Overview

The Study Buddy Program is run by the Monash Student Association (MSA) with the aim to match like-minded students with each other to form a study group. Study groups may range from 2 to 5 students.

We hope that the Study Buddy Program serves as a platform for peers to meet and connect over shared subjects.

https://msa.monash.edu/services/programs/msa-study-buddy/
History

The Study Buddy Program was conceived and created at end 2018 by a Monash University student Elizabeth Yu, under the MSA Welfare Warrior Leader Program.

With the help of 5 other volunteers

- Sunny Jain
- Beverly Chee
- Kevin Li
- Michelle Lee
- Mish Kumar

We developed Googleform surveys and a Gdrive platform, as well as created marketing and matching templates to run the program.

The program officially launched in 2019 in only two faculties: Civil Engineering and Information technology. Now, the Study Buddy Program has expanded in 2020 to run in fourteen faculties.
Expansion: **14 faculties for 2020!**

In 2019 we only ran the program in two faculties:
- Civil Engineering and
- Information Technology.

Who knows what 2021 will hold?
At a glance:
In Semester 1 2020

- **248 unique individuals** signed-up to join the program
- These individuals sought peer study groups for **708 subjects**
- **189 study groups** were matched
- **Most popular faculties** (based on sign-ups):
  - Information Technology
  - First-year engineering
  - Mechatronics engineering
  - Civil engineering

https://msa.monash.edu/services/programs/msa-study-buddy/
Next up:

Faculty Specific Statistics
First Year Engineering

- **45 Individual students** signed up
- **34 peer study groups** matched
- **60% of students** (i.e. 27 students) purely studied the Bachelor of Engineering

Most popular subjects:
- ENG1002 Engineering design: Cleaner, safer smarter
- ENG1005 Engineering mathematics
- ENG2005 Advanced Engineering Mathematics
- ENG1090 Foundation mathematics

Some Student Goals:
- “Highest possible HD score”
- “I would like to try to get myself and my notes organised for the exams so that I am in the best position possible by the time we get to the exams.”
- “Pass this bastard unit”
Information Technology

- **47 individual students** signed up*
- **34** peer study groups matched
- **24.8%** of students (i.e. 10 students) purely studied the Bachelor of IT (C2000)

*Note: Software engineering sign-ups were grouped together with IT*
Most popular units:

1. **FIT1045** (Algorithms and Programming Fundamentals in Python) / **FIT1047** (Introduction to Computer Systems, Networks and Security)
2. **MAT1830** (Discrete Maths for Computer Science)
3. **FIT2094** (Databases)

Student goals:

- “I want to give my best from now on and be able to achieve the highest grades that I can.”
- “I am starting my first year in IT so I am fairly new to everything and don't have a lot of knowledge. So my goal is to work hard, learn and achieve good grades.”
- “I would like to pass my units and develop enough of an understanding so that I can help others out and explain the problem clearly.”
Civil Engineering

36 sign ups
34 students matched into a study group
21 study groups created

CIV2206 Structural Mechanics most popular subject

“We have a facebook group set up where we help each other out with the lecture material and discuss it which really solidifies our understanding of the unit content.”

“I would have liked more advertising, I only joined in week 7, because I only heard about it then. I would have liked to join earlier”
Pharmacy

11
Student sign ups

5
Study groups created
of 2 - 5 students

PHR1011
Professional practice I
Most popular subjects

PHR1021
How medicines work I

34.6%
3.8%
7.7%
7.7%
7.7%
7.7%
Pharmacy

89% of first-year sign-ups occurred between 31 January 2020 and 9 March 2020

NB. On 31 January 2020, Monash University announced that O'Week activities would be delayed and that classes for the week commencing 9 March 2020 would be conducted online.
Pharmacy

Student Comments

“Since I am not used to the way of teaching, I think a helping hand was much appreciated”. This is especially relevant given the shift to online teaching during 2020.

“My goal is to be able to understand each topic on a deeper level through discussions with a group”

55%

Of the students who signed up to the Pharmacy Faculty had the goal of achieving marks in the Distinction or High Distinction range.
10 students signed up between February 29th (O-Week) and March 10th, 2020 (Week 1)

7 groups were created, with 3-5 members per group based on individual preference

The majority of students (90.9%) is studying Bachelor of Nursing

3 most popular units: 
NUR1111 (1st year unit); credit points: 6
NUR1112 (1st year unit); credit points: 12
NUR2226 (2nd year unit); credit points: 12
Nursing: students’ comments

72% of students aimed to achieve grades in the Distinction-High Distinction range

18% of students had the goal of achieving a pass for all of their classes

54.5% of students prefer individual face-to-face study sessions

Student’s expectations for study groups

“Mutual respect, kind and informative”

“Proactive and enthusiastic, serious about learning and working in teams”

“Balance between productivity and enjoyment”

“A study group that is willing to work together towards the best outcomes”
24 students signed up between February 29th (O-Week) and March 10th, 2020 (Week 1)

51/61 study buddy requests fulfilled

The majority of students (81.7%) is studying Bachelor of Engineering (Honors). All other students are doing an engineering double degree.

