

Peer Support Procedures

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Scope:	Course Type:	All
	RTOs:	Open Colleges Pty Ltd Integrated Care and Management Training Pty Ltd College of Fashion Design Pty Ltd
	Partner RTOs:	Yes

Communication:

All Policies, Procedures, Forms and Guidelines are loaded into the Quality Management System (QMS) in Firefly. This will automatically update documents in OCTiVE and OpenSpace. Updates are communicated to staff through Firefly Chatter, Trainers and Assessors through OCTiVE News and students through the Student Lounge in OpenSpace.

1. What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is the creation of interaction between students and is an integral part of the overall learning experience at Open Colleges.

2. Study Buddy

One way of achieving interaction between students is through the use of a Study Buddy or group of Study Buddies. This is the support provided by other students who are studying in the same course or subject area.

A Study Buddy is a fellow student or group of students that learners can study with. Usually they are studying in the same subject area and this allows the students to discuss study related issues. For example, study buddies might:

- Look at a particular topic and discuss any problems encountered by a specified time.
- Research relevant current issues and to swap ideas next time contact is made.
- Read examiners' articles and reports for specific papers and summarise key points.
- Develop approaches and plans for writing good essays and discuss how each could apply what was learnt.
- Collaborate, discuss and share ideas for improvement to the learning activities and/or practice questions in order to develop better understanding of the topics covered by the activity/practice questions.

Having study buddies helps in keeping each other motivated in their studies and it creates a sense of community in the virtual world of distance education.

Whilst a Study Buddy or group of Study Buddies are encouraged to work together, they are not permitted to copy or share answers to their assessments to avoid instances of plagiarism. Any such incident will be considered a breach of PR5.4 Student Code of Conduct Procedure and PO8 Academic Conduct Policy and Procedures.

Peer Support is also distinct from Academic Support (see PR4.1), Learning Support (see PR4.2), Work Placement Support (see PR4.4) and Student Administrative Support (see PR4.5).

3. Finding a Study Buddy

Students may locate and invite one or more other students in the same course to create a study group or to be a 'Study Buddy.' This invaluable resource assists in bringing a cohort of students from around the country together who have the same interests and are studying the same course to share their experiences and thoughts.

There are a few different options available to students to help them find a Study Buddy in OpenSpace. They are:

- **Forums / discussion groups**
The forums / discussion groups are a great place to find a Study Buddy as they bring together students studying the same course, and often at the same point in their course. Students can send out a general message to

all students requesting a study buddy by creating a forum post in the general course discussion group, or opt to send a private message to a student.

- **Private message**

Students have the option of sending a private message in OpenSpace to another student in their course, requesting to be a Study Buddy.

However, that student must first identify whether the student they are messaging wishes to be a Study Buddy. This information can be found on a student's profile in OpenSpace. Please refer to below section: 'Opting In / Opting Out of Being a Study Buddy' for more information.

Once a Study Buddy has been found, students can add the Study Buddy to their contacts list by clicking the 'Add contact' link directly under the Study Buddy's profile picture.

In some cases, students are also given the option of doing a postcode search in OpenSpace to find students in their local area who are also studying the same course and are happy to be a Study Buddy. The search will only display all the potential 'Study Buddies' who match the student's search criteria.

Opting In / Opting Out of Being a Study Buddy

While we suggest students take advantage of the support opportunities available with having a Study Buddy, it is not mandatory to find or be a Study Buddy if the student does not wish to.

Students can 'opt in' or 'opt out' of being a Study Buddy at any time. All they need to do is go to their profile and either tick or un-tick the 'Ok to be a study buddy' check-box.

4. Study Buddy Netiquette

Students who decide to be a Study Buddy need to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and online etiquette as detailed in the PR5.4 Student Code of Conduct procedures.

All students must remember to be courteous, respect each other's opinions and report any abusive behaviour to Student Support immediately.

5. Course Facilitation

Another way of achieving interaction between students is through the use of student discussion forums. Course page can be used to augment learning and allow learners to explore and extend their knowledge of the concepts covered in the learning materials.

Each Open Colleges' course has a Course page. The Program Manager and Trainers facilitate the Course page by:

- Making regular posts of interesting topics related to the course
- Posting questions that spur debate and discussion between students
- Moderating discussions between students
- Ensuring appropriate netiquette is observed by all participants

6.Frequency of Course Page Facilitation

The Program Manager will make at least one posting per week to the Course page and will continuously monitor discussions.

7.Forums / General Discussion Groups

OpenSpace provides two different types of discussion groups for students – general discussion groups and course and / or assessment-specific groups.

The General Discussion is a place where students may come together to share their experiences and communicate in a safe learning environment.

The Course and / or Assessment Discussion groups are a place to bring together students studying the same course to discuss course updates, industry news and learning materials.

Please note that students are required to abide by the General Forum Netiquette guidelines whilst participating in a forum.

8.Messaging

Students often message each other through the OpenSpace messaging service. A student's message centre can be found in the drop-down menu under their profile. Using this messaging feature, students are able to:

- Search for another student
- Add a student to their contact list
- Send a message to another student
- See their conversation history with that student
- Respond to messages

Related Forms and Documents

	Location		
	OpenSpace	Website	QMS
Procedures			
PR4.1 Academic Support Procedures	X	-	X
PR4.2 Learning Support Procedures	X	-	X
PR4.3 Peer Support Procedures	X	-	X
PR4.4 Work Placement Support Procedures	X	-	X
PR4.5 Student Administration Support Procedures	X	-	X
PR4.6 Special Consideration Procedure	X	X	X
PR5.4 Student Code of Conduct Procedure	X	X	X
PR7.1 Complaints Procedure	X	-	X
Related Documents			
DC1.3 Schedule of Administrative Fees	X	X	X
Forms			
FR4.1 Academic Referral Form	X	-	X
FR4.2 Learning Support Referral Form	X	-	X
FR4.3 Work Placement Support Referral Form	X	-	X
FR4.4 Student Administration Escalation Form	X	-	X
FR1.1 Enrolment Form	X	X	X
FR4.5 Course Cancellation Request Form	X	X	X
FR4.6 Course Extension Request Form	X	X	X
FR4.7 Course Deferral Request Form	X	X	X
FR4.8 Course Change of Mode Request Form	X	X	X
FR4.9 Course Transfer Request Form	X	X	X
FR4.10 Certificate Re-issue Form	X	X	X
FR4.11 Third Party Authority Form	X	X	X
FR4.16 Special Consideration Form	X	X	X
FR7.1 Formal Complaint Form	X	X	X

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