

Personal Academic Tutor Pack

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Introduction

These resources provide guidance and advice on how to carry out your role as a PAT effectively. By the time you have completed all the sections you should be able to:

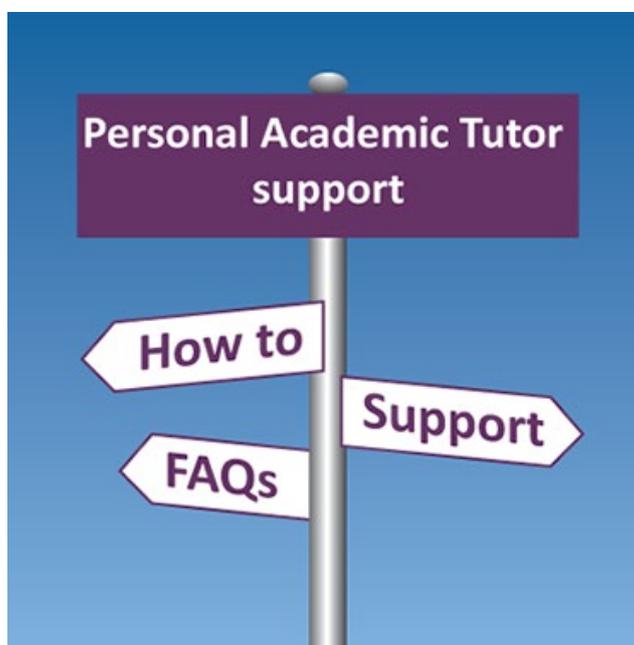
- Describe the PAT roles and responsibilities;
- Reflect on the best advice for students;
- Provide appropriate signposting to other services.

It will support you to:

- Fulfil your responsibility as a PAT;
- Develop your skills as a PAT through reflection and further practice.

There is no prescribed route through these resources. They are intended to be generic and flexible to allow you to refer to them as and when required. They include a number of reflective tasks and skills based resources to help you in your role as a Personal Academic Tutor. A number of scenarios have been included along with audio responses from current University PATs on how these scenarios were handled.

Enhancing learning and teaching



Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) support signpost

Why we need PATs

The Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) provides a vital service both within their own Academic Partner and across the University. It's the PAT who provides an informed response to academic studies queries from pre entry to post exit. The PAT also provides the essential first point of contact when a student raises a concern and provides students with support in the completion of online module and unit registration. As the main focus of the PAT role is to give academic support to a student, they are expected to provide signposting to all other services and assistance such as financial assistance and counselling services. The PAT also plays an integral role in the student withdrawal process.



The role of a Personal Academic Tutor

The scope

The Personal Academic Tutor is a key person in supporting students during their studies with the University, the list below outlines the range and limits of support you should offer students assigned to you.

The range and limits of PAT support

1. Provide an informed response to ACADEMIC studies queries at all points of engagement with the University from entry to post exit.
2. Provide a minimum of one academic advisory session on an individual basis, where academic progress is reviewed per student each semester. This in addition to an introductory meeting in the first semester each year as part of an extended induction to University and the specific course/year of study. Records of these meetings to be kept in confidence and made available to others only with students' permission. Concern over academic progress to be discussed and actioned as appropriate.
3. Undertake signposting and early referral to appropriate specialist information/ assistance/support for other issues such as: ICT access; library and learning resources; finance and personal concerns, including issues relating to disability or additional support needs; access to career development information available at the local academic partner and the [University's careers and advice](#) during a course of study and for an agreed period of time normally two years after graduation or leaving the University.
4. When a student or staff member begins the withdrawal process, the Personal Academic Tutor will be notified to allow them to support the student and explain the options available to them.
5. Provide information on University academic standards and quality regulations, including the avoidance of plagiarism and copyright.
6. Advise and /or signpost students on matters relating to the programme of study, including the selection of modules and options
7. Advise on study methods, academic writing skills and access to study support including the University online [Essential student skills](#) web based resources where required. Refer to appropriate study skill staff/resource within academic partner where available
8. Provide assistance with the collation and presentation of information to support a claim for mitigating circumstances.
9. Provide assistance and / or signpost in the production and maintenance of a personal development plan as appropriate.
10. Assist in the facilitation of appropriate contact between students and programme leaders/ committees in relation to course issues and student academic representation.
11. Respond to requests for job references as appropriate and for an agreed period of time normally two years after graduation or leaving University, in line with Data Protection requirements.

