

# Guidance

for student coaches in the academic year 2020-2021



**This document is a source of inspiration; it is up to the degree programmes to determine exactly what role the student coach will play.**

**To receive updates on buddy groups, you can register for the Buddy Groups, Study Career Counselling and Student Coaches environment in Teams with the code: [re1idwh](#)**

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## Colophon

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## 1. Introduction

This guidance for schools outlines the role of a student coach, so that degree programmes are aware of what this role entails. Memo 20200604MEM (Proposal for buddy groups in addition to community building activities for 2020-2021 academic year) states that degree programmes independently decide how to supervise the buddy group. The terminology in this document is as follows: the buddy group is made up of first-year students who are buddies, supervised by a student coach (senior student in higher education) and a study career counsellor.

The memo describes the buddy groups as a ‘socialising group’ during online teaching and education. This guidance forms a connection between buddy groups and study career counselling. This connection is made possible by the student coach, whose supervision of the buddy groups helps first-year students to get settled at Saxion and have their practical questions answered. It also helps to create a sense of community between students and their degree programme. As a result, this guidance goes beyond simply socialising (digital lunches).

### How does this guidance relate to other documents?

About student coaches		About SCCs	
<p><b>Best practices for student coaches</b> Document for student coaches, explaining their role on the basis of the student coach guidance document.</p>	<p><b>Guidance for student coaches</b> Document for schools and degree programmes, with ideas on what the role of student coach entails.</p>	<p><b>Guidance for first-year student SCCs</b> Document for schools and degree programmes, with ideas on what the SCC's role in building buddy group communities entails.</p>	<p><b>Guidance for senior student SCCs</b> Document for schools and degree programmes, with ideas for building community among senior students.</p>

## 2. The student coach's role

### Who is a student coach?

A student coach is a senior student who supports buddy groups of first-year students. In this role, he/she strengthens a sense of community among first-year students, with the degree programme, and with Saxion. They do this by holding weekly meetings with the buddy group, which are an opportunity to get to know each other as well as the degree programme, Saxion, and the city. This might entail organising various activities with the buddy group, with the emphasis on fun, or using various working methods at the meetings. In addition, student coaches create space for students to ask questions and to discuss the subjects and/or issues they encounter when they begin their degree programme at Saxion.

### What are a student coach's tasks?

The student coach supervises first-year students. His or her tasks involve:

- Familiarisation with Saxion and higher education environment, both physically and online;
- Giving examples from your own experience;
- Using working methods and various activities to strengthen a sense of community among students and within the degree programme;
- Encouraging teamwork among students by getting them to make agreements with one another;
- Monitoring student attendance at the buddy group meetings and involving the SCC if there are concerns;
- Being a point of contact for students.

Practical matters regarding the above tasks:

- The student coach supervises the buddy group once a week;
- The student coach has time to prepare these meetings.
- The student coach discusses the content of meetings with the group's study career counsellor to ensure that separate content builds on each other and there is no unintentional overlap.

### How can Saxion's Dienst Onderwijs & Student (OSS) support student coaches?

- A document of best practices for student coaches, with an appendix describing working methods;
- If necessary, student coaches can use the Blackboard 'SkillsCoach' environment. This Blackboard environment already exists and is where student coaches can find all the information and tools relating to study skills in particular.
  - If student coaches want to access this Blackboard environment, please see: [skillscoach.ssc@saxion.nl](mailto:skillscoach.ssc@saxion.nl)

### How do a student coach and a buddy group work together?

The student coach supervises the buddy group using a student coaching programme provided by the degree programme. This programme may focus on the topics mentioned in the student coach's tasks. If the degree programme has chosen not to provide a programme, the student coach can use the activities and working methods mentioned in appendix I.

You tell students in your buddy group that they are also responsible for:

- The attendance of fellow students;
- Proactive contributions from fellow students;

- His or her own development.

The student coach and participants in the buddy group are equal. This means that a student coach doesn't take on students' responsibilities but simply records them for use during the discussions with the study career counsellor, if necessary. He or she joins in with the activities and answers any questions students may have.

### How do a student coach and a study career counsellor work together?

The following table lists the requirements for community building and the general objectives of a buddy group. These are important for community building. It also clearly sets out the tasks of the student coach and the study career counsellor.

