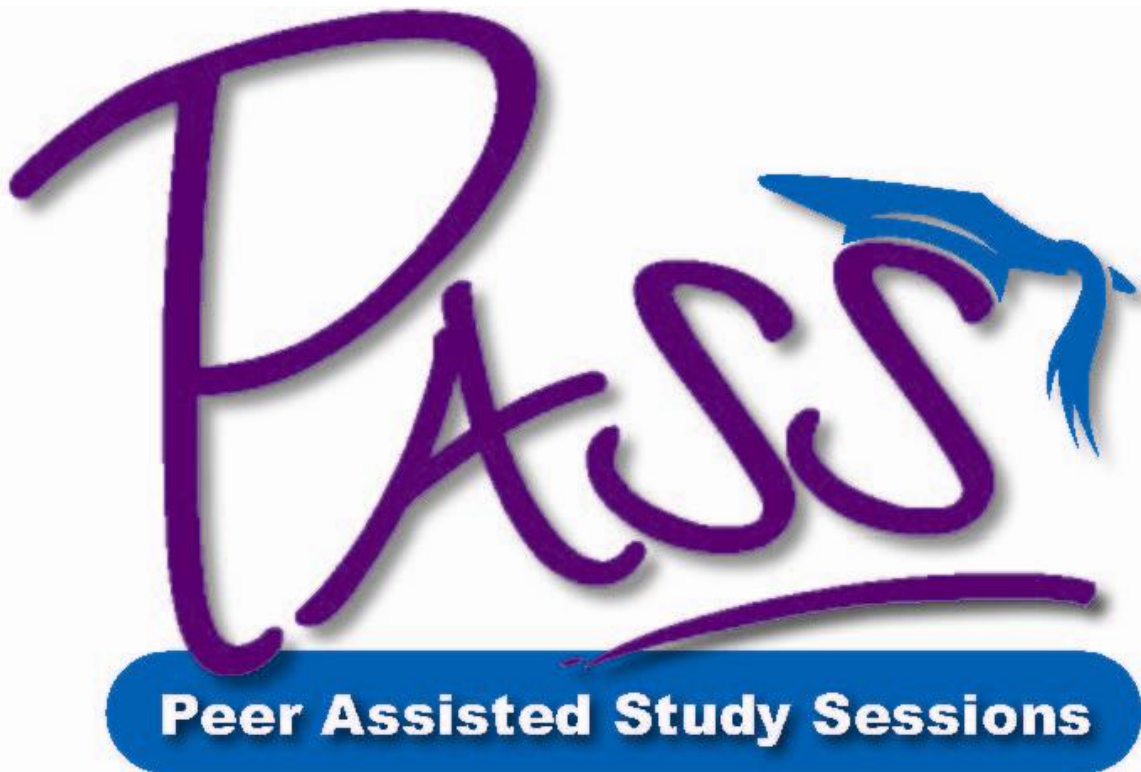


PASS Program: Information for Lecturers

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WHAT IS PASS?

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) is a voluntary academic assistance program that uses peer-led group study to help students succeed in traditionally difficult courses - those with high unsuccessful completion rates (Fs, PCs and withdrawal). PASS targets tough courses which over time have demonstrated their difficulty regardless of the staff who teach them or the material that is used. These are difficult for many students, with some struggling more than others and, as such, are deemed 'high risk'. At UB and other institutions, PASS may also be attached to courses for other reasons, such as the establishment of learning communities or the development of discipline-specific academic/learning skills.

The PASS sessions are facilitated by PASS Peer Leaders, students who have previously completed the targeted course (or a higher level version of it) and have demonstrated strong competency. The PASS sessions can be best described as 'super group learning' wherein the PASS Leader facilitates group study activities and collaborative study techniques specific to the course.

PASS and tutorials differ. Whereas tutorials typically cover a set of work and assessments indicated in the course outline, each PASS session has an agenda determined by the PASS Leader and the attending students that week.

Each week, PASS Leaders offer regular scheduled PASS sessions on campus in designated classrooms. PASS Leaders promote their sessions as 'guaranteed study time' because by attending PASS, students have an opportunity to meet with classmates outside of class and engage themselves in the course material. During a typical PASS session, students compare and clarify lecture notes, review textbook readings, and discuss key concepts. PASS also provides an opportunity to complete study activities while developing study skills specific to the course.

