



**Prifysgol Cymru**  
Y Drindod Dewi Sant  
**University of Wales**  
Trinity Saint David

*Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau*  
*Transforming Education, Transforming Lives*

# Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) at UWTSD

Jo Kelleher

# What is Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)?

PAL is a student-led programme whereby second or third year students act as mentors, providing academic support to new or first year students in their subject discipline.

At UWTSD, the aims of the PAL programme are to:

- Ease the transition to university

- Create a sense of belonging

- Enhance students' learning experience

- Develop graduate attributes in attendees and mentors

# What are the benefits of PAL?

- Provides a support network for new students and encourages a sense of belonging
- Provides a safe learning environment to acquire and develop new academic skills and ask questions
- Enhances employability for PAL mentors and consolidates their subject knowledge
- PAL mentors can feed back any learning issues to academic staff
- PAL mentors can signpost students to other services within UWTSD



# How are PAL mentors recruited and trained?

- Students are usually recommended by their lecturers
- They complete an application form
- They are then invited to complete an online module on Moodle (this takes about six hours in total study time)
- To complete the process, students attend a full day of face-to-face training during which they learn about facilitating discussions, using questions to prompt engagement and enhance understanding. They also learn how to handle a range of group work scenarios and how to signpost students to other services at UWTSd

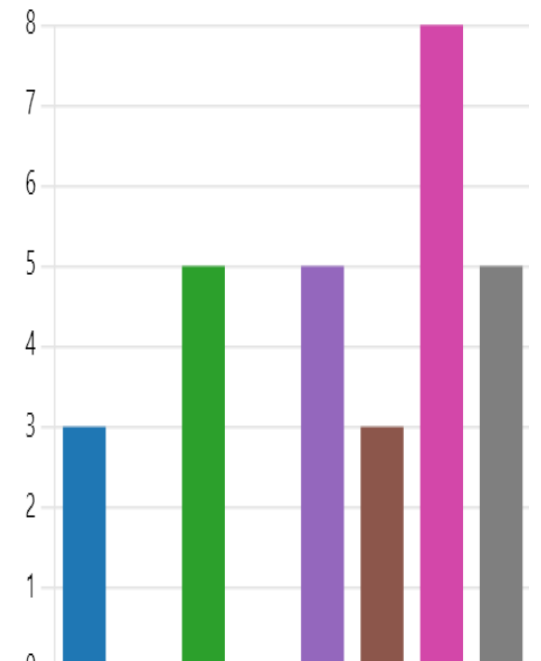
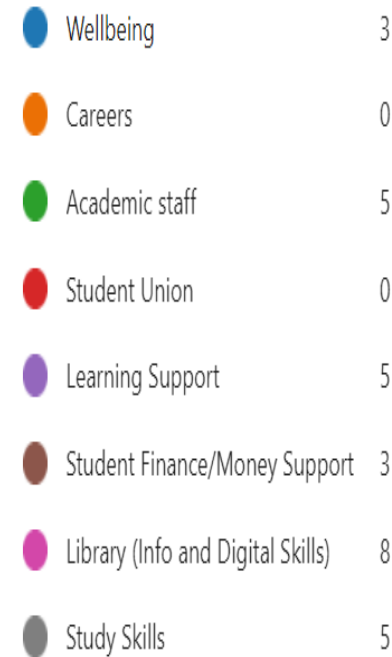
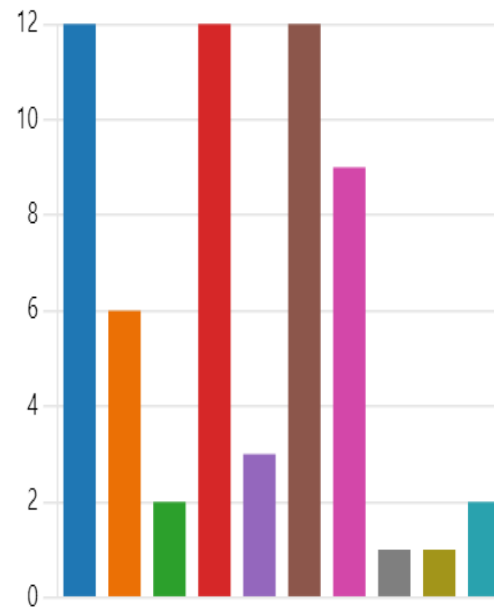
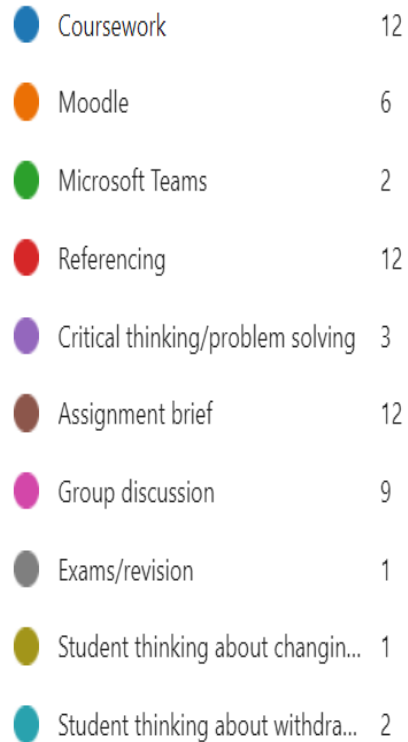
# How are PAL sessions run?