Student coach	Study career counsellor
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#### Requirements and aims

<p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make clear the purpose of the buddy group</li> <li>• introducing basic rules</li> <li>• make agreements with regard to co-operation, behaviour, and attendance clear</li> </ul> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students get to know and trust each other</li> <li>• Students bond with each other and the programme</li> <li>• Students can find their way around Saxion and higher education, both physically and online</li> <li>• Saxion is aware of students' welfare</li> <li>• Students feel a sense of responsibility for each other</li> <li>• Students learn from each other's experiences</li> </ul>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saxion is aware of students' welfare</li> <li>• Students feel a sense of responsibility for each other</li> <li>• Students value the group, because they learn through group reflection</li> <li>• Students learn from each other's experiences</li> </ul> <p><i>In the absence of the student coach, the study career counsellor can implement the requirements and aims described for the student coach.</i></p>
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#### Tasks involved in building community among students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using working methods to strengthen a sense of community among students and with the degree programme</li> <li>• Familiarisation with Saxion and higher education environment, both physically and online</li> <li>• Monitoring student attendance at the buddy group meetings and involving the SCC if there are concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usual tasks of a study career counsellor, such as professional and personal development and conducting interviews on binding study advice (BSA).</li> <li>• Referring students on to OSS when extra support is needed</li> </ul> <p><i>In the absence of the student coach, the study career counsellor can implement the requirements and aims described for the student coach.</i></p>
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#### Coordinating content of meetings

<p>It is advisable for the degree programme to provide the student coach with a student coach programme tailored to the study career counselling programme in the individual degree programmes. The student coach can then co-operate with the SCC by tailoring the content of the meetings to the SCC meetings. The student coach will tailor his meetings to those of the SCC by drawing on students' experiences during their time with the SCC or in the degree programme to start</p>
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a conversation in the buddy group. In order to do this, the student coach should regularly confer with the SCC about the meetings, student attendance, and possible concerns about particular students.

### **What is the student coach's remit?**

- The support provided by student coaches does not extend to assisting students with personal issues which affect their studies.
- Student coaches work with first-year students in buddy groups, and do not get involved in one-to-one conversations with students. Support is only provided within the buddy group setting.
- Student coaches refer students to the study career counsellor if they identify a need for extra support with particular issues; they do not refer cases to third parties. Only the SCCs do this.
- Whilst student coaches are not responsible for teaching students particular competences and/or skills, they may contribute to this by employing particular working methods and through their conversations with students.

### **Practical matters to discuss with the degree programme**

- What remuneration does the senior student receive for being a student coach? HRM will provide more information.
- How much time does a student coach need in order to supervise a buddy group? Considering that buddy groups will require one hour of supervision per week, plus time for preparing, as well as meetings with the study career counsellor and peer reviews, 0.1 FTE per week for two buddy groups is a realistic estimate. The school determines the exact number of FTE per student coach.
- How do we develop a student coach programme for the degree programme? The student coach programme for the first three weeks of the new academic year should be developed before the summer holiday and link up with the study career counselling programme. There is also written guidance for study career counsellors of first-year students which offers some practical tips for developing this programme. The student coach programme gives the student coach some ideas and helps the study career counsellor and student coach to support each other and avoid unintentional overlap.
- What happens if not enough student coaches are recruited before the summer? Given the short period available before the summer holiday, send a reminder to students after summer. It's better to start working on buddy groups later than not at all. You could also consider contacting alumni. If there are still too few student coaches, ask the school what to do.
- If necessary, amend the document 'Best practices for student coaches' so that it reflects the reality within the degree programme and so that student coaches have access to the correct information.

## **3. Tips for the student coach**

### **Creating Chats in Teams**

*The student coach does this as soon as he or she knows which students he or she is going to supervise*

- The student coach creates a chat in Teams for his or her buddy group.
  - Open Teams and select 'Chat' on the left-hand side.
  - In the search bar at the top left, click on the pencil icon labelled 'New chat'.
  - Name the chat and add students from the buddy group.

### **Practical aspects of online meetings**

- Rules

- The student coach leads the online meeting and is a moderator.
- The student coach encourages students to turn on their microphone during the meeting (unless this causes disruption). To create a spirit of community, it is important for the conversation to be natural and unforced.
- The student coach makes students aware that what is discussed in the group stays in the group. The student coach makes an agreement on this. This is a prelude to turning your buddy group into a safe, trusted space.
- The student coach initiates the conversation with students about their responsibility as a participant in the buddy group. This means things like: attend, be on time, listen and ask questions, respect one another and take part (see also *How do you work together with a buddy group?*)
- Communication channel
  - Meetings take place via online video calls, in Teams chats.
  - The student coach decides with the group which channel they want to use to communicate outside meetings, e.g. via a WhatsApp group, Teams (chat) or e-mail.
  - The student coach decides with the group where documentation (such as minutes) will be kept for the group. Tip: files can be stored in the Teams chat.
- Video, audio and network (applies to the student coach and students)
  - The student coach encourages students to turn on their camera during the meeting. To bond with each other, it is important that students and student coach can see each other.
  - The student coach suggests the following:
    - Make sure backgrounds aren't distracting - avoid sitting with your back to strong sunlights or other strong light sources.
    - Try to reduce background noise by holding the meeting in a calm, quiet space; shut the window if necessary;
    - Use a headset (or earpieces with a microphone);
    - Try to find a place with good WiFi connection.