A is for Academic (Audio clip)

“The A is for Academic, can everyone see that ok? The A is for Academic – it’s our role in developing graduate attributes, and when I spoke to one of my colleagues and said I was going to do this today, the response I got was “yeah, and the ‘P’s not pastoral”. And I

thought, crikey, that came back really sharply at me and I felt, woohoo, there's strong feelings in here.

So I think it might be worth just thinking about that.

[00:32-00:36 inaudible]

Mentors, not mates. Advocates not aunties. This is the kind of message I got – everything I've got here, I took from my colleagues. A major challenge for any PAT appears to be drawing the line between the student expectations, employer expectations, their own desire to support a student, and the role they have in developing graduate attributes.

I think it's really important to not forget that we actually are, most of us - some of us, caring people and we want to be able to do as much as we can for our students. The trouble is, that much like as a mother, I know with my children, if I gave them too much, they just take some more. And it was about deciding, "No, it stops here". It's quite a hard thing to do, because it is about what's the norm.

So what I wanted to do today was to examine expectations of the PAT. How we perceive people, what we perceive people expect of us. And to share our experiences. What are the challenges? Where are the issues that make the PAT job particularly challenging? And also, what works to put it right? How can we support, not just support PATs but how can we find for ourselves? As a PAT myself I find myself in this big hole sometimes. What would work to help me avoid falling into that pit of overdoing the kindness or developing expectations that are inappropriate?"

Strategic contribution

The PAT role provides a significant contribution to the strategic objectives of the University which state that:

"We will be recognised for the quality of our students' experience and for their achievement. Our worldwide reputation will be built upon our innovative approach to learning and our distinctive research and curriculum, enriched by the people, natural environment, economy, culture and heritage of our region and its communities. We will be locally based, regional in structure and have national and international reach". (2015: 3)

The University's strategic plan contains five critical performance indicators (CPIs) which directly link to the role of a PAT. These are:

Student satisfaction	Baseline (2013/14)	Target (2019/20)
CPI 3a National Student Survey (UK higher education)	3% below Scottish average overall satisfaction (84% / 87%)	2% above Scottish average overall satisfaction
CPI 3b National College Satisfaction and engagement student survey (Scotland)		2% above Scottish average overall satisfaction

Student attainment	Baseline (2013/14)	Target (2019/20)
CPI 5a Attainment of higher education students	2669 awards	10% increase in awards
CPI 5b Percentage of full-time education students successfully completing their course	66.1% (compared to 66% nationally)	At least maintain at sector average
CPI 9 Progression from further to higher education	34%	40%

Widening access	Baseline (2013/14)	Target (2019/20)
CPI 9 Progression from further to higher education	34%	40%

The National Student Survey (NSS)

'The National Student Survey (NSS) is a national survey which has been conducted by Ipsos MORI annually since 2005. It gathers opinions from final year undergraduates (i.e. HND/3rd Year Degree/4th Year Hons) on the quality of their courses. Aimed at current final year students, the survey asks undergraduates to provide honest feedback on what it has been like to study their course at their institution as well as areas that they feel could be improved. The NSS is conducted on an annual basis with The University of the Highlands and Islands taking part for the first time in 2013'

Full National Student Survey Report (2014: 5).



Students graduating

PATs also support students at important transition points during their learning journey. These transition points can be from leaving school to enrolling in further or higher education; from further education to higher education and from under-graduate to post graduate degree programmes. Each transition brings with it a number of challenges and a PAT can play a vital role in supporting a student to make these progressions.

A PAT for every student

Every student at the University of the Highlands and Islands, whether on a SQA (HN) programme, an undergraduate or post graduate or as a life-long learner is entitled to an assigned Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). In order that all students receive equivalent support irrespective of where or how they are studying a common framework for PATs was approved by the University in 2012 with the PAT role being formally established in that year.

In 2018 there were over 500 Personal Academic Tutors in the University covering all HE courses and supporting students across the highlands and islands and far beyond. The number of registered PATs continues to increase year on year.

