

# Peer Led Study Groups:

How to set one up  
and get the most out  
of it



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## *Thinking about starting a Peer Led Study Group? Read on.*

**I do fine studying on my own – how is being part of a study group going to help me?**

1. Study groups can help keep you motivated and on track.
2. Study groups typically discuss information and concepts during sessions; this practice can really help embed your learning and knowledge.
3. Being part of a study group can help you understand difficult concepts. One or more group members are likely to understand something you do not or vice versa. They may bring up ideas or perspectives you never considered.
4. You can learn valuable new study habits from the other members of the group.
5. You may be reluctant to ask a question in a lecture/seminar. You are likely to find it easier to do so in a small study group.
6. You can compare your lecture notes with those of the other group members to clarify your notes and fill in any gaps.
7. Interacting with the other group members can help make studying enjoyable.



## ***Making sure you stay on the right side of the rules***

I know students get in trouble for working together on coursework; how is this different?

Studying at university provides us all with an excellent opportunity to learn from our peers and to gain invaluable team-working skills that will aid us later on in life. As long as your study group is not working on coursework or other work that is credit bearing, then this is fine and is in fact something that the University encourages via their funding of a staff member to support the setting up of peer led study groups.

Unless a piece of work is a group project, you must not collaborate with others when preparing your assignments. You can share books and/or articles, but you should always do your own research and use only your own notes and essay/ essays drafts in the preparation of your work. Under no circumstances should you use another student's work or ideas and present them as your own as this is considered as academic misconduct. by the University.

Want to know about the rules that relate to assessed work? Please have a look at the following link and also look at your Department handbook for specific guidance.

[www.lboro.ac.uk/governance/regulations/18/current/](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/governance/regulations/18/current/)

***If you are ever unsure about whether what you are doing in your study group is ok or not, get in touch with the Peer Support Co-ordinator ([samanthadavis@lsu.co.uk](mailto:samanthadavis@lsu.co.uk)) and just ask.***



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## *Right, I'm sold, how do I set up a group?*

1. Find your study group. Speak to the person next to you in a lecture, seminar or lab; likelihood is they will know one other person who could join.
2. Think about the optimum size of your group. Groups of 4-6 work best; weekly meetings with more than 6 will be very hard to set up.
3. Find and agree on your study space; the same place each week will work well. Look at the following map to think of ideas <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/fm/development/space-team/learning/learning/>
4. Agree how you are going to go about deciding what you will study each week. Have you thought about setting up a Facebook group to agree it ahead of the next meeting?
5. You could all agree that each week a different person chooses a topic and contacts everyone ahead of the group to let them know what it is.
6. People could talk about what they find hard to grasp from the lecture/seminar that could be used to generate the topic.
7. It is likely that it will be necessary to do a bit of prep work ahead of the study group; all members should ensure that they are committed to doing any relevant reading or prep before committing to the group.
8. During the study groups, make the most of this time, ask questions, discuss and debate matters at length; doing so will help to compound and embed yours and the other group members' knowledge.
9. Use the end of each session to do mini quizzes, testing each other's knowledge and also overviewing the main learning points from the session.



## *Ok, I have got my group, any tips for the first meeting?*

Set the ground rules. For example, do you want people to let you know if they can't make a meeting? When will you agree any prep work by? How do you all want to keep in touch outside of the meeting? Exchange contact details, or set up a Facebook group, so you can all communicate easily.

Cover the do's and don'ts of study groups to make sure everyone is on the same page and no one is running the risk of breaking any rules.

Perhaps you could all agree to go for a coffee or something after the first session to allow time to get to know each other without taking time away from getting work done.

## *Tips for making the most of my study group*

Below are some ideas for some things you can do to start off your study group

**Think, pair, share** - based on the topic you are looking at, individually think about a concept or problem for a couple of minutes (perhaps 5 minutes). Reading back through your notes and any other information you have, perhaps underline certain bits you're still unsure of. Turn to the person next to you in the group and have a chat with them about the key areas of the topic and any areas which you don't fully understand. The group should then get back together to all discuss the topic to get input from each other.

**KWL**- What I know, What I want to know, What I have learnt. One of the group begins by drawing out a table with 3 columns, each with one of the above titles. Go around the group and add to the table with the things that you know and want to know. Once you have done this, the group should discuss what is written in the two columns. Are there any cross overs: is there something one person knows but another wants to know more about? Are there areas where there are common gaps in knowledge? Perhaps the session could work on this. At the end of the session, complete the learnt column.



## *Tips for making the most of my study group—continued*

**Summarising the procedure/steps** - Is your group working on a formula, numeric based area or a specific question? Rather than just focusing on the answer you got to and that it was right, it is important that you recap how you got to the answer too. The group could spend some time working backwards once at the answer to ensure everyone has grasped all of the theories, processes and concepts.

**Summarise the lecture** - At the start of your study group, pick out two of the group to summarise that week's lecture, firstly without looking at their notes. Change who summarises every time the group meets so that you all have a go.

**Concept knowledge challenge** - particularly useful in revision. Between the group, share out specific vocabulary that is relevant to the module you are learning about and give every member of the group a number of these topics to write down on one notecard per term. Once there are lots of cards to choose from, a member of the group picks a card and has to explain to the rest of the group that concept without using the words on the card.

**Quiz** - a quiz is a great way to check your knowledge of a module and is usually more useful towards the end of the module. Perhaps split into pairs and devise a quiz that you can then share with your group and take it in turns to try out their questions.



# *Common pitfalls of study groups and how to avoid these*

1. Don't let the study group get distracted from its agenda and goals.
2. Make sure the study group doesn't just become a social group. You can socialise with the members of the group at other times if you want to.
3. Don't allow group members to attend unprepared for the study group. To stay in the group, members should be required to turn up to the meeting prepared (i.e. having recapped the lecture notes ahead of the meeting, or read a journal if that is what the group has agreed). If someone turns up unprepared once, it might be a blip, but if it is happening all the time, group members should discuss this and ensure the other group member is committed to doing the prep work to make the most of a topic.
4. Make sure not to let the session become a negative forum for complaining about how hard the work is etc.
5. Do not allow one or two group members to dominate the group. It is important that all members have an equal opportunity to participate.



## *Help us to help you*

We are incredibly passionate about the benefits of peer support and particularly peer led study groups. The centralised support of these is new to Loughborough and we want to do all we can to help you get the most out of your group.

Need any help setting up a group or more ideas for how to get the most out of it?

Have you got a really successful study group and want to share tips with others?

Get in touch with the Peer Support Coordinator  
[samanthadavis@lsu.co.uk](mailto:samanthadavis@lsu.co.uk)



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