WHAT IS THE BUDDY SCHEME?

Coming to University can be quite daunting; whether it is the first time that you have lived away from home, or whether you have moved to an entirely new country! We understand that it can sometimes be difficult to strike up new friendships and settle in, and sometimes it can help to speak to someone who has done it all before… that is why we have set up the Buddy Scheme.

The Buddy Scheme is coordinated by Hertfordshire Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre and facilitates informal peer-to-peer support; matching up new students with continuing students (Buddy Volunteers) who can share their hints and tips for settling in to life at University.

Buddies are matched according to their preferences, such as interests or School; and the Buddies can agree between themselves how often they would like to meet and where. Buddies are also encouraged to get involved with the on-campus opportunities, such as Active Students activities and Students’ Union events.

Being a Buddy Volunteer:

What is expected of Buddy Volunteers?

- Welcome your Buddy to the University of Hertfordshire.
- Offer support and maintain regular contact.
- Help your Buddy to find activities that they may be interested in, such as sports or Students’ Union societies – even better, try the activities with them!
- Signpost any services that your Buddy may require, and ask the Students’ Union Advice and Support team if you’re not sure.
- Respect confidentiality, unless you feel that your Buddy is at risk to themselves or others.

What is not expected of Buddy Volunteers?

- To put yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable.
- To proof-read their work or offer any kind of academic support – there are University departments who offer this.
- To be ‘on call’ for their Buddy.
To offer money, skills or an uncomfortable amount of time.
To solve your Buddie’s personal or social problems.
To become best friends (however it might happen, and that’s great!).

How will Buddy Volunteers benefit from the Buddy Scheme?

- It’s a great way to meet new people and potentially make new friends.
- You can make a difference and improve the University experience for your Buddy.
- You can find out more about the amazing support services which are available on-campus.
- You can get some excellent experience to put on your CV.
- It’s a great opportunity to improve your communication, interpersonal and organizational skills.
- The hours you spend volunteering for the scheme can count towards the Go Herts Award. For more information read the later section of this handbook or speak to a member of the Advice & Support team.
- It’s a great excuse to try out loads of new activities and go to events, just like you’re a first year all over again!

How do I become a Buddy Volunteer?

1. Have you been studying at UH for at least one academic year? If so, complete the online application form; stating your reasons for wanting to become a Buddy Volunteer and also providing details to help us match you with a new student.
2. Your application will be reviewed by the Advice and Support team and you will either be invited in to the Students’ Union office for an informal chat or a time arranged for a chat on the telephone.
3. You will receive an e-mail notification regarding whether your application has been successful and provided with details for Buddy Volunteer training.
4. Once you have attended the training, you will be matched with a new student and you are expected to make the first contact.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does a new student sign up for a Buddy?

1. The new student completes the online application form, stating their preferences for being matched with a Buddy Volunteer (we will try our best to fulfil preferences, but this is not guaranteed).
2. The new student’s application will be reviewed by the Advice and Support team, to ensure that the new student fully understands the nature of the scheme and that it is
the right thing for them. If there are any queries about their application they will be contacted via e-mail.

3. The new student will receive a confirmation e-mail following the review of their application form, and soon after they will be matched with a Buddy Volunteer.

4. The assigned Buddy Volunteer will be the one to make first contact, and the first meeting can be arranged at the soonest convenience.

I’ve been assigned a Buddy, what do I do next?

1. Contact your Buddy by e-mail as soon as you can; introducing yourself, exchanging contact details and arranging your first meet-up.

   NB. We suggest that your first meet-up is on-campus during the daytime.

2. Before meeting up, prepare; how did you feel when you were a first year? Homesick? Was there a bit of culture shock? Have a think about:
   - How did you feel when you first came to UH?
   - What helped you to settle in and what did you enjoy doing?
   - What do you like about the local area? Do you have any recommendations?
   - Questions you may ask your Buddy to explore what activities they like doing and whether they would be interested in joining any clubs or societies.

3. At your first meet-up, set expectations about how often you intend to meet up and what the best method of contact would be for the both of you. You may also want to make it clear when you are available and when you are not.

4. At the end of your meet-up, always get a date in the diary for your next meet-up.

What can I do with my Buddy?

The Buddy Scheme is very informal; you can go to events with your Buddy, try out a sport activity, grab a coffee or just hang out. It’s completely your choice. We simply suggest that the first meeting is arranged on-campus during the day time.