Number of PATs in the University of the Highlands and Islands

NAFC Marine Centre UHI: 1
Shetland College UHI: 22
Orkney College UHI: 30
North Highland College UHI: 40
Lews Castle College UHI: 38
Highland Theological College UHI: 4
Inverness College UHI: 67
Moray College UHI: 60

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI: 26

West Highland College UHI: 14

Scottish Association for Marine Science UHI: 13

Perth College UHI: 84

Argyll College UHI: 16

Andy Fraser talks about being a PAT (Audio clip)

“The generic PAT: In our organisation up here in Orkney College, I think we’ve got 3 people doing PAT work but mostly they are working in their own subject area. I’m the only that’s actually working in subject areas that I don’t really know anything much about, so my experience is being a PAT since about ’96 I think, is serving as a PAT on a number of degrees in a small UHI college.

I want to talk to you about working out what a PAT does, the way I found my way into this role, some of the challenges of being a generic PAT, some of the positives of being a generic PAT, and some positives which I see in developing in UHI that make my role easier.

The PAT role I gather in UHI is very often taken by somebody that’s already teaching the students concerned. The big difference is where you are working with students on an online degree, or degrees where they’ve not got a lot of contact with their own people, their own tutors and so what it really means is you much have much less exposure to the students in the PAT role which I do. Some of them appear for induction and basically disappear for the entire course that they are on, so it’s often difficult to catch people and chase them up, and I’ve got no knowledge of some of the subjects when I start the role, I’ve got no knowledge of some of the subjects which I’m involved in which is a little bit alarming.

So, the way I got into this PAT role is I’ve been a core skills tutor, I’ve been a teacher of communication over the years, and various other bits and pieces. Orkney College suddenly had a dozen Child and Youth Studies students who got no means of support who needed a student advisor, and I was given three hours a week in which to do that process, and I’ve done that now for a lot of years. But, I’ve got nobody here in college who was on the degree team for that degree, and so my own research and problem solving skills had to develop rather rapidly. I had to find out who all the rest of the team were, and how to start to support the students on a degree I knew virtually nothing about. I think it took me about 4 years really to get a good understanding of the degree, to follow new students right the way through the degree, and to work out what on earth I was trying to do. So, at the moment I’m a PAT for 20-odd students – not 20 odd students, 20-30 students on eight different degrees. That has its challenges.

So I’ve got Child and Youth Studies – 12 students there, I’ve had those over the years – always about a dozen students or so in the group. But there’s a smattering of others, five applied music, two childhood practice, two history, two literature, two tourism and

hospitality, one cultural studies, I had up to 30 cultural studies at one point. That's gone drastically down because of the new HAP regulations. History and Politics, I've got a Sports Management person coming up, one or two more degrees possibly coming up, so it's a weird old mixture. "

Students tell us

The vital support that PATs provide is highlighted in these comments from students in BA Child and Youth Studies.

'Hats off to the team they were Brilliant!'

'The support was fantastic!'

'Encouragement and advice I have received from the team from the team at UHI has been fantastic and I hope as I go forward I can build on the foundations you have given me'

What PATs do

PATs are a member of the university's academic teaching staff, support staff or Learning Centre manager. It is normally expected that a PAT would be educated to at least one SCQF level above their module responsibility or be a member of the Higher Education Academy or hold a TQFE or equivalent qualification. Some university partners may not be able to provide PATs with these qualifications and if this is the case academic the partner may be asked to confirm a PAT is sufficiently experienced in providing academic support to students.



Erika Sutherland, MLitt Archaeological Studies at the Orkney College UHI campus

Academic advice to students

A key responsibility is to provide an informed response to academic studies queries at all points of engagement with the University from entry to post exit. Providing academic support is central to the role of a PAT and can make a significant contribution to the successful outcomes for a student.

Providing academic advice to students will vary, however there are a number of required minimum standards which are indicated below, but there's also a wide range of academic issues on which a student may seek advice from a PAT - for example study skills, academic writing and how to manage your time effectively.



A PAT meeting a student

Student support and guidance will be available at each academic partner college, and you should familiarise yourself with what is offered locally. In addition there are resources which are available to all University students. In the tabs below, you'll find resources to support you in providing this advice to students.

Advisory sessions

It is expected that PATs conduct an introductory meeting with their students in the starting semester each year as part of an extended induction to the university and the specific course/year of study.

PATs are often:

- A member of academic staff, support staff or Learning Centre manager acting as a PAT for a number of students who are studying a number of subjects. This is often the case in smaller Academic Partners who provide HAP (Home Academic Partner) facilities for a number of students but are not directly responsible for teaching the courses. In the latter instance signposting students to programme leaders for specific academic queries may be required.
- Lecturers on the students programme in question or a related subject area.