While it is important to know exactly what PASS is, it is equally important to understand that PASS is not a remedial program for three important reasons:

- 1) PASS supports high-risk courses rather than just high-risk students
- 2) All students enrolled in a targeted course are encouraged to attend PASS, not just those struggling. PASS therefore avoids any remedial stigma.
- 3) PASS usually starts in week 2 and continues to the end of the term

Purpose

PASS has multiple purposes which include:

- 1) Reducing rates of attrition within targeted courses
- 2) Improving student grades in targeted courses
- 3) Increasing the graduation rates of students
- 4) Assisting students to make a successful transition to tertiary study
- 5) Development of transferable study skills and independent learners

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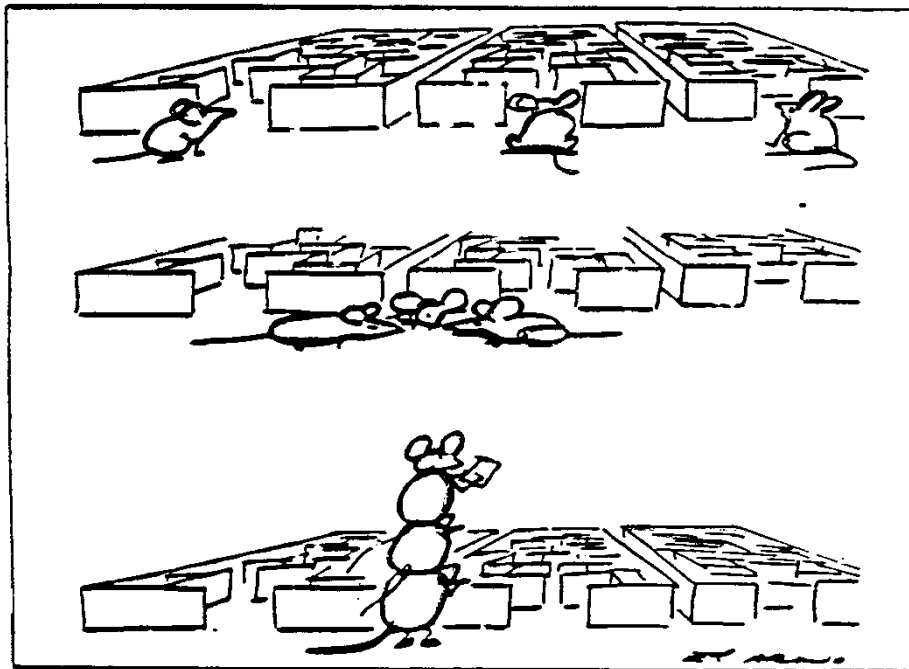
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THE PASS MODEL AND BASIC DESIGN

The PASS Model involves the following key persons:

- 1) **PASS Program Manager**
A trained professional responsible for the management of the program, liaising with School staff, selecting, training and supervising the PASS Leaders and evaluating the program.
- 2) **Academics**
Lecturers from identified targeted courses. You may have personally requested PASS support for your course or it may have been suggested by your HOS, Sub-Dean or another School. Lecturers reinforce PASS Program support, advocating this academic assistance to all students.
- 3) **PASS Leaders**
Students deemed course competent, and trained in proactive learning and study skills strategies. A key component of the PASS Model is use of peer students (as opposed to course tutors) for this position; doing so negates possible inference linking PASS with final course grading.
- 4) **Students**
The voluntary participants in the PASS sessions and, although mentioned last, *the* most crucial component of PASS.



Source: UMKC Training Material

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Role of the PASS Leader

PASS Leaders serve as peer facilitators for group study in PASS sessions. This role requires PASS Leaders to attend half the lectures on the targeted course to ensure constant and consistent knowledge of the lecturer's expectations and course content. The PASS Leader's role in the classroom is to model effective classroom behaviour and then transfer that knowledge to the PASS session. To form the basis of their PASS sessions, PASS Leaders combine specific study skills with key course content, integrating *what to learn* with *how to learn*.

PASS Leaders know the following:

- ✚ How and what to study
- ✚ What material to focus on
- ✚ How to interpret the lecturer's expectations

Moreover, the PASS Leader knows which successful strategies will facilitate all of these things. In turn, the PASS Leader will pass on his/her 'know how' to students in the class so they can be successful as well. PASS Leaders undergo an intensive two-day training before commencing their role, have regular observations by more experienced Leaders / staff who offer supportive feedback and undertake further professional development activities throughout the semester.

How is PASS helpful?

PASS is helpful in many ways, but students often comment that it:

- 1) Provides guaranteed study time
- 2) Offers a relaxed, 'non-threatening' learning environment
- 3) Creates a smaller, more comfortable-sized study setting
- 4) Facilitates discipline based social interaction and networking

Lecturer expectations

For PASS to achieve its highest potential effectiveness, we ask lecturers to provide assistance in a few areas:

- ✚ Make announcements about PASS (lectures, course outline, Moodle)
- ✚ Allow the PASS Leader to make class announcements when needed and provide them with Web CT access (student level)
- ✚ Post the PASS session schedule on the e-learning space (Moodle)

PASS prompts from lecturers remind students of its availability and encourage participation in a positive manner. It should always be stressed that ALL students are encouraged to attend.

How a PASS Leader differs from a traditional tutor

PASS Leaders can be different from tutors in a number of categories. The chart below emphasises these differences and helps to explain why it's important to maintain this key element of the PASS Model, which dictates use of peer students as PASS Leaders.

