

Personal Academic Tutoring Scheme Guide

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Document Version Control

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1. Introduction

Provision of effective personal and pastoral support can make an important contribution to the overall experience of individual students. There is evidence that high quality support in addition to normal academic contact through lectures, seminars and other classroom-based activities can improve retention, particularly in the early stages of study.

Students are 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. However, we have a role to play in supporting them in this process.

The Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) is at the heart of pastoral support and safeguarding / welfare duties as the PAT acts as the interface between the student and the London School of Business and Management (LSBM). However, there are other pastoral support mechanisms available within Student Engagement and Success in the form of the Student Success Advisors and the Disability and Welfare Advisor.

Having good quality personal tutors will help to retain students because they will feel part of a learning community and know that there is support available if they have any problems. Personal Academic Tutors give a personalised approach to higher education.

2. Role of the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)

The primary role of the PAT is to support the personal and academic development of a student by providing both general and academic advice and support. However, the PAT needs to know when to make referrals for specialist support (e.g. counselling, careers and financial advice) and to whom. The following responsibilities (divided into three broad categories) are responsibilities shared by the PAT.

2.1 Source of information

The PAT needs to:

- explain the role of the PAT and the responsibilities of both the PAT and the student.
- ensure the student has received or has access to all their course literature (including module information and timetable) and is clear about the requirements of their course.
- check for and help meet any information gaps the student might have e.g. how to submit coursework, plagiarism procedures and implications, how Turnitin works and how to interpret similarity reports, application for mitigating circumstances, and how to access the VLE and eBooks.
- signpost sources of information and support to the students.

2.2 Academic and Pastoral Support

The PAT needs to:

- provide initial pastoral support.
- support the student's PDP.
- inspire, encourage and motivate the student.
- help the student to develop and grow in confidence.

- act as a role model.
- ease fears regarding expectations, assessments etc.
- make onward referrals where necessary.

2.3 Information sharing

The PAT needs to:

- liaise with the Course Leader and Module Leaders on the student's academic progress. [Whilst the Module Leader is there to provide feedback against module learning outcomes, the PAT is there to discuss feedback.]
- liaise with Course Leaders, Module Leaders and relevant support staff where necessary in order to provide multi-layered support.
- monitor and flag to the Student Engagement and Success (SES) Division any attendance issues.
- flag to the Head of SES any safeguarding concerns affecting the individual concerned or those around the individual. These may be welfare-related or Prevent-related. [Prevent-related concerns will be referred on to the Head of Quality.]
- follow up on students who are not making satisfactory progress.
- identify any study skills needs and refer the student to CASE.

3. Personal Academic Tutor skills

- Effective communication.
- Effective listening, including an ability to listen before giving advice and guidance.
- Being approachable and yet knowing how to set ground rules and recognise and stay within boundaries.
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Empathy.
- An awareness of the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, as articulated in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- An awareness of safeguarding responsibilities including Prevent-related responsibilities, as articulated in our Safeguarding Policy, and our Prevent Policy.
- An awareness of your limitations including:
 - knowing when to seek advice for *yourself* when you are unsure of how to deal with a situation.
 - knowing when to refer a student on to a more appropriate person and who that person might be.

4. What the student can expect of their Personal Academic Tutor

- A friendly and helpful point of contact who will display care, concern and respect for the student.
- A source of advice and guidance on all matters relating to academic progress.
- At least one meeting per semester, which is booked via Canvas or email.
- An agreed record of meetings.
- Confidentiality provided that respecting confidences will not result in harm to the student or others.
- Compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- Prompt responses to requests for meetings, and referrals to other sources of help if an early meeting is not possible or if a referral is more appropriate.
- An awareness of the broader network of support services at LSBM.
- A link with other members of academic staff and an advocate for the student in appropriate circumstances.
- Up-to-date contact details for the PAT including office hours and information. These can be found in the student's PAT site in Canvas. PAT details are also located in the Student Self-service Portal (SSP) and the student induction letter given out at the Digital Essentials course.

4.1 What the Personal Academic Tutor can expect of their student

- Prompt responses to requests for meetings, which are booked via the student's PAT site in Canvas.
- Punctual attendance at scheduled meetings.
- An awareness of processes and arrangements for all aspects of their programme, particularly in terms of assessment, exams, mitigating circumstances, appeals etc.
- Respect for the limits of the PAT's role.
- An appreciation that PATs have a range of other responsibilities (including teaching commitments) and so cannot be expected to respond immediately to emails. In addition, students should not expect the PAT to engage in or respond to any emails at weekends, during statutory holidays and when LSBM is closed.
- To be prepared for meetings. This includes bringing any agreed notes or information to meetings.
- To make use of all the support mechanisms available to the student.
- To keep the PAT informed of circumstances that may have an effect on the student's studies.

- To take the initiative to raise at an early stage any problems or issues, particularly those that might impact on the student's academic performance / progress.
- To ensure that their contact details are kept up-to-date.

5. Change of Personal Academic Tutor

Students have the right to ask to change tutor. The request should be made to the Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

6. Preparing for the first meeting with the student

To ensure the effectiveness of the relationship between the PAT and the student, it would make sense for the PAT to consider the timing and nature of their first meeting with the student. To assist with the transition process and to help give the student a sense of identity and belonging, it is advisable that the PAT should aim to make contact within the first week of the semester by arranging a meeting first with the tutor group to:

- Provide students with an early opportunity to forge social links with both staff and other students.
- Help students to settle in more quickly.
- Give students an opportunity to raise early on issues which may be relevant for others as well as themselves.
- Get students used to initiating and maintaining dialogues (staff-student and peer).
- Explain the key aspects of the Personal Academic Tutor Guide.

7. Other sources of information on Personal Academic Tutoring

NUS Charter on Personal Tutors 19 April 2016.

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-charter-on-personal-tutors>