## Meetings

### *Structuring meetings*

- The student coach uses the student coach programme as much as possible – this contains components for each meeting. Introduce the component at the beginning of the meeting, so that students are clear about what's going to be discussed.
- Although there's a set programme, it's important to give students time to provide their input as well. What do they want to discuss? Which questions do they have for the student coach or the group?
- The student coach creates a varied homework assignment (which doesn't have to be big) for each meeting. The student coach alternates between individual assignments and assignments done in pairs. This will ensure that students are constantly involved in the buddy group, including outside meetings. The homework assignment can be anything: thinking of a name for the group, talking about each other's experiences, creating a vlog about their favourite hobby, or sharing something with the group.

### *If students fail to attend*

- If there is no contact with a student, a student is not taking part in the buddy group or meetings, or a student cancels at the last minute,
  - The student coach asks the buddy group: What should we do in this situation? Ask whether the agreements about this are clear. Are there agreements in place about who takes the initiative for making contact, and the communication method?
  - For example, the student coach could ask one of the attendees to reach out to students who fail to attend ('we miss you', for instance). Ideally, this should be done online in an online environment in which all students in the buddy group can keep track of the exchanges.

- This is important, because a buddy group is the sum of its parts. So, if one member is absent, this affects the whole buddy group.
- If the student fails to attend twice in a row without giving reasons, the student coach discusses this with the study career counsellor or sends an e-mail to the study career counsellor to inform them of the student's absence.
- If the student has been absent multiple times but has given a valid reason for this, ask the buddy group to involve that student.
  - If the student coach feels there's something strange going on, despite the valid reasons, he or she discusses this with the study career counsellor. The student coach should trust their gut instincts on this.

#### *Technical issues*

- If there are technical issues, you'll have to improvise. The student coach should participate in the buddy group how they want to proceed.
- It can take a while to find a solution... But the best ideas are usually the ones you have when you're forced to get creative!

#### *Reflection and evaluation*

- The student coach uses fun activities and working methods to help students reflect, but avoids 'schoolish' activities like reflective writing.
- The student coach asks questions about the content of the meeting and evaluates this.
- The student coach asks questions about what the student has learned and what they're going to do with this knowledge.
- The student coach encourages students to write down their evaluations and reflections (it doesn't have to be long).
- The student coach invites students to share their observations, concerns or reflections to help participants at an individual and group level. As others are encouraged to express their own personal experiences.
- Reflection is a group activity; students learn by hearing about others' experiences.

#### *Make it personal*

- The student coach makes it personal right from the beginning, but waits until participants in the buddy group feel safe and trust each other before going into any real depth.
- The student coach invites participants to share but doesn't force them to give an answer, so as to give students the freedom to share what they're comfortable with. However, the student coach can ask questions to encourage the participant to share their thoughts on what they do and don't like.
- Online teaching is personal from the word go, as students are participating from home. The student coach can use various working methods to do this.
- The student coach explains what's going to happen (by referring to the programme, for instance), and do this for each assignment, so that students can prepare.
- The student coach explains the objective of learning based on one's personal situation.

### **How does a student coach supervise a buddy group?**

- The student coach ensures interaction in the group by taking an active attitude, sets a good example to the group, responds enthusiastically and acts on spontaneous input. The student coach doesn't need to follow the programme to the letter.



- If a student is visibly happy, shocked, or looking vacantly at the screen, the student coach asks them what emotions they are feeling. The student coach engages with the student and enters into dialogue.
- The student coach invites students to share their experiences with the group.
- The student coach addresses students by asking them specific questions, asking different people questions so that everyone gets a chance to speak. If somebody is particularly quiet, the student coach tries to invite them to share their thoughts.
- The student coach asks questions about the pace and clarity of assignments.
- The student coach makes participants aware of their individual responsibility: establishing online group unity relies on students actively participating in a buddy group.
- The student coach keeps the pace of the meeting fast by setting time pressure for assignments; this requires students to be creative when solving the assignment.
- The student coach steps back from an ongoing conversation, discussion or assignment, so that the students can sort it out themselves – student coaches don't need to control or lead everything.

