

Quality Transformation Unit

# **Personal Academic Tutor Framework:**

## **Guide for Staff**

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Technical updates of this document take place on an annual basis to reflect changes to the University of Greater Manchester's organisational and management structure and to incorporate earlier, approved amendments to related policies, procedures and regulations.

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Authors:

Caroline Bracewell (Lead for Academic Quality)

Louise Ashby (Lead for Academic Quality Transformation)

Danyaal Atcha (Senior Academic Quality Officer)

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# Personal Academic Tutoring - Guide for Staff

The Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) role aligns with and supports the university's strategic plan by contributing to both the long-term sustainability of the institution and the academic and personal success of its students.

PATs at the University of Greater Manchester (UGM) help students navigate their academic and personal development, ensuring they feel supported and understood throughout their university experience. *It is essential that we adopt a proactive approach to Personal Tutoring because students do not always recognise when they could benefit from support. (Banks, 2022:18).*

The UGM believes that the development of the PAT-student relationship is essential to support the students' transition into and progression through Higher Education. The role of the PAT is also of great importance to the Core Aims of the Greater Manchester Way (GMW) and it is essential that this role is carried out with rigour, professionalism, care and efficient record keeping.

## **Core Aims of The Personal Academic Tutor Role in the context of The Greater Manchester Way**

### **REMINDER: GMW Core Aims**

<b>Core Aim 1</b>
Create a sustainable and strategic programme portfolio in block teaching mode based on innovative curriculum and assessment design that provides relevant education offerings for our domestic and international students in Greater Manchester and beyond.
<b>Core Aim 2</b>
Provide intentionally designed assessment enabled learning experiences based on TIRAE principles and pedagogies that enhance and extend effective learning focusing on formative assessment and feedback for all students.
<b>Core Aim 3</b>
Advance the academic quality and management of programmes through the careful adaptation of more rapid approaches to quality assurance and enhancement to support the university's switch to a learner-centred block delivery model.

### **Core Aim 1**

The transformed Teaching Intensive Research Informed Assessment Enabled (TIRIAE) focus that underpins the GWM will build on its TIRI predecessor, and on the platinum programmes initiatives. The PAT framework will embed TIRIAE across the institution, prioritising and enhancing the student experience. This will support improvements in student retention, progression, and educational outcomes as demanded by the academic strategy 2030.

Making personal academic tutoring personalised, relevant, and data-driven, the PAT role will enrich the lives of all students studying at the UGM.

### **Core Aim 2**

The PAT framework supports assessment enabled learning, through the expectation that ongoing, authentic, formative academic support for all students. The focus in group and individual tutorials will be informed by data and real-time discussions relating to competency and skills-based learning, where PATs and students co-create targets and development opportunities aligned with the Students as Partners Framework (SAP).

### **Core Aim 3**

Strategic alignment of high-quality teaching and learning programme delivery, and PAT sessions, will improve outcomes for students in all aspects of their personal and professional development, PATs will commit to embracing agile and innovative approaches to learning and tutorials, adopting TIRAE'S renewed focus on assessment enabled learning

Authentic real-world skills development will feature highly in PAT sessions, with students and tutors contextualising learning and development that ensures positive graduate outcomes for all.

*The value that good personal tutoring has on retention cannot be underestimated: with a more personal approach to the Higher Education experience, student morale is said to improve and the relationship is built between a student and personal tutor can help students to feel more supported throughout their studies (Fowler and Boylan, 2010)*



## Guidelines for Personal Academic Tutors

The core purpose of Personal Academic Tutor framework is to support all our students' academic, personal, and professional development throughout an ongoing personalised point of contact within the University. Regular and ongoing contact is key to the student's engagement within the Greater Manchester Way. This includes all aspects of recording and monitoring of progress, engagement and performance across the student's programme. This is particularly important for all those students who are deemed to require additional support.

PATs are academic members of staff who are supported by the Heads of School (or nominee) and members of Professional Support Services to provide holistic support for students through a 'whole institution' network of PATs.

The allocated PAT will be the student's first point of call for advice or signposting to further support on academic or pastoral matters, and all documentation related to group and individual PAT sessions should be added to the student record on PULSE within 48 hours of receiving student communication or attending a student meeting.

Within the academic school or subject area(s), students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including module tutors, programme leaders and professional support staff.

We will take a whole University approach that co-ordinates the available support for all our students to excel and succeed at the UGM.