What do I talk about with my Buddy?

Whatever comes naturally! As a continuing student at the University of Hertfordshire, you are full of info and tips about settling in to University life; however we do not expect Buddy Volunteers to know everything. If you are ever not sure about something, do not hesitate to contact the Hertfordshire Students’ Union Advice and Support team for more information (01707 285022, advice@hertfordshire.su).

It is also important to remember that the conversations you have with your Buddy should remain confidential, unless if you feel that they pose a risk either to themselves or others. In
the event of this, you must tell the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre team. If your Buddy is at immediate risk, we suggest that you call Campus Security and ask for assistance (Campus Security Emergency Line: 01707 285555) and/or call 999 for support from emergency services.

**My Buddy has asked me for advice, what do I do?**

If your Buddy asks about something and you’re not sure what to say, or if you find yourself in a difficult position, do not hesitate to contact the Students’ Union Advice & Support team and we will help as much as we can. Alternatively you could suggest that they visit our Advice Centre. There is also a list of University support services at the back of the Buddy Scheme Handbook which you can refer to.

**I am worried about my Buddy’s welfare, what do I do?**

You would need to notify the Students’ Union Advice and Support team (01707 285022, advice@hertfordshire.su) immediately if you have any concerns about the welfare of your Buddy. If your Buddy is at immediate risk, we suggest that you call Campus Security and ask for assistance (Campus Security Emergency Line: 01707 285555) and/or call 999 for support from emergency services.

**My Buddy isn’t speaking to me, what do I do?**

If you have contacted your Buddy and not heard anything back, let us know by e-mailing advice@hertfordshire.su and we will see what we can do to help.

**What if it’s not a perfect match?**

If there has been an error in the matching process, or if it’s just not working out, please e-mail advice@hertfordshire.su and we can try to re-match you.

**What if I no longer want to be part of the Buddy Scheme?**

It is completely fine to decide that you no longer want to continue with the Buddy Scheme. All we ask is that you do not ignore your Buddy; that you e-mail advice@hertfordshire.su to let us know that you want to be removed from the scheme, and for us to get feedback and to re-match your Buddy.

**How can I log my volunteering hours?**

First of all, when you start volunteering as a Buddy Volunteer, you should set-up a “Volunteer Profile” on the Students’ Union website. Once you have set up your “Volunteer Profile” you can use the “Volunteer Log” to add on the SU Buddy Scheme as an “Extra-curricular Activity”
and track the hours you spend volunteering. You can also add on other volunteering hours for different projects that you are involved with.

I still have questions about the Buddy Scheme, who do I contact?

The Buddy Scheme is coordinated by Hertfordshire Students' Union Advice and Support Centre, you can contact us by phone (01707 285022), e-mail (advice@hertfordshire.su) or by dropping in to the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre on College Lane campus (we are open on weekdays from 10:00-16:00).

THE GO HERTS AWARD

The Go Herts Award is an initiative created in partnership between the University and the Students' Union, and funded by ULiving. The Go Herts award is for all University of Hertfordshire students, it’s an award that students achieve by committing to taking part in extracurricular activities. These activities can be anything outside of their academic studies, examples are, work experience, voluntary work, Duke of Edinburgh and sporting events.

There are 3 levels to the award, 100 hours of activity equals a bronze award, 200 hours equals a silver award and 300 hours equals a gold award. Once students have achieved either 100, 200 or 300 hours of relevant activities – they can submit an application online to achieve the Go Herts Award.

If you are interested in applying for the Go Herts Award, make sure that you use the “Volunteer Profile” to log your volunteering hours on the Students’ Union website.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The conversations between Buddies will remain confidential, unless if the Buddy Volunteer feels that the Buddy poses a risk either to themselves or others. In the event of this the Buddy Volunteer will contact the appropriate member of staff from either Hertfordshire Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre, UH Student Wellbeing, UH Campus Security or NHS emergency services for assistance.

DATA PROTECTION

SU Buddy Scheme member details will be kept electronically secure and will not be passed on to any other organisation (other than in exceptional circumstances - stated above).

The details that are collected for the SU Buddy Scheme are the student's; name, student ID number, gender, course name, year of study, school, academic status (i.e. undergraduate or postgraduate), fee status (i.e. home or international), disability details and contact details. Matching preferences are also collected. Identifying data (such as a student ID number) is required to access the SU Buddy Scheme.
Student contact details will not be used for any other purpose than for the Buddies to contact each other, and for the Advice and Support team to provide updates to SU Buddy Scheme members.