*Students confide in their student coach and buddy group*

- If students talk about their personal problems in confidence and don't want this information to be shared with the study career counsellor, what should the student coach do?
  - The student coach is honest about his or her role: the student coach discusses students' attendance with the study career counsellor and refers students to the counsellor if they have any problems.
  - The student coach says that it would be wise for students to share this information with the study career counsellor, as they can provide better support to the student.

## 4. To dos for the first weeks

Tasks per week for student coaches, in chronological order

Meeting 1 (initial introduction)	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
<p><i>For first meeting:</i> Get to know the study career counsellor and agree how you're going to supervise students</p> <p>Receive names of students</p> <p>Create a group chat in Teams for buddy groups</p> <p><i>During first meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain the role of the student coach</li> <li>- Explain the basic rules</li> <li>- Get to know each other</li> <li>- Introduce higher education/study programme</li> <li>- Suggest dates for the meetings over the coming weeks (if these haven't already been timetabled)</li> </ul>	<p>Check the basic rules and add students' responsibilities to them.</p> <p>Use working methods that help students get to know one another better.</p> <p>Make sure students have the opportunity to ask questions about timetables, MySaxion, etc.</p>	<p>Use working methods that help students get to know one another better.</p> <p>Make sure students have the opportunity to ask questions about timetables, MySaxion, etc.</p>	<p>Use working methods that help students get to know one another better.</p> <p>Make sure students have the opportunity to ask questions about timetables, MySaxion, etc.</p>

## Appendix I Working methods for community building

This appendix lists the various working methods you can use to build community and help students get to know one another. There is information on the objective of each working method, what the student coach needs, how the working method can be put into practice and what the student coach's role is. These are only ideas to inspire you. The working methods are listed in no particular order, so there is no logic to how they have been arranged. Of course, there are many variations of the examples given – they're simply to inspire you and help you get off to a good start.

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### Storytelling

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Using stories to reach an objective and involve students. Stories are an ideal way to first make contact with people, to engage them, to entice them, to offer clarity and meaning, to make fans or to foster community spirit. Stories attract us, they make intangible things tangible, can be shared with others and add meaning to life events. Stories are an effective communication method: they get people engaged and deliver results.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Everyone has a story to tell, i.e. their experiences of starting higher education.</p> <p>What happened before that? What preliminary study has someone completed? Was it an obvious choice to study in higher education? Did you already know right away what study programme you wanted to do? Who helped you choose? What issues did you face progressing to higher education?</p> <p>Hearing other people's different experiences should help students to feel less alone in their own experiences. It can be very helpful to hear that other students were faced with obstacles but managed to overcome them.</p> <p>Ask the students to tell their story!</p> <p><b>A storyteller's tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use personal experiences, events and memories.</li> <li>- And use humour!</li> <li>- Think about the core of your message and make sure it's structured.</li> </ul>

- Bring the story to life and show something. Visualise – use images and clips!
- Think in terms of 'what if'.

You could present your speculations on this during one of the meetings.

**Student coach's role**

- You should participate as well!
- Ask questions: Why? Could you provide an example? Who identifies with this? Etc.

## True or false?

**Purpose**

Using personal statements to get to know one another.

**Materials**

- Creativity.
- Kahoot
- Preparation

**How?**

Each student comes up with two to three statements that are true or false. The student sends these to the student coach. The student coach uses them to create a kahoot, which can be played during the meeting. Students can get to know one another. You can also use multiple-choice questions or combined versions.

**Student coach's role**

- Gather the statements
- Use the statements to create a kahoot

## Brainstorming

**Purpose**

Brainstorm about how you can create a community feeling. What would help to create a community with fellow students?

**Materials**

- Creativity.

**How?**

Brainstorming can take many forms, such as:

- with the entire group
- in small groups
- in pairs
- individually, by asking students to make a brief note

Important: Share all the brainwaves with the group as a whole and together pick some fun ideas.

**Student coach's role**

- Explain the assignment
- Form groups or pairs
- Keep an eye on the time

- In the event of feedback: Oversee who may say what

## Escape room

### Purpose

Fun, engaging activity to get to know each other better and create a community spirit. You may get to know each other in different ways: Who is the initiator? Who enjoys solving problems? Who's the brains and who's the muscle?

