
Peer Program

Peer program

What is the Peer Program?

The Peer Program is a project that connects students at Charles University and helps them successfully complete their studies despite mental health challenges that may pose obstacles to their academic journey. The aim of the Peer Program is to ease the academic experience for those who may feel lost in the university environment or are seeking peer support, and to strengthen collegiality among Charles University students.

The cooperation is based on sharing study experiences, active listening, motivational conversations, and emotional support.

Who is the program for?

The peer recipient is a student who is dealing with psychological difficulties during their studies and needs help orienting themselves in the student environment at the university or is looking for motivation and support in a humanly difficult situation.

What, for example, can consultants address with students?

- A student is in a more demanding period of their life and needs additional support.
- Difficulties and insecurity during studies, e.g. problems with planning and managing responsibilities.
- A student is looking for someone to share their difficulties with and who will listen to them.
- Problems in communicating with others or in handling social situations.
- A student's psychological problems make it difficult for them to study.
- Difficulties with learning, concentrating, or struggling with procrastination.

If a student is dealing with any other difficulty not listed here, this does not mean that they cannot participate in the programme. The assessment is up to the programme manager, who may refer the student to another more suitable service.

Who are peer consultants?

Peer consultants are students of the university who are familiar with the study environment and are ready to offer their experience and empathy. They are not experts in the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, or any other related field. Thus, they do not provide psychotherapeutic or other professional counselling services. Peer consultants undergo regular training on various topics and intervention and consult with the programme managers.

How does it work?

After completing the questionnaire (see link below), the programme manager will contact the student and connect them with a suitable peer consultant. The students will agree on a meeting place and time that suits them best (anywhere at Charles University or even outside the university). Then the form and aim of the joint cooperation is determined.

Information:

Due to organizational reasons, the Peer Program currently takes place only in Prague. However, an online option is available, and there are plans to expand the program to Hradec Králové and Plzeň in the future.

You can find the rules of the programme [here](#) .

How to Apply?


Want to become a peer recipient?

Simply fill out the [Registration Form](#) and we will contact you with the next steps.

Want to become a peer consultant?

Fill out this [Registration Form](#) and we'll get in touch with you.

The Peer Program is coordinated by:

	Mgr. Veronika Sláviková Coordinator for students with mental health and other difficulties Program Lead of the Peer Program e-mail: veronika.slavikova@ruk.cuni.cz
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FAQ

Who exactly is a peer consultant?

Peer consultants are students of psychology and other humanities disciplines (such as social work, theology, or adult education). They have joined the program voluntarily, with the aim of supporting fellow students who face mental health or other difficulties—whether in their studies or in personal, relational, or family matters that may affect their academic performance.

The relationship between a peer consultant and a peer recipient is specific, because the peer consultant is not a professional. Therefore, the peer relationship is:

- Not a professional relationship,
- not a friendship,
- a peer consultant is not a crisis intervention specialist, but can accompany the student on their path to seeking professional help in a potential crisis situation,
- a peer consultant does not provide therapeutic or any other expert counseling services.

What does a peer consultant do?

The foundation of the peer relationship is support and the sharing of hope. A peer consultant is a source of support for their matched student during challenging academic and personal periods. As a peer consultant, you can go for walks, visit cafés, meet in study rooms, or even do sports or shared hobbies with your peer recipient. Sometimes, a peer recipient may need someone to accompany them to a doctor's appointment during a period of poor health, or to the university for a difficult exam. All activities depend on the mutual agreement of the peer pair.

Peer consultants receive regular training on various topics (such as basic crisis intervention, setting boundaries in relationships, etc.), take part in peer supervision, and consult with the program coordinator regarding crisis situations.

To join the program, you must:

1. Fill out the application form (below),
2. attend an introductory meeting, where we will discuss expectations, concerns, and explain how the program works,
3. complete a mandatory initial training,
4. after that, you will be matched with a specific peer recipient.

We will guide you through every step of the process, and if you have any questions or uncertainties, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Who can become a peer recipient?

A peer recipient is a student who is experiencing mental health difficulties during their studies and needs help navigating the university environment, or is looking for motivation and support in a challenging situation. It is not a limitation if the student is already receiving psychological or psychotherapeutic care. The Peer Program is specifically designed for the university setting and focuses on topics related to student life. The program is free of charge and there is no limit to the number of meetings a peer pair can have.

Where can I register?

- If you want to become a peer recipient, fill out the [Registration Form](#).
- If you want to become a peer consultant, fill out the [Registration Form](#).

By when do I need to register?

Peer recipients – can join at any time during the semester.

Peer consultants – recruitment (including the mandatory introductory training) takes place at the beginning of the winter semester. If you would like to join the program as a peer consultant during the academic year, please send us an e-mail veronika.slavikova@ruk.cuni.cz, and we will add you to the waiting list for the next academic year.

I am not registered as a student with specific needs. Can I still apply (as a peer recipient)?

Yes. If you are experiencing psychological or other mental health difficulties and you are not officially registered at Charles University as a student with special needs, you can still apply to the program. In the [Registration form](#), please describe what brings you to apply for our program.

However, we do recommend that you officially register as a student with special needs in order to access other benefits offered by Charles University. Learn more about the process [here](#).

I am not a psychology student, can I apply (as a peer consultant)?

Yes. If you are studying a humanities-related field or have started psychotherapeutic training, you can apply to the program. If you're unsure whether your background is suitable for peer consulting, feel free to contact us and we'll look into it together.

Where and when do the meetings take place?

Meetings between the peer pair take place by mutual agreement. They usually happen in public university spaces or cafés (common areas of faculties, Hybernská Campus, Celetná Study Club, etc.). The ideal arrangement is to meet once a week for about one hour, depending on availability.

Is the Peer Program also available online?

Yes. If the peer consultant and the peer recipient agree on meeting online, it is possible. This usually happens due to large distances between the peer pair or when one of them is away abroad for an extended period.

How does the program operate during the summer?

It is up to the individual peer pair to decide. Some peer pairs choose to meet less frequently or continue meeting during the summer. However, most pairs either end or pause their peer partnership and resume it in the winter semester.

Is it possible to have peer consulting recognized as a professional internship as part of my studies?

Yes. If your study program allows it, it's not a problem on our side. Just let us know and we'll provide you with a confirmation.

Can I choose my peer consultant / recipient?

We match peer pairs internally based on the completed registration forms. We do our best to carefully identify common ground in study fields, interests, or other specifics. If, for any reason, the assigned peer consultant or peer recipient does not suit you, it is possible to request a change.