Anonymous statistical data is collected, and shared with the wider Students’ Union staff; to measure effectiveness and inform the development of the service. Anonymised statistical data may also be shared with the University with the aim of improving the student experience. All statistical reports are created so that individuals cannot be recognised. Students reserve the right to request that their data is removed from statistical analysis and reporting. If you wish for your data to be omitted from statistical analysis and reporting, you must inform a member of the Advice and Support team.

In-line with the General Data Protection Regulations, you have a number of rights which you can exercise regarding the processing and use of your personal data (such as the ‘right to restrict processing’, ‘the right to object’ or ‘the right to be forgotten’).

Data will be kept for a period of six years, after which time all identifiable data will be destroyed; this destroyed data includes; all personal data (including basic client details), contact details and equality monitoring information. Other data may be retained for future benchmarking purposes.

Hertfordshire Students’ Union is a data controller. The Union processes personal information relating to students, staff and visitors. The Board of Trustees delegates day to day responsibility for implementing this policy and related procedures to key personnel within the Union. The Students’ Union and its subsidiaries are registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) and renews these registrations annually.

The General Manager is the Students’ Union Data Protection Officer and is responsible for the implementation of Hertfordshire Students’ Union’s Data Protection policy.

If you want to know what personal information the Advice & Support team holds about you (from being a member of the SU Buddy Scheme), you can make a written request to advice@hertfordshire.su FAO The Advice Centre Manager.

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint about how your personal data has been used, you can do so by contacting the Advice & Support Centre Manager (advice@hertfordshire.su).

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to raise them with a member of the Advice and Support team.

Thank you so much for showing an interest in the SU Buddy Scheme. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact the Advice & Support Team; visit our office during our opening hours (10:00-16:00, Mon to Fri), call us (01707 285022) or e-mail us (advice@hertfordshire.su).
USEFUL CONTACTS

Students’ Union Services

Hertfordshire Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre
Free, confidential and impartial advice and support is offered on a wide range of issues including academic appeals, academic misconduct investigations, housing issues, budgeting and legal issues. A weekly sexual health clinic is also hosted on Mondays, during term-time, where students can drop-in for full sexual health testing and contraception advice and services.

Where: Hertfordshire Students’ Union, Hutton Hub, College Lane.
When: Monday to Friday, from 10:00-16:00 (excluding University closed days).
Phone: 01707 285022
E-mail: advice@hertfordshire.su

Hertfordshire Students’ Union Elected Officers
Vice President Community – vp.community@hertfordshire.su
Vice President Activities – vp.activities@hertfordshire.su
Vice President Education – vp.education@hertfordshire.su

University & External Services

Active Students – Free sports sessions available to all UH students. Have fun, get active!
Visit: http://www.activestudents.co.uk/ for the full schedule of activities.

Campus Pharmacy – Over the counter services and advice for students and staff.
Visit: Lower floor, Hutton Hub.

Careers & Employment Service - Graduate recruitment and career development team.
Visit: Lower floor, Hutton Hub or visit the Careers Hub on StudyNet.

Centre for Academic Skills Enhancement - Useful study guides and workshops offered.
Visit: The CASE pages on StudyNet.
Chaplaincy – Multi-faith religious and spiritual support.

Visit: The Key Centre (near Telford Court accommodation), College Lane.

E-mail: chaplain@herts.ac.uk

Phone: 01707 284456

Equality Office - Information, guidance and support on all aspects of equality.

E-mail: equality@herts.ac.uk.

Phone: 01707 289362

International Student Support Team - Support for overseas students at UH.

E-mail: iss@herts.ac.uk

Phone: 01707 281299

Office of the Dean of Students

E-mail: deanofstudents@herts.ac.uk

Phone: 01707 284450

Student Centre - A one-stop shop for non-academic enquiries relating to University life.

Visit: Mon – Thurs: 09:00-17:00  Fri: 09:00-16:00.

Phone: 01707 284800

E-mail: ask@herts.ac.uk

Website: ask.herts.ac.uk

Police non-emergency: 101 (from landlines and mobiles)

Samaritans (helpline & e-mail support): Call: 116 123  Text: 07725 909090

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org