

BUDDY PROJECT REGULATION

Starting from the Academic Year 2015-2016, Politecnico di Milano has implemented a “Buddy System” to assist new international students in the pre-arrival phase and over a three-month post-arrival period.

OUTLINE OF THE BUDDY PROGRAMME

The Buddy Project has a duration of five months and matches new international students with ones who have been studying at Politecnico di Milano.

Who can become a Buddy: students enrolled in a *Laurea* (equivalent to bachelor degree) or a *Laurea Magistrale* (equivalent to Master of Science) programme for at least one semester.

Who can request a Buddy: International students admitted to a Master of Science programme or to an exchange/double degree program for the second semester of the Academic Year 2024-2025 will be eligible to apply for a Buddy.

Buddy will be matched with new international students solely on the basis of the attendance to the same study programme and on personal interests, which will be revealed through an online application form. The possibility of finding a match for all the students who have applied to be or to have a Buddy is not guaranteed, as it depends on the number of candidates/applicants. In case of extremely uneven numbers of candidates/applicants, matching priority will be given to those who have applied first.

The goal of the programme is to provide new students with a point of contact for general queries regarding day-to-day practical issues (such as the location of facilities), and to help the international students integrate with the new University/city context. The project will last for a period of five months after the students' arrival (e.g. for a student arriving in the second semester, students will be involved from February to June). However, students are required to keep in touch during the pre-arrival period as well. The programme is coordinated by the Community Life and Merchandising Unit.

OBJECTIVES

By providing such a relationship, it is intended that:

- The new student will feel more at home in a quicker period;
- Relatively straightforward queries regarding basic operational issues are dealt with in a timely and non-bureaucratic manner;
- The initial confusion and uncertainty faced by all new students is lessened;
- By being supported in overcoming initial problems, the new student will be able to start concentrating earlier on the didactic activity;
- A better understanding of the context and having a support-network will lead to increased confidence and self-esteem;
- You, the buddy, are actively involved in making this a better place to study in, and a better city to live in.

BUDDY TRAINING

Initially, you will need to obtain some guidance in understanding your role as a buddy: you will therefore be invited to a Buddy training day. On such occasion, you will receive some instructions on how you are supposed to deal with some common situations and what is expected and not expected from you.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BUDDY

You are asked to comport yourself in such a way as not to disgrace the institution you represent; to act in the best interests of the students placed under your guidance; to seek guidance from the Programme coordinators if faced with a problematic situation. You are expected to pursue the objectives of the project as listed above. You are not being asked to replace the university offices that normally support students concerning enrolment and career issues, although your role as buddy may involve you explaining some university related issues, or explaining straightforward procedures. If you feel the new student's queries are too detailed or specialized for you to answer, direct them to the program coordinators. You are not the new student's psychologist. If you feel that the new students are facing personal problems that go beyond the normal initial adaptation difficulties, direct them to the program coordinators by writing to buddy-system@polimi.it

CONTENTS AND FREQUENCY OF THE MEETING

After you have been notified of the name/s and other relevant information regarding the new student/s that has/have been paired up with you, it is up to you to make contact with them at the earliest available opportunity. Most probably, the new student will not be in Italy at the time of your first contacts, therefore you will be meeting personally only slightly before the beginning of the semester starts. The Programme coordinators will organize, according to the anti covid rules, social events and games in order for you to meet the new students and make you familiar with each other. Following this initial phase, it will be up to you to schedule meetings with the new student. If it is possible you should aim to meet regularly, once a week during their first month and at least once every two weeks thereafter. These meetings should be used to discuss any non-urgent issues the new student may have. Upon arrival, it may be reasonable to expect many queries from the new student in the first few days, tapering down to one or two a day thereafter. Although all new students are different, after 2-3 months, you may hear little or nothing from them on a daily basis. THIS IS A GOOD SIGN. If you are still getting a large number of "urgent" queries after the first month, then the buddy program is not working, and you should speak to the program coordinators. Within the parameters above, it is expected that you and the new student meet either during one of the free gaps in your weekly university schedule, or on a social basis, outside university. This is an entirely discretionary matter between you and the new student. It is up to you to indicate to the new student when you wish to meet or be contacted.

In case of need, presence activities could be replaced by online ones.



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TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The buddy relationship between you and the new student will be terminated either if:

- the project is over or both party requests it;
- If either the buddy or the new student so requests, the buddy relationship immediately ends.
Contact the Programme coordinators if you wish to trigger this process.

On the other hand, buddies may form separate, social relationships with the new students, which continue beyond the formal buddy programme. This is entirely a personal matter.

REVIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP

At the termination of the relationship, the programme coordinators will ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire aimed at improving the Buddy Project. The questionnaire is optional and will not involve the issues discussed between you and the new student.