

## PERSONAL ACADEMIC TUTORING POLICY

### Purpose and Context

The University takes an individualised approach to supporting each of its students to achieve their best. Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) have an important role to play in this, guiding students towards the most appropriate support, and helping them achieve their academic potential.

Every student is different. Some will come to University, adapt to their new surroundings straight away and flourish. Others may struggle adapting to their new academic environment. PATs are there for students to help them get the most out of their time at University, and to discuss academic progress so that they can achieve their best, and also to direct students towards appropriate support services such as wellbeing and finance should personal problems arise.

This document sets out the expectations of the University for PATs in order to ensure equitable treatment of our students.

### Scope

This applies to all PATs supporting students on a taught programme at undergraduate or postgraduate level, including those studying for University of Huddersfield awards under a collaborative partnership agreement. It does not apply to postgraduate research students for whom different arrangements are in place.

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy draws on good practice set out in the NUS Charter on Personal Tutors <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-charter-on-personal-tutors> and the UK Quality Code <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code#>.
- 1.2 All Personal Academic Tutors have a PAT module on Brightspace to support the role and a copy of this guidance can also be found on the [iPark website](#).

## 2 Nomination and Distribution of Personal Academic Tutors

- 2.1 All undergraduate and postgraduate students on taught courses (PGT) at the University will have a named PAT.
  - 2.1.1 PATs will normally be members of academic staff from the relevant School (or Schools for any joint courses). Academic-related staff may also contribute.
  - 2.1.2 It is accepted as good practice that PATs, where possible, are part of the teaching team students have a connection to. However, it is recognised that in some circumstances students will be allocated a PAT who does not normally teach them directly. There may also be some exceptions for PGT students where this is not practicable; for example, online courses or work based placements.

2.2 The expectation is that all academic staff will act as PATs, unless the Dean has authorised an exception.

2.2.1 As far as is practicable students should be evenly distributed across the members of academic staff.

2.2.2 This ensures that individual members of staff do not have too many tutees as having a large number limits the benefits to that student group and overloads the member of staff.

2.3 Ideally the PAT will stay with the same student throughout their time at University to allow continuity of the relationship between the PAT and tutee.

### **3 Frequency and Recording of PAT Sessions**

3.1 All full-time students should be offered a minimum five meetings a year with their PAT (a minimum of three meetings a year for part-time students). Some of those meetings might be in small group tutorials, but it is expected that at least three of these meetings (two for part-time students) will be on a one-to-one basis to discuss the individual's progress.

3.2 The meetings should be spread out evenly throughout the academic year.

3.2.1 Recognising that not all of our degrees fit to a standard teaching pattern, individual Schools/Course teams should adjust the timing of the PAT meetings to fit with their academic programme and be as flexible as possible to the individual needs of students.

3.2.2 Best practice is for a PAT to have a first meeting with their tutees during induction week. Where practicable in Schools these meetings should be added to the timetable.

3.2.3 If not timetabled as above, then it is the responsibility of the PAT to arrange suitable meeting slots for their tutees.

3.3. Meetings should be recorded onto the PAT module in Brightspace to ensure that student expectations around meetings are met and continuity of help for students is ensured, particularly if the designated PAT has to be changed.

3.3.1 Best practice is to agree the notes made in Brightspace with the individual student. Confidential information should not be written into the Brightspace notes.

3.3.2 Engagement with the PAT contributes to individual students' Engagement Index, which forms the basis of one of the Inspiring KPIs on the 2025 Strategic Plan, and therefore it is important that attendance at PAT meetings are correctly recorded.

- 3.4. In order to facilitate the PATs in undertaking a review of the tutee's progress all assessment marks are entered on Brightspace as soon as possible following the assessment feedback deadline.

## **4 Role of PATs**

- 4.1. PATs have a key role to play in proactively monitoring the academic progress of their tutees and offering appropriate support to help them reach their potential. They are not necessarily expected to provide subject specific guidance but should always signpost students to the appropriate subject support and facilitate any conversations with the teaching team as required.
- 4.2. While conversations should normally be treated as confidential, it may be necessary to refer to students to other University services, and where this is the case, tutees will need to be informed of this. It is good practice to agree wording with the tutee where other parties are being included in communication which might be interpreted as confidential.
- 4.3. PATs will be expected to offer general academic support to students, using their experience, their knowledge of course and assessment structures and the information presented on the PAT module.
  - 4.3.1. Alongside of discussions around a tutee's academic progress, each meeting should have a focus point for discussion as appropriate for that year group; for example, revision strategies, note taking, assessment practices, use of feedback, time management.
  - 4.3.2. PATs are not expected to intervene in giving detailed feedback on specific pieces of academic work as this is the role of the appropriate subject specialists and module leaders.
  - 4.3.3. In order to provide academic support, it is expected that PATs will familiarise themselves with a student's PLSP and actively engage with it, periodically checking that the support and adjustments are appropriate and being carried out. If the recommendations in the PLSP are appropriate but are not being carried out, staff in School should be alerted to this. PATs should signpost their students to Disability Services for specialist advice if the adjustments are not working and need to be reviewed or if the impact of the disability has changed.
  - 4.3.4. Building student employability, graduate level job outcomes and providing guidance to students towards their careers is an important part of the University's strategy. PATs should have regular discussions with their tutees about career planning, benefits of work placement, Professional/Personal Development Portfolios etc and be signposted towards the Careers and Employability Service and the Enterprise Unit as appropriate.
- 4.4. PATs are not expected to resolve a tutee's personal problems or undertake guidance which is better placed in the hands of experts. If such problems come up in PAT meetings, then students should be signposted to the appropriate support or wellbeing service as necessary.

- 4.5 PATs will make note of and refer any general course concerns to the appropriate course leader.
- 4.6 Support for PATs is located within the PAT module itself on Brightspace.

| <b>POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS</b> |   |
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| <b>Version Number:</b>                       | V4.0  |
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| <b>REVISION HISTORY</b> |               |  |  |
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| <b>Version</b>          | <b>Date</b>   | <b>Revision description/Summary of changes</b>   | <b>Author</b>  |
| V1.0                    | 07/11/2017    | First redraft under the new Policy Framework   | Head of Registry   |
| V1.1                    | November 2018 | Formatting and nomenclature updates (minor amends):<br>Dashboard amended to PAT Portal<br>Clarification of scope | Director of Registry   |
| V2.0                    | November 2019 | Minor updates in line with changes to regulatory environment (QAA) and business process (Grademark)              | Director of Registry   |
| V3.0                    | January 2021  | Removal of procedural detail. Minor update to reflect changes in resources, now housed on Brightspace.           | Director of Teaching and Learning (Vice Chancellor's Office) |
| V3.1                    | January 2022  | Weblinks updated, amendment to review period   | Director of Registry   |
| V4                      | January 2024  | Further clarification of role of PAT and staff eligibility   | Director of Registry   |