



MDX SLA

**Student Learning Assistant
Newsletter *Winter 2017/18***

Welcome

To the 2017/18 Winter Edition of Our SLA Newsletter

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PAL Manager's Note

Welcome to the Winter edition of your favourite newsletter produced by SLAs for SLAs and associates!

Since our main training events, we have all been engrossed in our calling of supporting student learning and this edition sums up our journey so far, this academic year.

Senior SLA, Tahminaz and the editorial crew have introduced the "Out and About" section (pg. 5-9) to capture interesting projects SLAs are involved in beyond the classroom – a must read!

Returning SLAs would have been taken aback at some of the changes instituted within the SLA scheme. Magda's **Black is the new Black** article on page 3 will most certainly shed some illuminating light on the reasoning behind the new T-shirts and why all SLAs should wear them with pride.

Finally, check out the pics from the Xmas party on page 11. It was an evening of great fun and networking! However all is not lost if you missed the party - we still have the SLA Awards event to look forward to in May.

Thanks to all the contributors and the editorial team and a big THANK YOU! to all SLAs for the worthy course that you have embarked on this year!

Happy reading!

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Editor's Note

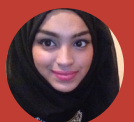
Thank you to all my colleagues who took time out of their busy schedules to help bring the newsletter to life. My vision for this edition was "SLA AWARENESS & SUCCESS" to showcase the wonderful work we do both inside and out of the university.

This is a scheme that has been recognised and adored throughout the university, endorsing the values in our student charter. I could not think of a better way of celebrating our successes and experiences than by sharing it with you all.

Read, enjoy and share.

Tahminaz Chowdhury

TC644@live.mdx.ac.uk
Senior SLA & SLA Criminal Law



Black is the new Black

The SLA Scheme got a makeover.

Our branding evolved over the years and last summer we have moved on from the teal blue/green T-shirts and pens to the slick black, with white text plus hints of red, T-shirts and pens. SLAs also got new stylish folders featuring the revamped SLA figure. The SLA figure initially designed by one of our past SLAs Adam McCarthy for the SLA Yearbook in 2015, developed by the SLA team a year after, now wears the new colours.



SLAs have to wear the T-shirts at MDX fairs, branded events and while they facilitate learning. However, the Teal blue/green T-Shirts were like marmite. While no one could agree as to which colour it was, some loved it while others hated it.

So why did we change?

MDX has very specific branding guidelines and these were supposed to be imposed on the SLA department from the next academic year.



The thinking behind the design

- 1.** We wanted the T-shirts to be visible but not too loud.
- 2.** We wanted the branding to be professional but with a casual vibe.
- 3.** We also wanted it to represent what SLAs do, which is learning facilitation (**An SLA's favourite 'F' word**).

So, keep wearing your T-Shirts and using our catch phrases, which although in new colours, are still as follow:

Succeed! Lead! Achieve!



Magda Durka
PAL Assistant

SLA TRAINING & OUR INSIGHTS

As many of you may or may not know when SLAs are first appointed they must undergo initial training. This is a compulsory requirement of being an SLA and is used to maintain the quality of support provided by the SLA's throughout the university.

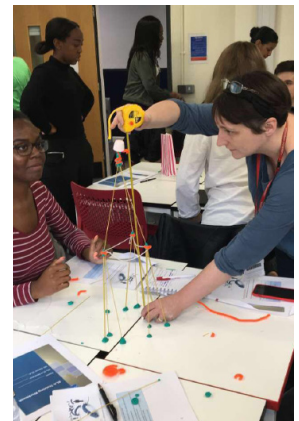
Two of our SLA's Cora and Paul share the highlights of the training.



"The structure of the training combined formal activities with elements of fun. One of the highlights of the training was the Play-doh modelling activity. The reasoning behind was meant to help us open more easily towards other SLAs who were in the room by using our creativity, a valuable feature of the SLA job position. All of the activities had a strong practical sense which provoked us to think, to bond with the others, to discover the depths and responsibilities of the role, respectively making us leave

that comfort zone and put ourselves there courageously in front of the others.