Whilst a PAT will often be a subject expert in their students' programme of study a PAT is not expected to bring that subject expertise to bear for all modules on the course. When subject specific questions arise, the PAT's agreed responsibility is to refer the student to the Module Leader, co-deliverer or Programme Leader if appropriate. A PAT's responsibility tends to fall into four broad areas of student support:

1. Academic advice to students
2. Signposting and referral
3. Online module selection
4. Student withdrawal

The following sections will look at each of these areas in turn and provide guidance and resources for you and for the students you provide support to.

Essential student skills

A key part of the university induction is encouraging students to work through the [Essential student skills resources](#).

In addition they should provide a minimum of one academic advisory session on an individual basis, where academic progress is reviewed per student each semester. Records of these meetings must be kept in confidence and made available to others only with students' permission. Concern over academic progress is to be discussed and actioned as

appropriate. PATs should particularly ensure that those students who do not receive face to face teaching within their HAP are communicated with on a regular basis.

Academic standards and quality regulations

Supporting students by providing information on [Academic Standards and Quality Regulations](#), is an important role for a PAT. The regulations cover all undergraduate and postgraduate students and originally were ratified by Network Academic Council (NAC) in October 1997. Since then, the regulations have been subject to regular amendments and additions.

Avoidance of plagiarism

The avoidance of plagiarism and copyright issues are crucial for students.

University students are expected to cite and reference any sources appropriately and are warned that a failure to acknowledge someone else's intellectual property is regarded as plagiarism. There are a range of resources to support students to fulfil their responsibilities in this area. These are available from the [University's How to web page](#) which contains the following links:

Support and Guidance

Support and guidance is often available at a student's academic partner college, and you should familiarise yourself with what is offered locally. The UHI student referencing guide:

- [UHI student referencing guide - English \(pdf\)](#)
- [UHI student referencing guide - Gaelic \(pdf\)](#)
- [UHI quick guide to referencing - English \(pdf\)](#)
- [UHI quick guide to referencing - Gaelic \(pdf\)](#)

Copyright

The University has guidelines and support on copyright issues these can be found on the [UHI Copyright licensing](#) area of the University website. The University has promoted the [JISC Online Copyright Course](#) which provides the key information on copyright issues for University and College lecturers. Although JISC Legal appears to have closed and archived, the resources can still be accessed and used but will not reflect any future changes to legislation.

Signposting and referring

PATs are not expected to know about every aspect of study provision with the University, so a valuable role in supporting students is to provide signposting and early referral to appropriate specialist information and assistance. This may include signposting on such issues as ICT (Information Communications Technology) access, library and learning resources, finance and personal concerns, including issues relating to disability or additional support needs and careers advice.



A student studying

Types of signposting

Some PATs feel very comfortable with the pastoral aspects of advising and others may feel that anything beyond academic advising should be referred to the Student Support Services Team straight away. It is important for the student and for the PAT that each PAT recognises the extent of their expertise, ability and comfort zone in dealing with each individual student/situation.

Support Services in each academic partner have professional expertise in a wide range of support areas and are there to help both advisers and students. Where a student agrees to be referred to more specialist services, try to make the referral during your meeting with the student and then to keep in touch and monitor progress. Keeping in regular contact is especially important where a student is a remote or networked learner and these students should expect a minimum of two pro-active contacts from their PAT each academic session.

Useful signposting links

There is probably no such thing as a typical list of signposting required by students, however the following links help with the common queries from students.

[Learning & Information Services](#)

[Library and learning resources](#)

[Finance and personal concerns](#)

[Careers advice](#)

[International students](#)

Mitigating circumstances

As a PAT you will be expected to provide advice and assistance to students about submitting a claim for mitigating circumstances, and providing evidence to support the claim. There is guidance on mitigating circumstances in Appendix H of the [University Regulations](#).

A student might have an approved entitlement to access coursework extensions as a result of disclosed additional support needs. Such an entitlement would be documented in the student's Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP), as a planned response to disclosed additional needs. PLSP adjustments are treated separately from claims for Mitigating Circumstances.

