

How the University of East London strengthened engagement through the Kortext student ambassador programme

STUDENT
AMBASSADOR
Kortext Est 2013

Overview of impact

- Increased on-campus visibility of the Kortext study+ platform
- Earlier student awareness and adoption of study+
- Reduced barriers to engagement through relatable peer support
- Ambassadors independently leading campus engagement activity
- Student ambassadors developing confidence, communication and leadership skills

Reconnecting students with Kortext

The University of East London (UEL) offers students access to a wide range of digital learning resources, including Kortext study+. However, many students were not actively engaging with these tools or were unaware they had access until much later in their studies. Shifting study habits and the dominance of quick online searches meant students often bypassed the digital textbooks and study tools available to them.

As Cheryl Harris, from UEL's content and digital team, notes:

"It's very easy for students to just go to Google... it's quite shocking that students actually don't even access anything to do with the library until their final year."

To support greater awareness and engagement, UEL incorporated the Kortext student ambassador programme into its wider library engagement activity, enabling students to demonstrate study+ to their peers through practical, peer-led support.



The value of a peer-led approach

Library staff recognised that while they could promote study+, students often respond more strongly to guidance from their peers. A student-led approach provided an opportunity to demonstrate how Kortext supports real study workflows in a relatable, practical way. Cheryl explains:

“It’s great to have some peer-led tuition... the staff can talk about the Kortext platform, but we don’t use it in the capacity that the students would be using it in.”

At the same time, students’ learning behaviours were also evolving. Darya Ashrafi, a third-year Computer Science student and Kortext ambassador, describes this shift:

“Now it’s so hard to learn. I feel like we’re chasing videos, short things, things that get your attention.”

Peer demonstrations helped reintroduce students to study+ in a format that felt relevant, accessible and immediately useful.

Embedding ambassadors within everyday engagement

UEL integrated the Kortext ambassador programme into its wider student engagement activity, recruiting four ambassadors for the most recent academic year. The student ambassadors worked across Docklands and Stratford campuses, creating a consistent and recognisable presence within the library.

The model is deliberately light-touch: staff provide support, while ambassadors are empowered to take ownership of how and where they engage students.



Their work included:

- Running pop-up stalls and supporting engagement at events such as LibFest
- Supporting students one-to-one during open days and campus activities
- Demonstrating how to access, organise and personalise digital textbooks within Kortext
- Showcasing accessibility features and offline capabilities
- Acting as visible, approachable points of contact in the library

For many students, the peer-to-peer aspect made a significant difference. Seeing another student navigate study+ in real time reduced barriers to asking questions and encouraged practical use.

“I was showing them on the laptop... this is how you access these things... You can download and keep things offline so you can access it whenever.”

Darya Ashrafi, UEL student and Kortext student ambassador.

These demonstrations helped students see how Kortext could support their everyday study routines.



Darya Ashrafi, UEL student and Kortext student ambassador.



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Cheryl Harris, Content and Digital Assistant, UEL.

Building confidence and capability

One of the most significant outcomes of the programme has been the development of the ambassadors themselves. Initially, some ambassadors were hesitant to approach students or lead activities independently, but their confidence grew steadily over time.

“Some weren’t so confident. And I’ve seen the confidence in people grow... to go out into the library on their own and speak about Kortext with passion.”

Cheryl Harris, Content and Digital Assistant, UEL.

Ambassadors became more confident communicators and increasingly skilled at adapting their support to different student learning preference

“It helped me with my communication. It helped me understand that I need to change and adapt the way I talk to some students... Some are visual. Some need it explained.”

Darya Ashrafi, UEL student and Kortext student ambassador.

The impact extended beyond skill development, with ambassadors seeing the results of their work directly:

“I’ve met students that I’ve told about Kortext... and they’ve come to me afterwards... ‘Oh yes, I’ve been using it, look, I’m taking notes.’ And I can see them actually using the app. And that’s satisfying.”

Darya Ashrafi, UEL student and Kortext student ambassador.





Improved awareness and engagement

Through consistent, student-led engagement activity, UEL observed several positive developments:

- **Greater visibility** of Kortext across campus and library spaces
- **Higher engagement** during events, pop-ups and open days
- **More students using Kortext earlier** in their studies
- **Ambassadors leading activity independently**, increasing staff capacity
- **Greater integration of Kortext** into everyday academic study

The programme has become an integral part of UEL's approach to improving digital literacy and engagement with study+.

A sustainable model for long-term adoption

The ambassador scheme is now embedded within the library's engagement strategy and continues to play an important role in promoting awareness and long-term use of Kortext at UEL.

Cheryl emphasised the importance of sustained commitment:

“Do it... but you have to put the effort in. It doesn't work unless our ambassadors are engaging, and it doesn't work unless we're engaging.”

Through sustained collaboration between library staff and student ambassadors, UEL has strengthened awareness, confidence and everyday use of the Kortext study+ across campus. At the same time, the programme enables ambassadors to develop transferable communication and leadership skills that support their future careers, creating lasting value for both students and the institution.