For me, the training was vital because it prepares us for the real-life experience through the simulation of the activities. SLAs will know how to react and handle challenging contexts at their very best."



"The training was far more in depth than I could have imagined, and the activities were designed to help us prepare effectively for the SLA role. I found that it covered a range of different skills that SLAs need including, approaching the role with passion and enthusiasm."



Cora-Paula Vacura
SLA Interpreting & Translation

Paul Ashley Hudson
SLA International Politics



OUT AND ABOUT

Birmingham Skills Show



Students and Lecturers from the team representing Middlesex University at the Birmingham skills show

What is the Birmingham Skills show?

In November, I had the opportunity as an SLA to represent the university in the Birmingham Skills Show event. The Skills show is a big event for career opportunities as well-known companies are on hand to offer advice and information about work experience and internships.

Lecturers and SLAs organised and ran the chemistry stand where we challenged the public to try and build chemical molecules in the shortest time!

Different departments held an assortment of activities such as:

- The virtual reality roller-coaster (created by MDX students)
- taking selfies with the MDX robot and playing Super Mario using your body via motion sensing.

Being a part of the skills how was amazing and I would be happy to represent MDX again!



Super Mario games using the motion detection



Students taking picture with the Selfie robot



Virtual Reality Roller coaster developed by the engineering department

How has the SLA Scheme helped?

Being an SLA for two years in a row has greatly influenced my character. Guiding foundation and first year students through their first experience at the university is extremely rewarding as this can be one of the most challenging times for a student. My confidence and approach to students develops more as I carry out this role. The skills obtained are unlimited with communication and presentation to name a few.

I believe that an SLA fills the gap between students and lecturers and is a programme that could be adopted at other universities as well. I am proud to be an SLA!

Naseem Ahmed
SLA Foundation Chemistry



OUT AND ABOUT

European Law Students Association (ELSA)



The European Law Students' Association
MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

What is your society about?

ELSA is the largest independent organisation for law students with branches at universities all over Europe. At ELSA MDX we aim to give our members the chance to interact with students and professionals from Europe to create awareness for cultural diversity.

How the SLA Scheme helped?

All SLAs will probably agree that the SLA scheme has given us all a fantastic opportunity to contribute and support other students in their studies. However, sometimes I think we forget how much it has also given us, by way of developing our own skills, in terms of **communication** and **organisational skills**. These skills, which I believe the SLA scheme has had a big impact on developing for everyone, are crucial skills to have in all the different roles you will have in life. I have taken great advantage of these skills in my role as president of the ELSA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Legal 50 Quiz

"5 different Legal topics, 50 questions and the chance to win a 3-course meal at an inn of court"



Moo-bate

"Bringing mooting and debating together, the moo-bate is an excellent opportunity to explore the legal and moral aspects of the hottest topic of them all... Brexit! So if you would like to enhance your public speaking skills contact me on the email below!"

nh581@live.mdx.ac.uk

SIGN UP **HERE**

£1 Registration fee
(goes towards prizes)



Nina Bredvold

President of ELSA & SLA EU Law

OUT AND ABOUT

People & Planet



What is the society about?

- Founded in 1969
- largest student-led activist network (over 50 university groups) to end world poverty and protect the environment.
- At Middlesex, our society is currently working on a more specific goal and that is to action against sweatshop labour in the electronics industries.

How does it affect us?

Universities have massive budgets for buying ICT equipment and spend millions of pounds every single year on computers and other electronic from major brands like: DELL, APPLE AND HP. These subcontract companies in the Global South that mine goods, manufacture components and put together the final products.

Don't these companies create jobs?