*The Personal Tutorial System has a vital role to play in enhancing students' academic, personal and social development and is essential in ensuring that students take full advantage of opportunities available to them at university so that they are more likely to achieve and enjoy their programme of study (Stevenson, 2006).*

As a PAT you will support your students within student facing procedures, such as self-referral for extensions, special circumstances applications, suspensions, withdrawals and academic appeals, and you should retain an interest in your students general academic and professional personal development throughout the students' academic career. You will also monitor students' attendance and engagement in line with the current Student Attendance and Engagement Policy<sup>1</sup>. Further support and guidance, and students' completion of mandatory training with the OFS E6<sup>2</sup> condition of registration will be necessary, and PATS should access appropriate training at the UGM to enhance their understanding and expertise in this area.

## Allocation of a Personal Academic Tutor

Each taught student will be assigned a PAT at the start of their studies. This allocation should be completed by the Personal Academic Tutor assigned allocator at the point of enrolment. PAT tutorials and 1:1 meetings all form part of the Personal Tutor duties and hours needed for this role.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/assets/Student-Attendance-and-Engagement-Policy-Final-v4.1-5.9.24.pdf> (old link)

<sup>2</sup> [Condition E6: Harassment and sexual misconduct - Office for Students](#)

An agreement will be reached by the Head of School (or nominee) on the number of hours or personal tutors each academic member of staff will be allocated. This will be dependent on the lecturers' additional duties and will be informed by the Work Load Allocation model set by the UGM executive team.

## Personal Academic Tutor Meetings

Tutorial (individual and group) meetings must be scheduled by the PAT and these should be held regularly throughout the Academic Year. There must be one initial tutorial, timetabled for all students, in the **Set Up 4 Success Week**. There should be no fewer than 4 group tutorials in the Academic year. Students should be supported in understanding how tutorials are key to the success on the academic programme.

All meetings should be structured with a clear and agreed agenda and this should be published in advance. Students should be able to contribute to the agenda to allow them to discuss any relevant areas that they feel they require more information or support with; this links with the expectations of the SAP framework.

A tutor may invite a student to a 1:1 meeting where there is unsatisfactory attendance or progress that has been highlighted by Module Tutors, or if there are any other causes for concern. Both parties can request this meeting, and this meeting must be documented and information added to the PULSE within the required timeframe. If students do not attend a meeting they are invited to, this information should also be documented on the PULSE.



## Change of Personal Academic Tutor

Students are permitted to request a change of Personal Tutor. The students or the Personal Tutor needs to contact the Head of School (or nominee) to action this request with a rationale for the change made clear.

## The role of the School Quality Lead and Quality Transformation Unit

The School Quality Lead (SQL) or nominee and a representative of the Quality Transformation Unit (QTU) will oversee the Personal Academic Tutor framework including the number of PAT interactions and levels of subsequent documentation related to these interactions. The documentation regarding students' interactions is essential as this information may be required for student appeals & complaints.

The SQL and the QTU will review the student documentation regarding student support to offer relevant training needs and guidance to ensure that all PATs are offering tutees an effective and fairly distributed level of support. They will also ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to recognise high quality performance by PATs via recognition within an institutional award scheme, for example the annual student awards led by the Student Union.

### How to Refer Students to additional support networks

Please familiarise yourself with the links on the website<sup>3</sup> to identify the student services available at the University to support students. All contact details will be available on this website and will be updated regularly.

### As a Personal Academic Tutor, what could you help your students with?

To support your student's progress, you can help in several ways. These will include, but are not limited to:

#### **Signposting**

*Academic* - You can offer guidance and support on academic matters such as getting the most out of the library, accessing LEAP online, the Academic Skills Hub (<https://libguides.bolton.ac.uk/academicskillshub>), understanding Academic Integrity, accessing Moodle, time management and work life balance.

*Pastoral* - Helping students to settle into the UGM way of life is a key role of the PAT. Informing students of the services that are available to them at the university including different teams that offer guidance about suspending studies, visas, withdrawals, student finance, academic leave and other student facing procedures. You can signpost to the relevant teams if required and support students with contacting them.

#### **Liaising with Programme Teams**

The PAT will be a contact if the students need to discuss any module or programme matters they may be experiencing that they feel they cannot discuss directly with the module or

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<sup>3</sup> [Student Support | University of Greater Manchester](#)

programme leader. A PAT will listen, advise and work with programme teams to support the students.

## Attendance support & monitoring

As a PAT you will offer pastoral support and advise on day-to-day concerns that may affect a student's study outcomes / deadlines. Alongside a Module Leader you will be a point of contact if your students cannot attend any classes and you can advise students on approaches to catching up with any missed work and/or attending enrichment and intervention sessions offered by Programme Teams.

