

An introduction to Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) at the University of Bedfordshire

We believe that personal academic and pastoral support is central to providing you as students with a transformational learning experience. Our Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) system aims to improve the support you are given, based on your pro-active, sustained engagement with academic staff. You will work with your PAT in addition to your work with tutors at unit and course level. This is in addition to the personal support provided by specialists within the central student support services.

Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) time is focused on developing and sustaining a valuable professional relationship. We recognise that at times you may need additional support in managing your overall student experience, and your requirements may vary. Working with a PAT is one part of a package of support offered to students. Your Faculty will provide information about the range of support available to you, including any course-specific, enhanced-support mechanisms in place, such as placement support on professional body courses.

A key principle of the University of Bedfordshire PAT policy is that all students are respected, listened to, responded to, and given clear guidance and support.

What is the role of the Personal Academic Tutor?

Your PAT will support you with your studies, and conversations and meetings may cover different things, depending on your needs at that time. Wherever possible, PAT meetings are student-led, based on your needs. The following provides a guide to the range of things that may be discussed in PAT support meetings:

- addressing general questions and concerns
- providing advice on University policies and processes
- signposting you to the support services of the University
- supporting you with academic/study concerns and questions
- providing pastoral support and promoting your well-being
- providing guidance to help you through your studies and supporting you to achieve
- acting as an advocate for you, where needed
- providing guidance on any significant absences, and supporting you to apply for assessment mitigation
- supporting in matters relating to academic misconduct
- signposting you to who you need to contact to seek advice on transferring course, interrupting studies or exiting a course
- support for postgraduate careers and further study, including signposting to the University's Careers and Employability Service

Personal Academic Tutoring at Study Centres

If you are studying a Foundation Year/Pre-Masters course at Study Centres, you will be supported by a team of PATs so that we can ensure you can easily access help when you need it. Academic staff will be available to you in 'Foundation Study Office Hours'. During these hours you will be able to book meetings or drop in and discuss your academic progress.

The University of Bedfordshire Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) process

Who has a PAT?

- PATs are allocated to all undergraduate and postgraduate students on a course carrying 60 academic credits or more in one academic year.
- If you are studying under 60 credits per academic year, you do not have a Personal Academic Tutor, you will be supported by your unit coordinator(s).
- Apprentices on a Higher/Degree Apprenticeship do not have a named PAT, as personal academic guidance is provided in regular meetings with the apprenticeship co-ordinator.
- Partner institutions are responsible for providing PATs. If you are studying with a partner, please do check how to contact your PAT by asking your course team. You can also ask your course team when you are unsure if you are studying at a partner institution.

Who is a PAT?

- Your PAT will be from the subject discipline of your course of study.
- Your PAT may not be the same person for the duration of your course, although typically students would have the same PAT in one academic year.

When do students meet their PAT?

- When you first join the University, your first PAT meeting would typically take place within the first three weeks of starting your course.
- If you are an existing student, your first PAT meeting would typically take place within the first six weeks of you returning to study.
- If you are repeating a year, your first PAT meeting would typically take place within the first three weeks of your return to study.
- Your PAT will contact you to introduce themselves.

What type of meetings are PAT tutorials?

- Usually your first meeting will be a group tutorial, as part of your welcome to the University.
- PAT meetings will sometimes take place as a group and sometimes individually.
- PAT meetings can be either online or face-to-face, depending on the type of course and your needs as a student.
- You will be offered a minimum of three PAT meetings in an academic year and are encouraged to attend, as they are essential to ensure you are supported.

When will PATs refer students to other University of Bedfordshire staff and services for further support?

- All students have access to a range of specialist support services at the University. Your PAT is not a counsellor and will signpost you to the relevant support services and specialist advisers, as required.
- You will be signposted to your unit and course coordinators for specific course and unit assessment queries.

Where is information on PAT meetings held?

- A record of your PAT meetings will be entered on to e-vision, the University of Bedfordshire student information system, called SITS. Information given to PATs is confidential unless you have agreed that the information can be shared, or a safeguarding or legal issue is identified which requires disclosure.