- Weekly drop-in sessions scheduled after a lecture
- 'Embedded' sessions scheduled towards the end of a lecture
- Individual 1:1 sessions either in person or online



# What happens in PAL sessions?

See below topics covered in weekly and/or 1:1 sessions since September 2023 (lefthand chart) and Signposting by PAL mentors (righthand chart)



# Pathways where PAL sessions are running

- We have recruited 26 mentors, 18 of whom have been trained, with a further 5 being trained in December. There are a number of pathways where PAL is now operational:
  - Business (Across Carmarthen, Swansea, Cardiff and Birmingham campuses)
  - Health & Social Care (Swansea, Carmarthen and Birmingham campuses)
  - Education (Carmarthen and Swansea)
  - Sociology (Carmarthen – PAL activity at level 4 and 5)
  - Humanities (Lampeter – offered to Foundation and level 4-6 students)
  - Psychology and Counselling (Swansea)
  - A number of enquiries re PAL from other pathways received including WAVDA, Widening Access, Computing and Art.
  - 4 PCET students currently working as PAL mentors within Health & Social Care and Business.



## Feedback from PAL Mentors

- *'PAL has been an amazing experience. It has enabled me to help my fellow students settle into university life and reinforced my understanding of the topics covered in the early days of my degree. I have made some great lifelong friends, both students and staff!'*  
**Debby Mercer, Lampeter.**
- *'I have really enjoyed learning new skills and putting them into practice, this have given me a boost and encouraged me to seek progression into a formal teaching postgrad degree. I have built confidence in my skills and every session I learn something new and constantly adapt the way I run the sessions so the student gets the most out of PAL.'*  
**Chrissie Joy, Carmarthen.**

## Feedback from Attendees

- *'I found PAL great. I like the fact I can choose which ones I want to go to and not have to go to each session.'* **Sociology/Advocacy level 4 student**
- *'PAL sessions really help me put my thoughts onto paper especially when I'm struggling and over thinking things.'* **Business level 4 student**
- *I've had marks back from most assessments and am happy with them - got 70 on the last one. I'm slowly getting into the swing and realising I need to put a lot more time in but getting these marks have given me the motivation.*
- *Thanks for all your help.* **Business level 4 student**

# Future PAL activity this academic year

- Submission of case study for publication in AdvanceHE on employability skills developed through engagement with PAL at UWTSD
- Collect qualitative data from January onwards for end of year report (2023-24)
- Evaluate quantitative data generated from PAL Attendance form
- Promote PAL at student facing events: Careers Fairs, Wellbeing Weeks.
- JK to attend next WPLN meeting in February to be hosted by Cardiff university.
- JK to attend International Forum for Peer Learning to be held in Dublin in March 2024.
- Begin recruitment of PAL mentors for next academic year and if staffing allows, establish new pathways to deliver PAL activity in 2024-25
- Establish PAL activity on the London campus, in Business and Health & Social care pathways



# Thank you for listening!

## Any questions?