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	PASS Leader	Tutor
Characteristic	Model student	Content specialist
Status	Peer	Academic elite
Goal	Helps students to be successful	Sometimes teaches course matter only
Mode	Group participation/ Collaborative Learning	Sometimes a more passive learning environment
Orientation	Student-oriented	Lecturer-Oriented
Instructional Duties	Leads group. Leaves teaching to lecturer	Re-lectures or re-teaches group. Also grades assessable tasks

TYPICAL LECTURER CONCERNS

Why my course?

PASS typically supports introductory, core curriculum or 'gatekeeper' courses. PASS is part of your class for several reasons, none of which have anything to do with your ability to teach. The primary reason is usually because the class is a historically difficult course wherein many students struggle and fail, thus producing a high failure and withdrawal rate for the course. Rest assured you have not been singled out because someone out there thinks you need support. The focus of PASS is the difficulty inherent within the course itself and/or acquiring discipline specific learning skills.

How much work will it be for me to have PASS support?

PASS is maintained and coordinated through the PASS Program within CLIPP. All we ask of lecturers in PASS-supported classes is that they provide the following:

- ✚ A few minutes at the beginning of lectures for the PASS Leader to make announcements when needed
- ✚ Time to meet briefly with the PASS Leaders, allowing them to keep you informed of what's happening in the PASS sessions. At the lecturer's request, Leaders can also provide very valuable and early feedback on concepts students are struggling with.

Will I have to change my teaching style?

No! PASS attempts to help students learn how to be successful in the course, regardless of the way you teach. It is not our intention to dictate how you should teach your class. PASS will *support* your teaching.

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Will PASS Leaders just help students complete their homework or assignments?

Absolutely NOT! PASS Leaders do not facilitate the study groups so students can complete homework together, write group papers, or complete take-home exams. On the contrary, the purpose of PASS is to help students become successful and independent learners. By doing their work for them, PASS Leaders would run the risk of making the students believe that it is not necessary for them to understand the work or how to go about completing their assignments. Instead, PASS Leaders may discuss typical problems, how to organise material, how to prepare for assignments or exams, and how to develop problem-solving abilities.

What goes on during PASS sessions?

A typical PASS session is an hour-long meeting in a classroom on campus and might include a review of lecture and assigned readings, group work and discussion, problem-solving and critical thinking activities, or a mock exam. The PASS Leader's primary focus is to assist students in understanding the course material while helping them to develop effective study skills that are applicable to the content. The PASS Leaders will never structure PASS sessions as a forum to re-lecture to students who missed lectures. Indeed, Leaders regularly emphasise to students how important it is to attend lectures and tutorials.

How can students find PASS sessions?

PASS support is promoted in a variety of ways. PASS Leaders make introductory PASS announcements in the first week of lectures. Students may receive text and/or Moodle messages promoting PASS and referring them to the PASS website (in development).

Is the PASS Program interested in PASS Leader referrals?

Absolutely! We use a variety of publicity methods to attract qualified students for PASS Leader positions, and we welcome lecturer suggestions.

PASS HISTORY

PASS is based on Supplemental Instruction (SI), the brainchild of Dr. Deanna Martin from the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC). In 1973 Dr. Martin developed the SI Model in response to her university's concern regarding the high failure rate among minorities in medical school. The program quickly spread to UMKC's health and professional schools and soon after that throughout the entire university. By 1981 the U.S. Department of Education named Supplemental Instruction an Exemplary Education Program. Very few post-secondary programs hold such a distinction. Today, over 1800 institutions in the United States and 27 countries have implemented SI / PASS on their campuses.

PASS in Australia

The PASS Program at UOW is an internationally acclaimed, multiple award winning program run by Student Services. PASS commenced in the Informatics faculty in Autumn 2002 and has since expanded to serve around 1,000 students each semester in all 9 faculties. Most recently, the UOW

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PASS Program has been awarded a UOW Award for Outstanding Contribution to Teaching And Learning (2007), and Sally Rogan and Phillip Dawson have been awarded a Carrick Citation (2007) for "*Leadership and mentoring in the adaptation, dissemination and advancement of the Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) Program*". The originator of SI / PASS, Dr Deanna Martin, said that the UOW PASS Program "hits all the benchmarks of an exceptional implementation".

Since 2005, the UOW PASS Program has been accredited by UMKC as the National Centre for PASS/SI in Australia, with Sally Rogan as the National Trainer. The National Centre offers support to PASS Programs in the Australasian region. Nearly 100 staff from 25 institutions in Australia, NZ and Malaysia have now benefited from training and assistance by UOW PASS since 2005. PASS operates at a range of institutions including the University of Sydney and University of Melbourne.

What should I do if I have any concerns about a PASS Leader or the PASS Program?

Immediately contact Bronwyn Blaiklock, Coordinator Learning Skills, email b.blaiklock@ballarat.edu.au or phone 5327 9378.

(This resource has been adapted from resources provided by the National PASS Office at the University of Wollongong.)