



The SLA Newsletter

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Student Learning Assistants (SLAs) are Middlesex University students who have been identified by their academic tutors as being highly motivated and capable individuals.

SLAs work collaboratively with academics in lectures, labs, seminars, workshops and small group sessions to support other students in their learning.

To find out more about SLAs, visit
<http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/ldu/index.aspx>

Contributors:

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Lest we forget...

- SLAs facilitate and do not teach

- SLAs are not counselors- when in doubt, refer to Academics, PAL Manager, or the counseling service on
<http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/counselling/index.aspx>

- SLAs are students and should keep on top of own workload

- SLAs work collaboratively with Academics

- SLAs are the best. Let this reflect in all aspects of our education.

Success Stories of our SLA Alumni

My name is Ester Stefanikova and I studied BA Business and Marketing at Middlesex. After finishing my degree I felt a need to further deepen my knowledge in management studies and therefore applied for a master's degree. Currently I study at The London School of Economics and pursue a two-year master's degree in Management.



Studying at Middlesex enhanced my essay writing skills, which is extremely useful for any assignment I face. Moreover, the multicultural diversity at Middlesex allowed me to appreciate working with people from all around the world and has made me flexible in different working environments. During this summer, I will work as an intern in management consulting, which I am looking forward to, as I find it intellectually stimulating settings. I am also interested in a sales career in large multinational firms. I constantly try to set new goals and therefore decided to spend the next semester at Bocconi University in Milan.

Student Contribution Awards event – May 17

SLAs have been invited to the prestigious Student Contribution Annual Awards. You would have received an email requesting your confirmation of attendance. The Awards ceremony recognises the achievements of SLAs who have gone the extra mile and worked hard throughout the year ensuring that students received the much needed support. The Student Contribution Awards will take place in The Forum on May 17 from 5pm to 8pm and we will share the stage with other student volunteers, helpers and ambassadors. This will be a great event to mark the end of your role for this academic year as a Student Learning Assistant and an opportunity for us to offer you our appreciation. We hope to see you there!

The SLA Newsletter

THE STUDENT LEARNING ASSISTANT



Issue 6
April 2013

Welcome...

...to the sixth issue of the **Student Learning Assistant Newsletter**. The Newsletter is aimed at all Student Learning Assistants (SLAs) and the wider university community of academic and administrative staff who are involved in the SLA scheme. The idea is to create awareness regarding the SLA scheme and to provide a forum for discussions, suggestions and contributions by all currently involved and also those who have been involved in the past, such as SLA Alumni and other members of staff.

Thanks for all the feedback we have received so far. If you have further comments on our work and the SLA Newsletter, please email to

s.ajayi@mdx.ac.uk.

Quote of the Month:

"The ultimate inspiration is the deadline."

Nolan Bushnell

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SLAs watch out for the Annual Student Contribution Award!

Motivational Dialogue Training

Barbara (Master Marketing SLA) comments

In March, the Middlesex University Student Learning Assistants once again had the opportunity to attend Motivational Dialogue Training. This year, we were happy to be trained in the beautiful building of the Hendon Town Hall. Again, Kathryn Budd-Brophy proved to be a unique specialist in the social training area. Despite busy schedules of our SLAs, many of us managed to attend one of the three trainings to further improve our listening and communication skills.

Kathryn has extensive expertise in working with challenging students. Thanks to the assistance of her colleagues she successfully implemented several frameworks into education, which are aimed at demanding students and facilitating their studies. In addition, Kathryn delivers trainings to teachers and educational authorities and provides them with useful hints on how to approach students effectively.



The training consisted of many exercises focused at motivational and listening skills. Within one day, SLAs had improved their ability to deal with challenging situations, and learned how to motivate their students to make a success of their studies. We tried to develop our empathy through various role-plays and group exercises such as the observer-listener-speaker exercise.

After the demanding training all of us had the chance to reflect on our experience over a much-needed cup of tea.

Coffee morning in the LL...