## Assessment Advice

You will be the point of contact for your students who may need support and guidance with extensions, self-referrals, and special circumstances applications. You can advise and help manage students' assessment workloads by, for example, encouraging them to set SMART targets and manage their work/study balance. You will support the student to understand assessment feedback, and how they can use this feedback to improve their academic performance.

## Well-Being

There may be times when students need additional support and guidance around their well-being, and as their PAT you can listen, advise and signpost as required.

The University of Greater Manchester has Mental health and wellbeing services available to all students. Students can self-refer to services via the registration form and the service is confidential or you can refer on their behalf if consent is given. This is the referral form [Counselling & CBT Clinic Registration](#)



**Safeguarding Responsibilities.** Please note that if you or any member of staff is concerned about safeguarding, Prevent, the bribery act, harm, sexual harassment or other types of abuse, or topics of serious concern, then you must disclose this information to the relevant safeguarding officer.

[Safeguarding | University of Greater Manchester](#)

## Career Passport

The Career Passport is a flexible, online stamp-based system where students earn a stamp for each career-related activity they complete. Stamps serve as recognition of their employability accomplishments. The Passport is available to all UGM students and apprentices. It must be completed before a student graduates.

A full range of activities, based around six key themes, will be made available so that students can see what is possible, and how it can support their career thinking. The six themes are:

- Career Planning
- Work Experience
- Enrichment
- Job Recruitment Skills
- Networking
- Leadership

The online Passport will be hosted on the careers platform, Student Hub, with direct links available on Moodle. An online workflow platform manages the process, reviews achievements and rewards progress and skills acquisition. Students submit evidence through the portal to demonstrate that they have achieved that skill area and/or experience. Once this has been verified, a digital stamp is awarded to demonstrate attainment.

The Career Passport features a range of mandatory components which are compulsory for all participating students and form the Passport foundation. These include:

- Introductory video and 'entry' into online Passport workflow
- Career guidance interview with a Careers Adviser
- Personal skills reflection
- CV Workshop and CV submission
- LinkedIn Workshop

Due to the hybrid nature, students have the chance to gain digital stamps for activities that sit within the curriculum, and features a wide range of extra-curricular activities. An extensive list of optional stamps, which offer flexibility based on career interests and goals are available to allow for differentiation. The Career Passport will ensure that all students, regardless of their background or subject discipline, see the value of planning their career and developing the skills needed for a graduate-level job. It is designed to be accessible and inclusive.

### Working with Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)

PATs have a key role in supporting and encouraging students to engage with their employability. Students can be assisted to take action and ownership of their future career plans.

The Jobs for Students Team work with PATs to promote the Career Passport and help deliver information workshops within curriculum sessions; PATs should encourage their students to develop a wide range of additional skills by participating and engaging with all of the career resources available.

For further information and/or to look at including a curriculum-based activity within the Career Passport please contact the Director of Jobs for Students: [J.Bateman@greatermanchester.ac.uk](mailto:J.Bateman@greatermanchester.ac.uk)

## How Many Times Should I Meet with My Tutees?

A student should be able to contact you and receive a response in line with the University's guidance. You may prefer to meet online or in person dependent on the students' preferences. Students must use their university email to contact you on your university email. Please ensure you create an out of office reply if you are on leave including a named alternative point of contact. A PAT should arrange group tutorials 4 times a year.

As Personal Academic Tutor you may arrange group or 1:1 tutorials throughout the academic year. It is the expectation of the University that students attend these. Please use a student's University email account to arrange these appointments giving adequate notice.

*The development of the personal tutor / student relationship is particularly significant within the first few weeks of study as it can help to ease the transition into an overwhelming academic environment (Wilcox et al, 2005).*

## Important Note for Late Enrolment students.

As late enrolling students will have missed the initial *Set Up 4 Success* week, including their PAT tutorials, you should ensure that a meeting with these students is arranged as soon as possible. This will ensure that the students receive all the information needed to catch up and that they have an initial point of contact within their PAT.



## Summary

The University of Greater Manchester prides itself on its student support, recognised by the consistently high scores in the National Student Survey; the role of the PAT is a worthwhile aspect of this. PATs should be extremely proud of their role in supporting students throughout their time at the University.



For any queries about the PAT role, or to give feedback on your experience as a Personal Academic Tutor, please email the Quality Transformation Unit at [Q TU@greatermanchester.ac.uk](mailto:Q TU@greatermanchester.ac.uk)

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Author	Caroline Bracewell (Lead for Academic Quality) Louise Ashby (Academic Quality Lead) Danyaal Atcha (Senior Academic Quality Officer) Jo Hornby (Head of Quality Transformation)

Owner	Quality Transformation Unit
Responsible person	Jo Hornby
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