



Upward Bound Program
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Upward Bound Peer Coaching Handbook

TRIO Upward Bound Program

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Upward Bound Program
UW-Stevens Point
Student Services Center 210
Stevens Point, WI 54481
www.uwsp.edu/upbound

TRIO
UPWARD BOUND

Introduction to Peer Coaches

Welcome Peer Coach

We are so glad you are helping our Upward Bound family in your new role as a Peer Coach. We hope that this handbook and your training will provide you with everything you need to do a great job. Your role as a Peer Coach is very important to our students. You can make a difference in their academic success and even in their lives overall, by the way you assist them. We hope you enjoy this unique position and find it fulfilling. We're looking forward to working with you.

A Sense of Belonging

Research suggests that coaching programs can improve the academic performance and persistence of students. It has been determined that students who have a sense of belonging are more likely to successfully complete high school, go on to college and be successful. The main goal of the Upward Bound Peer Coaching program is to create the sense of belonging and assist new TRIO Upward Bound students to successfully adapt to the numerous academic, college readiness, social, and personal issues that accompany being a successful student.

What is a Peer Coach?

A Peer Coach is a student guide in Upward Bound for other UB students who are newer in the program. They will provide information, encouragement, skills, perspective, and feedback to the newer students. They are an additional resource to help our newer members succeed!

What are the goals of the Peer Coaching Program?

1. Implement training for Peer Coaches on the topics of:
 - a. Building a Peer Coach Relationship
 - b. Communication
 - c. Qualities of a Coach
 - d. Soft Skills
2. Improve the retention, graduation, and college enrollment rates in TRIO Upward Bound high school students.
3. Provide a support and information system.
4. Increase student involvement in program activities and events.
5. Increase students' awareness and use of Upward Bound resources.
6. Increase students' knowledge and sense of belonging to the UWSP TRIO Upward Bound Program.



7. Encourage student-to-student and student-to-UB staff communication.
8. Provide support and information on college exploration.
9. Encourage UB students to use technology utilized by Upward Bound including, but not limited to:
 - a. Communication tools such as Facebook Messenger, text messaging, and email
 - b. OnTrack
 - c. Canvas
 - d. Tutor.com
 - e. Public Facebook page and private Facebook group, "UWSP UB Pointers"
 - f. UWSP Upward Bound website (www.uwsp.edu/upbound)

Peer Coach Job Description

What are the criteria for being a Peer Coach?

1. Be an active Upward Bound participant by attending required activities.
2. Be in good academic standing with a GPA of 2.5 or higher, but a 3.0 is preferred.
3. Be a high school junior or senior participant of UB (apply as a sophomore or junior).
4. Can commit for one summer and the following academic year (June-June).
5. Can develop positive relationships with students from diverse backgrounds.
6. Have a strong desire to help other students attain academic and career goals.
7. Can maintain an appropriate conduct with other students.
8. Can keep personal information confidential.
9. Adheres to Upward Bound Rules and Policies.

What Regular Duties are Required of a Peer Coach?

1. Meet one on one with assigned students AT LEAST once per week during the Summer Session.
2. Contact assigned students AT LEAST once per month during the school year, after discussing how they want to communicate (e.g. phone call, meet at lunch, meet before school in commons, Facebook video chat, etc.).
3. Record notes when you contact students by using the online (or paper) "PEER COACH CONTACT FORM." This can be found online by going to our website and clicking the "Peer Coaching" page.
4. If a student has any emergency related issues, contact us directly right away via phone call, text, or social media messaging; do not wait to submit the "Peer Coach Contact Form."
5. During the summer, assist residential staff with special projects as needed.



What does a Peer Coach Discuss with Assigned Students?

1. Answer questions they may have about Upward Bound.
2. Help in the development of skills necessary for students to succeed in school.
3. Motivate students toward achieving positive grades and GPAs.
4. Serve as a resource person for the student at their school.
5. Serve as a role model for the student.
6. Provide a caring connection for the student or just be a friend.
7. Encourage use of technology utilized by Upward Bound.
8. Promote program activities and events.

Performance Standards

1. Peer Coaches are required to maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher, but a 3.0 is preferred. Students placed on Probation or Limited Services Status are not eligible to continue coaching. A detailed discussion of the Student Academic Policy can be found at <https://www.uwsp.edu/upbound/Pages/Forms.aspx>.
2. Peer Coaches are expected to perform their regular duties.
3. Peer Coaches must adhere to confidentiality by not talking to others about their assigned students (except staff where necessary).
4. Any occurrence of a disciplinary step can cause elimination from coaching

Support from Upward Bound Staff

The TRIO Upward Bound Program at UW-Stevens Point will support the Coaches in the following ways:

1. Provide Orientation and Training to the Coaches during Summer Session.
2. Provide information, structure and resources to assist the Coaches in developing a plan for the Coaching relationship.
3. Answer questions and help problem-solve when needed.
4. Provide academic, leadership, and social opportunities in which the Coaches and Students can participate.
5. Provide opportunities to check in on a regular basis with an assigned staff advisor.