Mitigating Circumstances Procedure for UHI Approved Awards

- Mitigating Circumstances procedure for degree students – [guidance and FAQs in Exam Board Sharepoint area](#)
- Mitigating Circumstances procedure for degree students – [process map](#)
- Mitigating Circumstances procedure for SQA students - [guidance in SQA Sharepoint area](#)

Mitigating Circumstances – online claim process for degree students

Step by Step Guide

Step 1

Student completes the mitigating circumstances claim form online via [UHI Records student hub](#) using own login (**or PAT can do this on behalf of student**). Completes all sections and press submit. When they press submit, an email notification containing the link to the claim will be sent to their PAT to check the details.

Step 2

PAT receives email notification that this is a Mitigating Circumstances claim for each student and they need to complete their sections via the online process. A link to the claim will be included in the email received. PAT completes their sections of the claim. When they press submit an email notification containing the link to the claim will be sent to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel Chair. Also an email notification will be sent to the student indicating the PAT has completed their sections.

N.B if you have completed the claim on behalf of the student, then please still complete this section as well.

Step 3

Mitigating Circumstances Panel Chair receives email notification claim for each student and they need to review the claim and make the decision whether the claim is approved or otherwise. An email notification of the decision will then be sent to the student and PAT.

Step 4

The decision will be recorded on all relevant module assessments in SITS by MC Administrator ready for Tier 1 exam boards.

Step 5

Module leader enters marks with relevant penalties applied (Module leader to be reminded that when entering marks against MC/ML flag the MC/ML flag should not be removed).

Step 6

Confirmed MC decision will be on module reports for tier 1 so ML/PL/chair/clerk have access to this.

Step 7

Exam Board

1. True mark will be recorded i.e. any late penalties lifted
2. Marks agreed by exam board and resit opportunities discussed and agreed. This is recorded by the exam board clerk.

For further details on the mitigating circumstances procedure for UHI approved awards [please click here](#).

Withdrawal process

The relationship between PATs and students is vital in this process as PATs will be able to spot signs of students disengaging at an early stage and can initiate appropriate interventions to help them re-engage. However when a student or staff member begins the withdrawal process, the Personal Academic Tutor will be notified to allow them to support the student and explain the options available to them.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations

The withdrawal process is detailed in section 16 of the [Academic Standards and Quality Regulations](#). The online withdrawal form must be completed for all students withdrawing from their programme of study. Both the PAT and the Programme Leader have a role in the withdrawal/transfer or suspension process.

The role of the Module Leader in this process would be to flag up concerns e.g. about poor attendance or lack of achievement with the relevant PAT so that an appropriate course of action may be taken.

Permanent withdrawal - This is where a student is seeking to discontinue their programme of study with no intention of returning in the near future.

Suspension of studies - A student seeks to suspend their studies for a set period of time, perhaps due to illness or other personal circumstances. This is not an available option for individual modules/units.

Student led withdrawals, suspensions and transfers

A student who is intending to withdraw, suspend or transfer their studies, should first contact their PAT. The PAT will be able to signpost students to appropriate services as required where they can discuss any background issues or alternative options other than withdrawal/suspension and the financial implications of this. It is not intended that PATs provide this information but rather that they point the student in the right direction to the team that can handle these issues.

Online withdrawal form

Students, for whatever reason, can **initiate** a withdrawal or suspension however they cannot complete a withdrawal/suspension or transfer form. They should in the first instance contact their PAT and can do so if they wish, by completing the section '*I wish to withdraw/suspend/transfer*' on [UHI Records](#). An email will be sent to their PAT so they can discuss circumstances and options and for the PAT to process the withdrawal form if

appropriate. **Withdrawal/suspension/transfer forms can only be completed by a member of staff.**

Transfer of studies

This is where a student wishes to transfer programme, mode of attendance or HAP.

University led withdrawals

Who can initiate a withdrawal?

Students, for whatever reason, can also initiate a withdrawal. They should complete the section 'I wish to withdraw/suspend/transfer' on UHI Records and an email will be sent to their PAT so they can discuss circumstances and options and for the PAT to process the withdrawal form if appropriate. Withdrawal forms can only be completed by a member of staff and processed by SRO who update records and inform SAAS/SLC if applicable.

Early intervention is critical in the retention of UHI students. Where a student has failed to engage with their studies for a period of 3 weeks (or as stated within their module descriptor/programme handbook) a member of staff (usually the module leader) should contact the student's PAT so that an appropriate course of action may be taken, with a view to re-engaging them with their studies.

