

Personal Academic Tutoring Scheme Policy

Index

Document Version Control	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Defining Student Success	3
3. Context	4
3.1 The LSBM Student Context	4
4. Personal Academic Tutoring Principles	4
4.1 Understanding the PAT role	5
4.2 Supporting and developing students	5
5. Evaluation	6
6. Relevant Policies and Procedures	6
7. References	6

Document Version Control

Document Version	Committee	Committee Action	Date
	Course Committee	N/A	
	QAEC	N/A	
v1.0	SMLT	Approved	12 November 2014
	Academic Committee	Approved	8 January 2015
	Board of Directors	N/A	
		Date in force	16 January 2015
v2.0	SMLT	Approved	22 September 2016
	Academic Committee	Approved	30 September 2016
		Date in force	30 September 2016

1. Introduction

The aim of the London School of Business and Management (LSBM), as defined in its mission statement, is to transform students' lives through the provision of a high quality educational experience. As a relatively small institution we are able to provide extensive individual support and guidance for all our students. Central to this is our Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) scheme, which ensures students have fast and easy access to their PAT. Additionally, our small classes mean more personal attention and encourage greater involvement of students in their work during and outside of scheduled lessons.

Students are however, primarily responsible for their academic experience with us. It is their responsibility to improve and develop their academic work and personal skills by accessing the support, advice and guidance we make available to them. Our PAT scheme has a role to play in supporting them in this process.

The PAT scheme is at the heart of our academic and pastoral support. The PAT acts as the interface between the student and LSBM. There are a wide range of professional support services available within our Student Engagement and Success division. These can be accessed through our Student Success Advisors and the Disability and Student Welfare Advisor.

Having good quality personal academic tutors will help retain students as they shall feel part of a learning community and know that there is support available if they have any problems.

2. Defining Student Success

LSBM's definition of student success has come about after a long period of reflection and dialogue between staff and students. On the one hand, our definition relates to the traditional concerns of retention and course completion as indicators of student accomplishment; on the other, it speaks to the Servant Leadership notion of finding meaning through service.

Our reflections and dialogue have centred on our vision and mission statement, clearly articulated in our Corporate Governance Framework. The statement stresses our desire to transform our students' lives through the provision of a high quality educational experience. We see the raising of aspirations and the empowerment of students to build rewarding careers as a central component of the education we offer. Additionally, we aim to educate graduates who will go on to make valuable contributions to society. Our definition of student success speaks of the underlying philosophical position which spurs this important work to transpire.

Our students are introduced to the notions of self-knowledge and "character" during induction. For all Servant Leadership practitioners, the good arises from self-knowledge, and is synonymous with the quality of service we show to others. As the student journey progresses, this notion of character is developed through Personal Development Planning and our Encourage Programme so that the student sees clearly the link between self-knowledge, service and personal fulfilment. Taking this into account, alongside our clear moral obligation to do all we can to retain students and guide them to course completion, we define student success as follows:

The successful student is one who examines the nature of their character and discovers therein something of their unique style of being in the world. The successful student uses this self-knowledge to appreciate the value of life: their own and the lives of others. From this appreciation of value, the successful student engages in both their own learning and their own creative capacity, building an academic and professional profile which reflects the potential of the life they occupy. As an academic community, our success is wholly related to the care and nurture of this process in all our students, believing, as we do, that retention and course completion are profoundly linked to the students' appreciation of the potential they offer to the world.

3. Context

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) provides a national point of reference in terms of the standards and quality of UK higher education. There is an emphasis in the QAA Quality Code on 'integration, coherence and internal co-operation' so that students are helped to develop academically and more broadly. Students should be informed about the support opportunities available to them in the context of an inclusive environment where provision is guided by the principles of fairness and accessibility.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (2016) encourages all 'students to be effectively supported to achieve educational and professional goals'. The establishment and maintaining of relationships with a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) is an essential part of successful study. Retention and progression can be improved with high quality, timely individual interventions by academics who develop an established relationship with students. Several sources and educational researchers highlight the significance of personal tutoring in Higher Education (Barfield, Hixenbaugh and Thomas, 2006). Most recently, the National Union of Students (NUS) published a Charter on Personal Tutors (NUS, 2016), emphasising that many students see personal tutoring as a "vital lifeline to their academic progress".