Effective Practices for Coaches when Communicating with Students

Topic: A Sense of Belonging



It is important that UB students feel welcomed and a part of our community. The Peer Coaches serve as a positive role model to other students newer in the program. Communicating with them regularly helps make them feel “a part of.” Students who feel “a part of” tend to do better overall. It has been determined that students who have a sense of belonging are more likely to successfully complete high school, go on to college and be successful. Peer Coaches have the freedom to connect with their students on a personal level to build that connection.

Topic: Academic Planning

Appropriate classes and class load levels are carefully regulated through early advisement and planning. The Peer Coaches can encourage students to meet with the school counselor and Upward Bound staff throughout the school year. Encourage students to attend all scheduled school day visits with Upward Bound staff.

Topic: Maintaining the Integrity of Grades and GPA

Increased contacts through Peer Coaching throughout the school year can prevent unnecessary course failings (F's). Peer coaching can encourage students to receive tutoring and perhaps help in the formation of study groups among other Upward Bound students taking the same classes. Helping to encourage students to communicate with their teachers can foster healthy working relationships. These can carry over into a work environment. Students can gain confidence to graduate high school and go on to college. Students can then be scheduled to meet with the school counselor or Upward Bound staff to review their progress until the end of each quarter.

Topic: Personal College Planning

Encourage students to participate in scheduled Upward Bound Workshops. The workshops reunite Upward Bound students and staff with activities that emphasize college planning, career readiness, and self-development. Encourage students to participate in scheduled College Campus visits. Group college visits can help students find what type of college they are looking for. Promote other college readiness events such as financial aid workshops, college application workshops, and ACT Bootcamp.

Peer Coach Training

Building a Peer Coach Relationship



The UB staff will do their best to match you with a student whom we believe would be a compatible match in terms of either interests, gender, or other criteria indicated by a new Upward Bound student. It will be your job to pursue building the relationship with the new student, at least initially. You may want to suggest to the assigned student that you meet in person initially just to get to know each other, then determine how and how often you communicate.

Communication

Clear, direct communication is always best for fostering a healthy, open and beneficial helping relationship, such as the Peer Coach-Student relationship you will be building. Once the initial relationship is established, communicate when needed (e.g. meet monthly in person, email weekly, call every other Monday, etc.). It is possible that the assigned student may want to use more than one form of communication. You both can determine what will work best.

Qualities of a Coach

A Peer Coach needs to be patient, caring, encouraging and knows the limits of his/her own expertise. A Peer Coach does not have to be the expert on everything the assigned student is experiencing or may be struggling with. Using active listening skills to understand fully the issues experienced and knowing how to advise or refer, when necessary is very important. A Peer Coach should use clear, direct, open communication, but should always remember that listening is usually more important than talking. Knowing when to refer an assigned student to a teacher or staff member at your high school, or a UB staff member will help the student more than the Peer Coach trying to solve a problem that he/she is not equipped to handle. If in doubt, ask an Upward Bound staff member what to do.

Soft Skills

Part of the importance of the Peer Coaching experience is helping your assigned student to build their soft skills. This can cover a wide variety of areas but is basically anything that is not directly academic in nature. They can include organizational skills, understanding homework demands, being prepared for class, time management and punctuality. Other soft skills can include building a sense of belonging in the high school and Upward Bound, being involved in clubs or other supportive groups, as well as being involved in the community.

Encouraging your assigned student to persevere through difficult experiences could be an important part of your role. Look for ways to help them where they may be struggling.



If you are concerned that your assigned student may be struggling with issues beyond your expertise or understanding, please do not hesitate to talk with Upward Bound staff or school administrators immediately. Your role is to come alongside this newer student and help guide them to the extent that they need it, and to the extent you can offer it. You are not expected to be a counselor nor to be able to fix problems they may have. If you are unsure about anything, let us know. That is why we are here!



**TRIO Upward Bound Program
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PEER COACHING CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

As a coach in the Upward Bound Peer Coaching Program, I understand that I may have access to confidential information such as grades, student records, test results, student progress in class, and similar data, as well as a student's personal information such as personal, family or medical problems. I am aware that I may receive verbal or written communication with UB staff or students concerning any of the above referenced information, which should be kept confidential. I also understand that participation in the UB Peer Coaching Program means I must accept responsibility to preserve the confidentiality of this information and that failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the termination of my role as a peer coach.

I have read the above confidentiality statement and understand and accept the responsibility to preserve the confidentiality of privileged information.

Coach Name _____

Coach Signature _____

Date _____



PEER COACH CONTACT FORM*

1. How did you communicate with your assigned student? (Circle as appropriate)

Text Phone Email In-Person Facebook Video Chat Other: _____

2. Issues Discussed: (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study habits | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusting to the demands of school | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Social issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Test-taking skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Career Goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal goals | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

3. What was discussed and how was it resolved?

4. Does this student need additional help? If yes, how? Yes No

5. Additional Notes:

Peer Coach: _____

Assigned student: _____

Contact Date: _____

***This is available as an online form and is preferred to be completed and submitted digitally, however paper copies may be filled out and submitted as well via in-person or picture/scan and emailed to UpwardBound@uwsp.edu.**