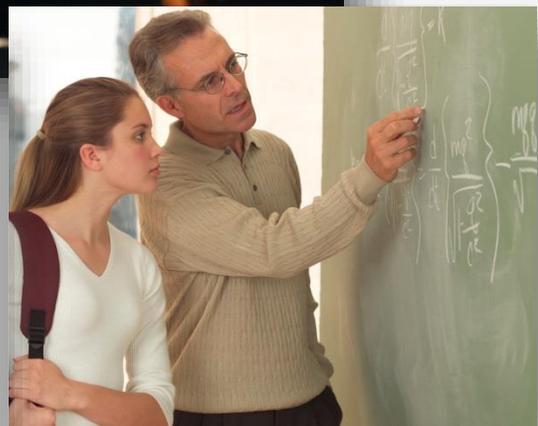


OSR Peer-Lab Faculty Handbook

Office of Student Research
California State University, San Bernardino



Welcome

Dear colleagues,

The OSR Peer-Lab is a voluntary academic assistance program that utilizes peer-led group study to help students succeed in courses that have demonstrated their difficulty regardless of the faculty who teach them or the material that is used. The OSR Peer-Lab program will be offered every quarter.

The OSR will provide instructors with a Peer-Lab facilitator, graduate and undergraduate student, who has taken the class before and earned a high grade in such class. During the Peer-Lab sessions, the Peer-Lab facilitator will facilitate group study strategies and collaborative study techniques specific to the course. The primary function of the Peer-Lab facilitator is to draw the most difficult information from the course lecture and use it to facilitate discussion among students and model successful learning strategies proven to be beneficial for the students. Faculty involvement is crucial to the success of the program.

The OSR hopes that Peer-Lab facilitator's assistance will contribute to the students' success in the targeted class through the combination of reviewing lecture notes, textbook readings, outside supplemental readings, and other effective learning strategies. By mastering the effective learning strategies used in Peer-Lab sessions, students can adopt and apply these learning strategies into other disciplines.

The OSR hopes you will consider using Peer-Lab in your courses and will encourage your students to participate in Peer-Lab sessions.

Best,



Dr. Jeffrey Thompson
Associate Provost for Research and
Dean of Graduate Studies



Dr. Francisca Beer
Director of OSR and
Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

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Peer-Lab Program Mission, Vision, and Goals

The Office of Student Research (OSR) at California State University, San Bernardino has designed a Peer-Lab instruction program modeled after Supplemental Instruction (SI)¹ to assist students by providing regularly scheduled, out-of-class supplemental instruction sessions.

Vision

Through supervised peer-facilitated collaborative learning, the Office of Student Research Peer-Lab Program (OSR-Lab) will support an environment addressing the intellectual development of all learners, helping them succeed in their courses, their careers, and life. The OSR-Lab will be known to have positive influence toward student's retention and graduation at CSUSB.

Mission

The mission of the OSR Peer-Lab is to increase student retention and success in upper division courses by providing collaborative peer learning experiences that improve understanding of subject content, foster critical thinking, and strengthen study skills. This OSR program is directly related to University efforts to better prepare students for life and work in a diverse and global society.



¹ The SI program was developed by Deanna Martin of the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UM-KC) during the mid-1970s. She developed the SI model to address high attrition rates for certain courses in the institution's 6-year medical school program. SI was successful in improving course grades and student retention, and it was subsequently extended throughout the curriculum at UM-KC (Burnmeister, Kenney, & Nice, 1996).

Goals and Objectives

The goal of Peer-Lab is to help students become independent advanced learners in the targeted classes.

The objectives are to:

1. Develop, implement and monitor a program that will enhance the academic performance of students actively participating in the program.
2. Employ an on-going, reliable evaluation program that includes goals and objectives, means to measure outcomes, and a process for incorporating results into program development and implementation.
3. Contribute to campus, state, and national academic and non-academic conversations regarding the role of supplemental instruction.

The Peer-Lab Model and Design

The Peer-Lab Model involves the following key personnel:

1. **Peer-Lab Administration:** The OSR provides support to faculty and Peer facilitators. It evaluates Peer facilitators and the overall achievements of the program.
2. **Faculty:** Instructors select Peer-Lab support for their classes. Peer-Lab faculty screen Peer-Lab facilitators for course competency. Faculty members also promote the Peer-Lab program by encouraging all of their students to attend Peer-Lab sessions. It has been found that instructors who provide students with incentive to attend the sessions, students are more likely to attend.
3. **Peer-Lab Facilitators:** Former students of a course who are approved by the instructor, and trained to provide assistance to faculty in all colleges with the exception of the College of Education.
4. **Students:** Participants in the Peer-Lab sessions who are interested in enhancing their understanding of the course material and improving their overall learning and reasoning skills.