3.1 The LSBM Student Context

Many of our students join us with a patchy academic history and from families/communities of low academic participation. This often results in them facing additional challenges as they embark on their higher education studies.

They may encounter any number of the following:

- Personal difficulties in the areas of work, family, finance and health.
- Academic difficulties with the transition to higher education and/or insufficient academic and study skills.
- Difficulty in connecting to and engaging with college life.
- Difficulty in managing the workload, leading to falling behind and a sense of failure.
- Limited vision as to the direction in which they would like their careers to go.

Given the above challenges, PATs need to be adaptive, proactive and dynamic to cater for the wide ranging challenges and demands that our students encounter.

4. Personal Academic Tutoring Principles

There are several key principles involved with Personal Academic Tutoring and the points below are intended to help colleagues understand their involvement and responsibility for ensuring student success. The Personal Academic Tutoring scheme is underpinned by the following principles:

- In line with the QAA Quality Code Chapter B4, LSBM has arrangements in place which will facilitate student success.
- In recognition of the extremely diverse nature of our student profile, a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the safeguarding responsibilities articulated in our Safeguarding Policy.
- All students will be assigned a PAT. PATs are often the first point of contact for students who need additional support with personal issues. PATs take an active role in referring students to appropriate support services within the institution.

- PATs will provide effective academic and pastoral support.
- The PAT scheme will create an engaging academic and non-academic interface to enhance the student's personal and academic development.
- Students will experience the benefits of working in a supportive and professional relationship with peers and PATs.
- The PAT scheme will help embed the institution values of Servant Leadership.

Personal Academic Tutoring is about providing pro-active academic support to students, in the form of an academic partnership with mutual expectations.

4.1 Understanding the PAT role

- Each student has a PAT to provide general guidance on academic and nonacademic matters, and to suggest other sources of help when required. The PAT should be conversant with the documents listed in Section 4 below.
- The student may ask for a change to the allocated PAT by submitting a written request to the Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- The role of the PAT is acknowledged in the Academic Workload Model.
- PAT staff training takes place at induction, staff CPD meetings and is available through PAT training sessions on Canvas.
- The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is responsible for the management of the PAT scheme and the allocation of students to a PAT.
- Students will be allocated a PAT at the start of their course.
- The size of the tutor group should not exceed 25 students.
- The procedures for Personal Academic Tutoring will be explained clearly in the Personal Academic Tutor Guide for Tutors and Students, which is available on the website and PAT page on Canvas.

4.2 Supporting and developing students

- PATs should be encouraged to develop a community of practice i.e. groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger circa 2007).
- To encourage engagement, PATs are required to publish times when they are available and times for meetings, for example by use of email to tutees or notices in the PAT course in Canvas.
- Supporting students to develop their academic and professional skills through the PDP scheme.
- Supporting students with advice on what skills they need to develop to improve their academic performance.

5. Evaluation

The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning evaluates the effectiveness of the PAT scheme via Course Committees, and student feedback through SMEQs, Interim Course Evaluation questionnaires, and the Student Staff Consultative Forum (SSCF).

6. Relevant Policies and Procedures

- Personal Academic Tutoring Scheme Guide
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Support for Pregnant Students

7. References

Barfield, S; Hixenbaugh, P and Thomas, L (2006). *Critical Reflections and Positive Interventions: An electronic casebook on good practice in personal tutoring*. The Higher Education Academy. Available at:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resource_database/personal_tutoring_ecasebook_2006 [accessed on 25 August 2016].

HEA (2015). 'Retention and Success' webpage. Available at:

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/retention-and-success> [accessed on 21 August 2016].

Laycock, M (2009). 'Personal tutoring and first year experience', in *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education — Where Now and Where Next?* SEDA Special 25.

NUS Charter on Personal Tutors (2016). Available at:

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-charter-on-personal-tutors> [accessed on 24 August 2016].

OFFA and HEFCE (2014). *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education*, London, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf [accessed on 25 August 2016].

House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (2015 – 16). *The Teaching Excellence Framework: Assessing quality in Higher Education Third Report of Session*.

QAA (2013). *Enabling student development and achievement*, Chapter B4. Available

at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B4.aspx> [accessed on 14 November 2014].

Wenger, E (c 2007) 'Communities of practice. A brief introduction'. *Communities of practice* [<http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>]. Accessed August, 25 2016].