



Peer-Assisted Learning Sessions



University
of Windsor

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What is PALS?

PALS is a support program designed to **enhance student success** in large-enrolment courses with historically difficult content and high rates of D-letter-grades, failures, and withdrawals (otherwise known as DFWs). Rooted in *Supplemental Instruction (SI)*, our methods are supported by 50 years (Martin, 1973) of research and development, and are implemented across the globe under different names such as *Supported Learning Groups*, *Facilitated Study Groups*, *Peer-Assisted Study Sessions*, and others.

Our main goal is to help students develop as **independent learners**, equipped with strategies to help them solve a variety of problems and take greater ownership over their educational experiences. Facilitators **pair what to learn with how to learn it**, developing collaborative exercises that help scaffold complex material. A core motto of our program is to **study smarter, not harder**.

For what courses are PALS currently offered?

Course	Fall	Winter	Inter/Summer
General Chemistry	CHEM-1100	CHEM-1110	N/A
Organic Chemistry	CHEM-2300	CHEM-2310	N/A
Intro to Physics	PHYS-1400	PHYS-1410	N/A
Intro to Economics	ECON-1100	ECON-1110	N/A
Engineering Math	GENG-8010	GENG-8010	GENG-8010

How do we select courses for PALS?

PALS is unique in that it **targets courses, rather than students**, which helps alleviate some of the burden associated with individual tutoring. Courses at UWindsor have been selected as part of an institutional analysis of DFW rates, or through instructors and departments approaching our team about PALS implementation for their courses. If a course is selected for PALS, we ask that instructors provide access to their course materials including syllabi, allow student leaders to attend classes, and provide end-of-semester data used for program evaluation and reporting.

Who are the PALS leaders?

All PALS leaders are enrolled as students at the same degree-level as the target course (i.e., undergraduate or masters), and are prepared to share what they have learned through their own experiences in the target course, and beyond. They must have successfully completed the course (earning a threshold grade), demonstrate strong personal and facilitation skills, and have adequate availability to run one or two 90-minute sessions per week. Leaders will typically

attend classes and keep up with course material, so they are aware of what is being taught each week and will prepare activities based on (a) the most difficult material, (b) upcoming assessments, (c) what the instructor believes is most important, and (d) the students' reported needs.

What is required of my students?

Not much. There is no cost, no exclusion/inclusion criteria, and no sign-up process. What we do hope for though, is that students show up to PALS prepared to engage and learn. It is ideal if they are able to access their class notes and/or textbook/materials, since they may be referred to during the sessions.

How is PALS managed?

PALS is coordinated and supervised by [Ashlyne \(Ash\) O'Neil](#), one of the learning specialists in the Office of Open Learning. Ash sends out job advertisements through departmental administrators, conducts a review of applications and candidate interviews, and usually selects two Leaders per course. Ash trains these students and mentors them throughout their tenure as leaders, providing opportunities for personal and professional development. Ash also completes the relevant data collection and analysis necessary for program evaluation and reporting, and liaises with faculty who are involved or interested in the program.

If you would like more information, please contact Ash via Microsoft Teams or email (ashoneil@uwindsor.ca) with PALS in the subject line.