Role of the OSR Peer-Lab Faculty

In order for the OSR Peer-Lab program to achieve its highest potential effectiveness, faculty are asked to provide assistance in the following areas:

1. Allow time during the 1st or 2nd week of class for the Peer-Lab facilitator to introduce Peer-Lab to the class.
2. Verbally encourage all students to attend Peer-Lab sessions.
3. Provide test grades to the Peer-Lab facilitator as soon as possible after each exam or as requested.
4. Insure that the pre and post Peer-Lab survey is administered to the class.
5. Emphasize to students that Peer-Lab is opened to any student in the class and any student may benefit from a greater understanding of the course content.
6. Secure a desk copy of any texts and related materials for the Peer-Lab facilitator.
7. Do not call on Peer-Lab facilitators in class to answer content questions. Peer Lab facilitators are focused on building a model of well-organized lecture notes and are thinking of ways to help students learn this material. Because of this, Peer-Lab facilitators have a different focus than students enrolled in the class and may not be prepared to answer content questions.
8. Participate in end-of-quarter Roundtable discussion.
9. Complete end-of-quarter Faculty Survey.
10. Invite students to attend OSR events/workshops.
11. Include OSR Peer Lab Program statement in course syllabus.
12. Provide copy of course syllabus with application.
13. Provide OSR a brief biography and picture for webpage.

To maintain proficiency in the targeted course, Peer-Lab facilitators must attend all lectures for the course, takes extensive notes during classes, and meet with the faculty members in office hours every week to review all course material.

It is important to understand that Peer-Lab is not a remedial program for three important reasons:

- 1) Peer-Lab supports courses that have been proven to be “traditionally” difficult.
- 2) All students enrolled in a “traditionally” difficult class are encouraged to attend Peer-Lab—not just those who are struggling in the class.
- 3) Peer-Lab starts with the first day of classes and continues to the end of the quarter.



Role of the Peer-Lab Facilitator

OSR Peer-Lab facilitators help student participants learn effective learning strategies, collaborate with fellow students by discussing, analyzing and evaluating the course material, and allowing students to explore different techniques to become confident in their academic career. Facilitators will work a maximum of 10 hours per week with a rate of \$14.85 per hour.

Peer-Lab Facilitator Responsibilities

1. Provide subject-specific information.
2. Facilitate active learning by allowing students to participate.
3. Attend all class meetings.
4. Provide guidance and direction to student participants in order to help students become independent learners.
5. Encourage students to attend faculty office hours.
6. Meet with faculty throughout the quarter as needed.
7. Meet with OSR Director and staffs as needed.
8. Maintain confidentiality of student performance and faculty feedback, except as required for reporting purposes to the OSR.
9. Complete all required paperwork prior to the start of the quarter (or hire date).

10. Refer students to appropriate college offices, departments or professionals when necessary.
11. Maintain regular and accurate records of lab sessions and/or relevant forms.
12. Take attendance during each lab session and submit at the end of each week by 5pm.
13. Report any problems to the OSR Director and staffs.
14. Administer, collect and input surveys data.
15. Perform other duties as assigned by OSR. *Please note that as a participant in this program, Peer-leaders are expected to attend the OSR's Annual "Meeting of the Minds" Symposium opening ceremony. More information to be given at a later time.*

Peer-Lab Facilitator Job Requirements

Please see the OSR Peer-Lab Job Description for a complete list of job requirements and application procedures.

1. Eligible for work on campus as determined by the Student Employment Office.
2. Maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 (B) or above with a course grade of 3.33 (B+) or above for all courses you plan to be a facilitator for.
3. Attend mandatory training before the start of the quarter.
4. Commit to working a minimum of 10 hours per week.
5. Provide a recommendation form from your professor for each course you would like to facilitate.
6. Excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills.

Please note: All international students who apply must obtain a work authorization from the Center for International Studies and Programs CE 356 (909) 537-5193.

Management of Peer-Lab Facilitators

The OSR is responsible for training, monitoring, and supervising the Peer-Lab facilitators, including their attendance to class and Peer-Lab sessions. If faculty members are concerned about the Peer-Lab facilitator in any way, they should alert the Director of the OSR by phone (909) 537-5709, (909) 537-3177 or email (fbeer@csusb.edu and dnwhite@csusb.edu). The Director of the OSR monitors the Peer-Lab facilitators' performance and evaluates the Peer-Lab facilitators in a variety of ways: through Peer-Lab session observations, lesson plan reviews, meetings and trainings, Peer-Lab student evaluations, Peer-Lab faculty surveys, and Peer-Lab facilitator self-assessment/evaluations.



Outcomes

Evidence that SI is effective in improving student performance and retention can be found in several studies focusing on several disciplines, including biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, history, mathematics and statistics (Blanc et al., 1983, Burmeister et al., 1996, Congos and Schoeps, 1998, Kochenour et al., 1997, Loviscek and Cloutier, 1997, Martin and Blanc, 1980, Warren and Tonsetic, 1997–1998 and Webster and Dee, 1998).