...reveals new changes



Shortly before the Easter break, the SLA staff team invited SLAs over to the Learning Lounge to have an informal chat about the challenges and pleasant moments, which surely everyone of us faced during this academic year. The meeting was very fruitful as we shared our tips on how we approach students and deal with various obstacles.



To our surprise, we found that there are a few organisational changes to the scheme. The SLA unit will become a sub-division of the Library and Student Support (LSS). However, it was a perfect opportunity to say farewell to our Learning Lounge in the basement of the Sheppard Library, since we might be moving back to the Williams building. (Watch this space!)



Words of Wisdom- EXAM TIPS!

An open letter to students

Hi guys,
From my experience I know that exams are probably one of the most frightening factors in our University experience. However, you do not have to worry as I will try to help you to do well and score high grades.

During the exam preparation period, it is important to organise your notes and sort out essential information. I personally interact with materials provided during the year including text books, journal articles and lecture slides.

In addition to that, many module leaders upload past exam papers onto [MyUniHub](#), which gives useful insights into how to answer a question in an effective way.

It is also good to build up writing speed and provide concise answers. I personally consider time management as the most crucial determinant of success. Being able to equally allocate my revision over a greater period of time will eliminate the stress situations.

If you feel that you are not the best at organising your time, arrange revision sessions with your friends. This will not only broaden up your knowledge and help you to see the topic from different perspectives, but it will also push you forward in times when you are losing hope.

Lastly, do not be afraid of exams, they can be as straight-forward as any other assignment. While writing exams, you are not required to reference all your statements since you have to show a broader knowledge. For some students, this is sometimes a lot easier compared to academic paper in which in-depth research is vital.

I hope you will have fun studying and I wish you all good luck.

Barbara

Exam strategy*

- Read the whole exam paper carefully*
- Follow all instructions*
- Plan time so that I can check through my answers*
- Know what writing style is appropriate*
- Ask myself what the examiner is looking for and get to the point quickly*
- Use all available time*

* From Stella Cottrell's *The Study Skills Handbook*, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2008

Fine Art Events Day Magazine Project

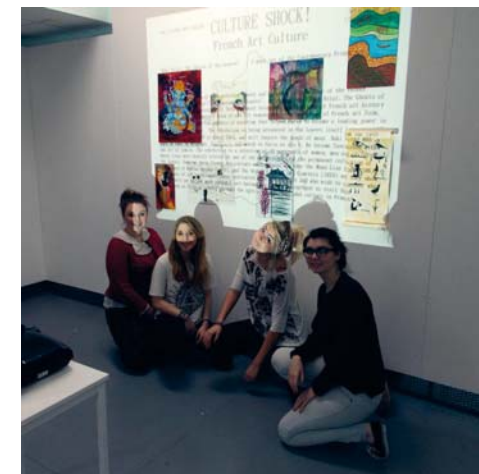
Supported by Fine Art SLA Ilze Babra

Events Day is the largest yearly Fine Art event at the Middlesex University, which is mostly organised by students themselves. It is a great opportunity for Fine Art students of all years to curate shows, exhibit artworks and try out ambitious projects. This year as well, on the 19th of February, the Grove building was buzzing with performances, exhibitions, collaborations and other events under a common slogan 'Sky is the limit!'

For the past four years, an assignment for the 1st year Fine Art students, the Magazine Project, also benefits from the huge activity of the Events Day. This year six experimental art magazines were launched.



BA Fine Art tutors Nic Sandiland (1st from left), Sewart Martin (3rd from left), and student Damien Mas enjoying the magazines



'Culture Shock' magazine team



Coordinator of the Events Day, tutor Judith Cowan 'reading' a 'page' from the 'UNTitled' magazine



BA Fine Art 1st year students presenting the 'Front Cover' magazine



Fine Art SLA Ilze Babra looks with interest at a 'kangaroo'

I was really pleased that the Fine Art tutor Stewart Martin found me useful and gave me a chance to gain more experience working with my peers. The magazines were all a huge success, and this year they really stood out with amazing performances and lots of other interesting 'reading materials'.



It's an art cake!