Although they do create jobs the workers are likely to

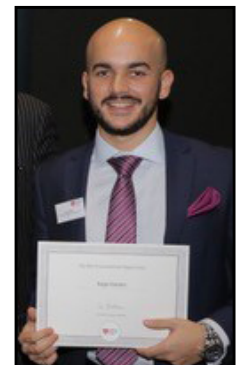
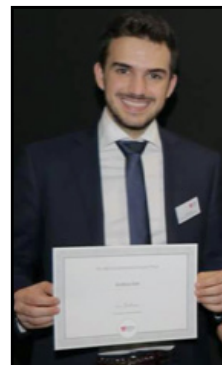
1. Spend excessively long hours in DANGEROUS FACTORIES.
2. Exposed to TOXIC CHEMICALS that pollute the environment

3. Experiencing violence and modern slavery

Our plan to reverse this is to lobby the university to; join the Electronics Watch, an independent monitoring organisation, who will ultimately gather collective purchasing power (from as many universities as possible) to change the circumstances of these workers.

How has the SLA Scheme helped?

Our experience working as SLAs has helped us in many ways, in the work that we do in the society.



- **Communications skills and confidence** when it comes to public speaking has helped us engaging with students to create awareness and make them understand these issues at its importance.
- **Organisational skills** developed while being an active part of the SLA scheme has had a great contribution to planning and managing projects at People & Planet.



Andrea Enti

Senior SLA
SLA Business Management



Tiago Tavaréz

SLA Business Management

OUT AND ABOUT

Mini Student Success Fest



What is the SSF?

The Mini SSF is a festival that allows all students from different walks of life to come together engage with others and learn all about how to succeed in University by taking advantage of the facilities we have at the University.

How has the SLA Scheme helped?

By interacting with different people, I have begun to appreciate the diverse backgrounds and cultures making it easier to communicate more effectively. In my experience, it can be uneasy to just walk up to someone you do not know and engage in conversation especially when they don't know your intentions. Working as a Senior SLA has further enhanced my communication skills and enabled me to review my approach to conversations. I have found that learning together in a group can be fun plus, "2 heads are better than one." However, your good intentions need to be clearly articulated.



STUDY HUB



What is the study hub?

At the StudyHub, SLAs collaborate with the Learning Enhancement Team (LET) to aid students with their written course work. The LET team provides feedback on academic writing - grammar, punctuation and structure. Working at the StudyHub, gives SLAs an opportunity to work with students outside of the classroom arrangements. They build their time management, team work, leadership and communication skills, to name a few.

How has the SLA Scheme helped?

As a Senior SLA, the StudyHub and staff engagement project has given me an opportunity to learn and develop my skills. I work with a team of 10 SLA's and we meet regularly with the LET Coordinators to improve the service and provide all students with the best possible experience. We suggest ideas for improvement and reflect on these. The role has given me a chance to enhance my leadership, problem solving and communication skills as I need to ensure the standard of service we provide are maintained.



Mukai Mhlanga

Senior SLA
SLA Banking & Finance

Zainab Jivraj

Senior SLA Science & Technology



OUT AND ABOUT

TECHgirls



What is your society about?

The main agenda for TECHgirls is to create a platform where young women can gain skills and knowledge about tech industry. Within the society, we started collaboration with CodeFirst:Girls social enterprise that help with organizing coding courses.

What have you been upto?

As an ambassador for Code First: Girls I was able to bring the 8-weeks-long basic coding courses to our University. The same courses are run in Cambridge, UCL, Imperial College, King's College and many more. During the course the participants learn how to use html, CSS and JavaScript and at the end each of us build her own website from scratch!

How has the SLA Scheme helped?

The SLA Scheme has allowed me to meet my colleague and partner of the TECHgirls society Oliwia (*SLA Business with Foundation year*) who has helped me with all the events. I got to know her from weekly lab sessions when I was her SLA. Being an SLA is an amazing adventure, as it gives you an opportunity to meet fantastic people who have similar interest as you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CODEFIRST:Girls
@ MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

TECHgirls society in collaboration with Code First: Girls is offering a free, coding course at Middlesex University this year for female students who want to be part of the digital revolution.

LET'S CODE GIRLS!

During the 7 week course which consists of 2h session per week, we will be teaching coding for absolute beginners: HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

All material for these courses are provided by Code First: Girls. All you need is to bring is your own laptop!