The Student Records Office have produced a [useful guide](#) to withdrawal, suspension, and transfer which includes important information relating to dates (i.e. the point in the academic year) and the subsequent academic and financial consequences.

Thinking of leaving?

If a student intends to withdraw, they should be advised to consider the financial implications of this as well. Further information about this can be found at [Thinking of Leaving](#).

When informed that a student is suspended/withdrawn, the university Student Records Office will contact them in writing to explain what this means and their options e.g. appeal process. Any request for suspension/permanent withdrawal should not be submitted, or supported, where any disciplinary process, which may result in loss of registered status, has already commenced.

Indispensable resources

The range of information a PAT could need probably touches on every aspect of student learning. It's not been possible to include everything within these resources but here are a few essentials:

UHI Records

Log into [UHI Records](#)

Then click the **PAT button** from the Staff Hub:

And click **View My Students**:

The My Students screen includes a Student Support column. A View link and flag will be visible for any student who has an arrangement in place within Additional Support Online as a result of disclosed additional support needs. Click the View link for further details of the support measures agreed for that student.

If you can see a flag in the Student Support column without a View link you are advised to contact local Academic Partner Student Services in the first instance to ensure the appropriate records are set up.

Further support

Further details are available at [Disability matters](#) and from the university's Disability Support Coordinator, Mark Ross (Mark.Ross@uhi.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP)

The university's web-based Additional Support Online system enables students with an approved Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) in place to access their support records via UHI Records. The system records a student's interactions with Academic Partner Student Services and is available to FE and HE students.

Additional Support Online allows students with disclosed needs and relevant staff (e.g. student support practitioners and Personal Academic Tutors) to view and work from a single source of data from within UHI Records. On-demand reports are now also available to provide details of specific student requirements on a need-to-know basis (e.g. to Academic Partner Exams Officers, for the purposes of implementing exam arrangements).

The system promotes transparency in the provision of student support and engages the student as an equal partner in the process.

PATs can use Additional Support Online to:

- **View** details of a student's appointments / contact with Academic Partner Student Services.
- **Identify** which of their students has an approved PLSP in place, and view relevant PLSP recommendations that have been put in place for the student. PATs are

responsible for disseminating a student's Summary of Support to relevant staff involved in teaching the student.

- **Download** a university dyslexia sticker for a student (if access to dyslexia stickers has been approved within their PLSP).
- **View** items of equipment that have been loaned to help support the student during their studies, and see when loaned items are due back.
- **View** any exam arrangements that have been approved for the student.

International students



International student

Each international student will have a HAP and it is the responsibility of that HAP to assign a PAT to those international students just as they would for any other student. Each academic partner will have either a designated individual or department with responsibility for ensuring legislation is complied with and becomes process. They will work with departments and teams within their AP to ensure any such requirements are reinforced. There will be a natural interaction between the PAT and the aforementioned individuals and departments e.g. the PAT may need to flag up poor attendance.

More information on [international students](#) is available from the university website.

Careers and Employability Centre

Careers and Employability Centre – Helping students look up, look forward and be in the know.

Over the course of our lives we will make frequent career decisions. Our careers, alongside many other areas of our lives, are subject to constant change and the influences of unplanned events. Iain Eisner and Helen Anton from the Careers team encourage students not to see career decisions as 'problems to be solved' but as amazing opportunities to look creatively at possibilities and take action to change things.

Accessing support from the Careers team is easy and can be done through the online [FutureMe](#) service.

[FutureMe](#) allows users to:

Book one to one career advice and coaching appointments with Iain and Helen,) via email, telephone or videoconference. (Face to face meetings can also take place depending on location and availability)

Upload CV's & application forms for personalised feedback

Book a mock interview

Submit a careers related question online

Search and book on to career development events and workshops

Access the [Jobshop](#) to search a range of local, national and international opportunities

In addition, a full suite of career development resources are available through our [website](#) providing information and advice on various topics such as:

Managing your career

Options with your qualification

Job searching

CVs and applications

In your role as a PAT if you find yourself in a conversation where you think a referral to the Careers team would be helpful please feel free to contact Iain or Helen for an initial discussion.

Iain Eisner iain.eisner@uhi.ac.uk

Helen Anton helen.anton@uhi.ac.uk

Testimonials

"I received advice on how to approach my interview, the sort of questions that I am likely to face, and how to prepare and structure answers. Helen was very helpful and, following our meeting, I feel more confident about interviewing."