The OSR peer-lab program will be assessed based on direct assessment provided by instructors and indirect assessment using pre and post surveys developed by the OSR. The following tables outlined the outcome the OSR seek to achieve and the assessment tools the OSR planned to use.

OSR-Lab recipients	
Outcome(s) / OSR-Lab recipients	Assessment
OSR-Lab recipients will strengthen their subject knowledge.	Direct Assessment provided by instructors through tests, quizzes, papers, course assignments, presentations, portfolios, projects, etc.
OSR-Lab recipients will gain better understanding of the content of the course.	Direct Assessment provided by instructors through tests, quizzes, papers, course assignments, presentations, portfolios, projects, etc.
OSR-Lab recipients will improve their aptitude to learn independently and effectively.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.
OSR-Lab recipients will acquire study strategies that can be applied to other courses.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews. Direct Assessment using class cohort course completion.
OSR-Lab recipients will learn to collaborate with other students.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.

OSR-Lab facilitators	
Outcome(s) / OSR-Lab facilitator(s)	Assessment
OSR-Lab facilitators will strengthen their subject knowledge.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.
OSR-Lab facilitators will gain better understanding of the content of the course.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.
OSR-Lab facilitators will learn to collaborate with other students.	Indirect Assessment using pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.

Faculty	
Outcomes	Assessment
Faculty workload will decrease	Survey of faculty participating in the program.

Faculty perceive that Peer-lab participants are more active participants in class with better questions and are more ready to venture answers to classroom questions.	Survey of faculty participating in the program.
Faculty recognize that that Peer-lab participants acquire better mastery of the subject as these students refine and upgrade their skills by attending Peer-lab sessions.	Survey of faculty participating in the program.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is my course selected?

Your course has been deemed to be a “high risk” course suitable for supplemental instruction because it has historically been difficult with a high rate of failure.

What goes on during Peer-Lab sessions?

A typical Peer-Lab session is an hour-long meeting in a classroom on campus and might include a review of the lecture, assigned readings, group work, discussion, and problem-solving and critical thinking activities. The Peer-Lab facilitator’s primary focus is to assist students in the course content to enhance their understanding of the course material and improve their overall understanding and study skills.

Can I come to Peer-Lab sessions?

Students who attend Peer-Lab sessions are guaranteed anonymity so that they can feel free to ask any questions and are able to reveal any weaknesses in understanding course material. The presence of instructors may inhibit students from revealing weaknesses and students may not feel comfortable answering questions or in participating in discussion.

How much do I have to do?

Peer-Lab only offers courses where instructors invite and support Peer-Lab. Since Peer-Lab facilitators attend the class, instructors do not need to provide lecture notes or a content review. It is recommended that instructors and Peer-Lab facilitators meet periodically to discuss content material. During that meeting, Peer-Lab facilitators will show instructors the activities they have planned, provide insight about materials students find difficult. Instructors may provide Peer-Lab facilitators with various resources to use in Peer-Lab sessions such as textbooks, previous papers, old tests and homework.

What are the qualifications to become a Peer-Lab facilitator?

Generally, Peer-Lab facilitators are upper-division and graduate students who have taken and earned a high grade in the targeted course. Ideally, Peer-Lab Facilitators are selected by the faculty and approved by the OSR. The OSR looks at a potential Peer-Lab Facilitator's interpersonal skills, leadership style and ability to be trained and receive feedback, and compatibility with the Peer-Lab Model. After OSR reviews the qualifications and experiences of all candidates, the faculty will make the final selection.

Why do colleges and universities have SI programs?

A major reason why many institutions have chosen SI is because it is a cost effective and an educationally effective program designed to retain and graduate students while protecting academic integrity.

Can the Peer-Lab facilitator substitute for me in class when I am out of town?

Peer-Lab facilitators are not allowed to substitute for a faculty member.

Why should I consent to having Peer-Lab with my class?

By participating in Peer-Lab, students will have an enhanced understanding of the course content and will develop effective learning and study skills used to master the targeted class. Students learn to discuss the course material to increase and check understanding of the material. Peer-Lab is also beneficial to Peer-Lab facilitators. It allows them to improve leadership skills that will benefit them in future courses and in the professional world. Lastly, Peer-Lab facilitators provide an important communication liaison between students and faculty.

Does the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) or UCF permit me to provide exam grades to the Peer-Lab program? How is this confidential information handled?

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure provisions 99.31 allow those with a legitimate educational interest to handle student records without prior consent provided

that Peer-Lab facilitators sign a confidentiality agreement (FERPA, 1988). Peer-Lab has been permitted access to exam scores nationwide subject to permission from existing campus committees for using students' records in research.

Can I give the Peer-Lab students extra credit?

Yes. This is a good strategy for increasing Peer-Lab attendance. Instructors should create alternative means for earning an equal amount of extra credit for students whose schedules inhibit attendance at any Peer-Lab sessions.

Peer-Lab Contact Information

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