5:30PM-7:30PM | TUESDAYS

Sessions will start 13th February 2018.
To sign up, click on the link in the description above.

Everyone is welcome - whether you know a thing about coding or you know nothing at all!



Patrycja Waszkiewicz

President of TECHgirls & Senior SLA
SLA Business Management

SIGN UP HERE

SCROLL DOWN FOR MDX APPLICATIONS

LOOKING AHEAD

SLA App

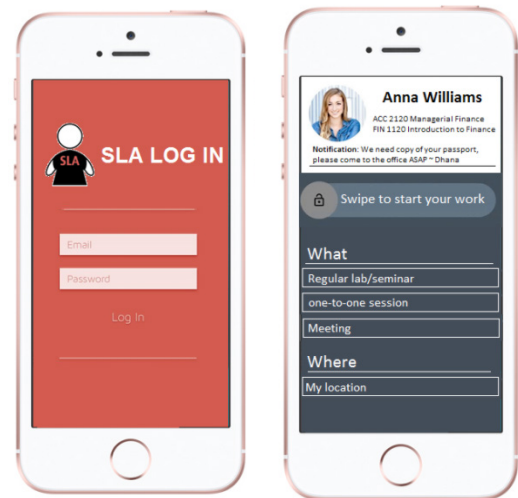
To keep up with technology and the vast number of SLA's I have recently pitched the SLAapp to the Peer Assisted Learning Team.

The app will make SLA job more efficient, it will include features like:

1. Online sign in
2. Extra hour job opportunities
3. Live chat with PAL/Senior SLA's

These are only a few of the ideas that we've come up with which will enable a more faster and smoother communication process rather than the conventional emails!

To the Right you'll find a sample of what the app will potentially look like and our first ideas.



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- If you are interested in the coding courses for the beginners
- you have experience in app development
- or you have any suggestions feel free to contact me! (Pw410@live.mdx.ac.uk).

Have you got interesting proposals for the PAL Team or content for the newsletter?"

Contact Senior SLA Tahminaz on TC644@live.mdx.ac.uk



Patrycja Waszkiewicz

President of TECHgirls & Senior SLA
SLA Business Management

XMAS PARTY

Organising and delivering the SLA Christmas Party 2017 was one of the most rewarding yet stressful things I have ever undertaken. Liaising with the many different departments around the university meant that I was extremely busy in the run up to December. But thanks to the wonderful team of SLAs, Senior SLAs and Middlesex University staff, we were able to pull off a great party! Highlights include the quiz, karaoke and Simbo doing the limbo!

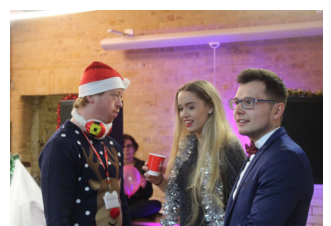
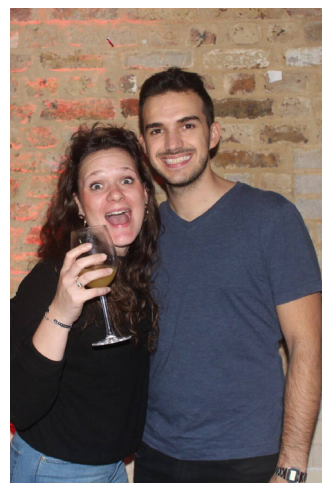
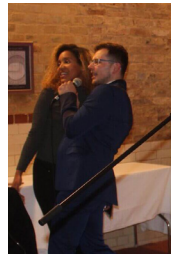
I learnt a great deal about events management and how to manage a team as well as being able to cope when things go wrong.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the awards ceremony in May!"



Thomas McLennan
Senior SLA & SLA Sports

XMAS PARTY



Thomas McLennan
Senior SLA & SLA Sports



DO NOT FORGET!

- Use your Mahara reflections
- Use effective communication skills
- Refer students to other student support services
- SLAs facilitate and do not teach
- SLAs are not counsellors
- SLAs are students and should keep on top of their workload
- SLAs work collaboratively with academics
- SLAs are the best!