3 most popular units:
ECE3141 (3rd year unit); credit points: 6
ECE3073 (3rd year unit); credit points: 6
ECE3161 (3rd year unit); credit points: 6
69% of students aimed to achieve grades in the Distinction-High Distinction range

95% of students aimed for higher than a pass for all of their classes

Preferred study methods varied across students, but most students were open to any study arrangement

Student goals:
“I want to get more hands on experience in the coding and lab part.”
“Gather resources and information as much as possible to understand the concepts”
The majority of students (61.36%) are studying Bachelor of Engineering (Honours). Popular double degrees include Bachelor of Science (15.91%) and Bachelor of Commerce (14.77%).

3 most popular units:
- ECE2131 Electrical circuits
- ECE2071 Computer organisation and programming
- MEC2402 Engineering design 1
53% of students aimed to achieve grades in the Distinction-High Distinction range

59.1% of students preferred any group arrangements

55.6% of students prefer individual face-to-face study sessions

**Student’s expectations for study groups**

“to have fun, do well, develop solid understanding”

“achieve the highest level of grade possible while maintaining physical and mental health, and potentially make more friends”

“improve together and achieve a good result (HD)”

“To gain a holistic understanding of the unit through active search for additional study materials, practice tasks and teamwork.”
30 unique individual sign-ups

24 groups matched

Most Popular Mechanical Engineering Units
- MEC3547 - Systems and Control
- MEC2401 - Dynamics 1
- MEC2403 - Mechanics of materials
Some Student Goals & Expectations

“I am really keen to stay motivated and work hard this year and I think a study group will help me with that. I would really like to see an improvement in my grades this year and definitely retain the knowledge from my units.”

“Be able to help each other in struggling areas”

“I am hoping to gain a strong enough understanding and knowledge in my units that the skills stick with me long after I complete the final exam for said unit”

“[Hoping for] driven and communicative buddies”
Aerospace Engineering

12 unique individual sign-ups

6 groups matched

Most Popular Aerospace units
- MAE2406 Orbital mechanics and spaceflight dynamics (8 sign-ups)
- MAE2401 Aircraft structures 1 (6 sign-ups)

Some student Goals
- "Study hard and help others study too. I will try to my constructive towards people and treat people with respect and dignity."
- "To enjoy the units and find a passion…"
- "... Really want to know the ins and outs of orbital mechanics and air flight and become somewhat proficient at CAD modelling. I am a little slow, to begin with, and find concepts hard to understand, but once the content of the unit clicks with me I can solve problems quite effectively. I want to get to that position for each unit as it doesn't always happen."
Chemical
- 7 unique individual sign-ups
- 5 groups matched

Comments
- Most students aimed for HD
- The sign-ups were largely for 3rd and 4th year units (in contrast to other faculties, where students typically favoured 2nd year subjects)

Materials
- 14 unique individual sign-ups
- 6 groups matched

Student Expectations for study groups
“Very casual, hoping to make some good connections with other people who enjoy materials engineering.”

“I’d like to be a part of a group that will help each other when we need it. It would also be a plus point if we could become friends too!”

“I’d love to have people to discuss content with- to bounce questions off each other and mutually better our understanding.”
Other Engineering

**Resources Engineering**
- All 3 sign-ups were grouped with civil engineering due to overlapping units

**Software Engineering**
- All 12 sign-ups were grouped and matched with the IT faculty due to overlapping units

**Environmental Engineering**
- 3 sign-ups; 2 groups matched
**Student Success Story**

This student was matched to a group of 3 and rated the program as highly effective in aiding their studying.

"[My matched study group] met on zoom a few times to discuss assignments/lecture material/lab content. We have a facebook group set up where we help each other out with the lecture material and discuss it which really solidifies our understanding of the unit content.

We also fill each other in on Q&A sessions with the lecturer if some of us weren’t able to attend. (The unit’s lecturer encourages discussions and believes its the best way to learn so that’s exactly what we’re doing!)"

Source: Study Buddy Student Feedback
Faculty: Engineering - Material
What’s next? Improving the program further.
What students are saying:

**Suggestions for improving the program**

“tips on how to run study sessions”

- “directing students to the resources that can help make study sessions effective (availability, study tools, note-taking, etc.)”

- “link to a guide on Google Docs”

“Mention the use of teams or other social media platforms will really help with the study group communication when the study buddy matched notifications are sent.”

...“maybe have a preference of communication i.e. Facebook / Discord / WhatsApp etc.”

Provide “an induction or orientation session at the beginning with everyone as ice-breaker”

...“the advertisements for the program only showed up in the middle of my semester.”
For Semester 2 2020 and future semesters

We aim to:

- Create study tips and direct students to guides on how to set up meetings and form effective study groups
- Update our forms to include social media preferences and/or social media links
- Advertise the program earlier into the semester
- Merge faculty forms together for greater efficiency (e.g. software engineering & IT; resources engineering & civil etc.)
- Consider expansion into other faculties: such as for select commerce and law subjects

We heard your feedback.
Future timeline

Semester 1 2020
- Expanded Study Buddy program from 2 faculties to include 14 faculties

August 2020
- Develop study tips to send to students

September 2020
- Establish further marketing ties with faculties and student societies

November 2020
- Create formal committee for Study Buddy and consider expanding to other faculties for 2021
Thanks to our Study Buddy volunteers!

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- Jenny Tran
- Valeria Velika
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- Kevin Li

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