### Materials

- Online escape room

### How?

Look for a fun online escape room and make sure everyone can access it. You can do this (physically) behind a computer or ask everyone to log in at home. If you log in at home, make sure everyone can talk to each other in Teams so that you can work together!

Examples of online escape rooms:

- [www.deverlorenherinnering.nl](http://www.deverlorenherinnering.nl) (free, three to ten hours of fun, suitable for groups of nine people; can start, close and resume at any time)
- <https://www.theteambuilding.nl/2020/04/09/online-escape-rooms-spelen/> (several are mentioned: some are free, and some require the payment of a small fee)

### Student coach's role

- Supervise the escape room (make sure everyone can access it and join in)
- And you can join in, too!

## Our first impressions

### Purpose

Getting to know someone based on first impressions: talking about the first impressions and realising they're not always correct.

### Materials

- List of topics
- Preparation

### How?

Each student receives a list with a number of topics, such as: hobby, countryside/city, pets, positive attributes. He or she fills this in for other participants, and then talks about whether this first impression is correct.

### Student coach's role

- Students hand in a list of topics
- Keep an eye on the time
- Initiate and moderate a conversation

## Truths and lies

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Using two truths and a lie to get to know one another. Every student writes two things about themselves that are TRUE and one lie. Everyone then enters into a discussion to find out what is true or false.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pen/paper or mobile phone</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p> <p>The participants are given two minutes to write down their three items. The time given to separate fact from fiction depends on the number of participants.</p>
<p><b>Student coach's role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the game</li> <li>• Supervise the game</li> </ul>

## Photo gallery

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Using photo galleries on people's mobiles to get to know one another.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pen/paper or mobile phone</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p> <p>Check whether everyone has a smartphone.</p> <p>Instruction to participants: 'Go to the photo gallery and pick a photo that says something about you. You can decide which one. Ask everyone to look for a photo. You have one minute to say something about it.' The student gives a sign after every minute, at which point we'll move on to the next person.</p> <p>Variation: Before the meeting, ask everyone to pick three photos and briefly say something about them. It could be several batches of photos that are linked to a certain theme.</p>
<p><b>Student coach's role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the game</li> <li>• Supervise the game</li> </ul>

## Toss a name

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>This game is to help to get to know one another. Depending on how you do it, you can achieve the following: learning each other's names, learning more about one another on a personal level, creating openness, getting to know each other during the game as the group roles become clearer, or learning about people's personal goals within the context of the buddy group.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The online version just needs a bit of concentration!</li> </ul>

**Starting setup:** Ask the participants to sit in a circle.

**Explain:** During this game, you'll all have the opportunity to get know one another better. Everyone has to stay concentrated, otherwise the game won't work.

**Order of the game**

Point to someone on the image and give a description of them; They introduce themselves: My name is <naam>. which point the student coach describes another student. who says: My name is <naam>. The student coach repeats this until everyone has had their turn.

After, the student coach starts a round by calling the name of one of the students. This student then calls the name of another student, etc. Everyone must have a turn – nobody should be left out, and nobody's name should be mentioned twice! The last from the group must then call the student coach by his or her name to complete the round.

If the group enjoys it, add a theme; My name is <naam> And my hobby is <hobby>. Make sure everyone gets to say what their hobby is. Now we'll see who's been paying attention. the student coach starts with <iemands zijn naam> and his or her hobby is <hobby>. The game proceeds as described above, but with an extra theme.

If the group enjoys it, add another theme: such as people's favourite food. If it seems like an appropriate moment; ask deeper questions such as 'what do you want to learn?'

You can do so many rounds this way!

**Differentiation**

Ask who knows everyone's name and record this.

Do the same if you've talked about hobbies.

**Evaluation**

What happened?

Who led the activity?

What are the lessons learnt for the following activity?

**Areas of concern**

You achieve the best results when everyone does their best and concentrates.

**Role of the student coach:**

- Explain the game
- Starting the game

**Pub quiz**

**Purpose**

Fun, engaging activity to get to know each other better and create a community spirit. Who has a 'specialist subject' and what is this? Who is really into it and who's a bit quieter?

**Materials**

- A pub quiz

**How?**

Use an existing pub quiz or make one yourself. You can use the following websites to put a quiz together:

- [Www.quiz-vragen.net](http://Www.quiz-vragen.net)
- [www.quizzo.nl](http://www.quizzo.nl)
- [Www.quizplein.nl](http://Www.quizplein.nl)

Choose an environment you'd like to use for this, such as kahoot, and create the quiz. You can do the quiz during one of your meetings.

**Student coach's role:**

- Make a quiz
- Lead the quiz