"Iain was very thorough and went through every aspect of my CV with me. He gave me very constructive advice, which I followed, to improve my CV and bring it up to date. Iain was very thoughtful in how he presented ideas and gave me great advice which I plan to follow. I am very grateful the service is there."

"A brilliant response... helpful, informative, understanding and friendly."



The banner features five circular icons with labels: 'Book an event' (calendar and clock), 'FutureMe' (two people), 'Book an appointment' (person and clock), 'JobShop' (checkmark), and 'Resources' (gears). Below these is the University of the Highlands and Islands logo and the text 'FutureMe Helping you look up, look forward and be in the know'. A colorful brain graphic is on the right. The bottom purple bar contains contact details: 'Contact details', 'careers@uhi.ac.uk', '01463 279213', 'www.uhi.ac.uk/careers', and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter.

Book an event FutureMe Book an appointment JobShop Resources

University of the Highlands and Islands
Olltrigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean

FutureMe

Helping you look up, look forward and be in the know

Contact details
careers@uhi.ac.uk 01463 279213 www.uhi.ac.uk/careers f t

Clàraich airson tachartas

Mi fhìn ri thighinn

Clàraich airson coinneimh

Bùth obrach

Goireasan

University of the Highlands and Islands
Oidhgh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean

FutureMe

*A 'cuideachadh leat a coimhead suas,
a coimhead air adhart agus a bhith èòlach.*

Fiosrachadh conaltraidh
 📧 careers@uhi.ac.uk 📞 01463 279213 🌐 www.uhi.ac.uk/careers

Useful links

Please follow the centre on [Facebook](#) and Twitter or check the [MyDay portal](#) for announcements and news items.

PATS may also find these online [career resources](#) useful.

There are many useful career sites that students would find useful. Helen and Iain are always available to offer advice and suggestions on information sources that you can pass on to a student.

University Records: PAT Updating Tool

It is **crucial** that the names of PATs and the students assigned to them are recorded in SITS in order that the PAT can be identified and be contacted when appropriate. For example, while many academic partners have efficient internal mechanisms to link PATs with academic staff delivering programmes this can be problematic on networked programmes. This will assist activities relating to; student support, module/unit selection, withdrawals and mitigating circumstances.



Student filling in a form

Once the PAT assignments have been made by academic partners, the information will be entered into SITS using the relevant network ID (i.e. 'EO01XX'). The academic partners determine who will be responsible for entering this information and ensure that the information and any support needed are provided as appropriate

An online tool developed for this purpose is available via [UHI records](#) and can be accessed by all staff members. The PAT Updating Tool provides details about:

- logging in to student records
- PAT assignment by individual student
- PAT assignment by course

It is up to those entering the information to choose which option they will use e.g. if staff are provided with a class list then it may be easier to use the PAT assignment by course option, if it is just a few students at a time then the individual student tool might be easier to use.

Semester timeline

The responsibilities and key PAT activities can be reviewed as a timeline. The timeline below which Matt Sillars, Social Science Lecturer at Inverness College UHI uses, shows four distinct 'predictable moments' and details the key activities within each moment.



Prior to term starting

- Interview
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Induction arrangements
- Agreeing module choice
- Course options and choices
- Enrolments
- RPL applicators

During first few weeks

- Late enrolments
- Late inductions
- Late module choice
- First PAT interview

Mid course

- Second PAT interview
- Mitigating circumstances submissions
- S1 exam board
- UCAS references

End of year / Exit interviews

- Mitigating circumstances submission
- S2 exam board
- UCAS references
- Progression interviews / Exit interviews

Stressing

Well, I feel that we have to stop stressing. Andy's contribution at the beginning very much reflected my feelings of being very overwhelmed, at least initially and still at certain times of the year. You cannot think you've got everything under control and then something else comes in, and it becomes stressful again, so stop stressing and finding ways of talking to each other and to get better at it.

I think it's important that PATs realise the significance of their role and the fact that in terms of issues like retention, PATs are extremely important, because they are the people that will sometimes pick up if a student is struggling before anybody else does. So I would want to encourage PATs that what they are doing is very important and they need to just bang on doors, email people and basically make noise until they get the specific help that they need in those moments of crisis, or those times when suddenly things are moving on rapidly and they're not sure where to turn. I think it's important that PATs do that, so that on the one hand there's pressure from Iain and people like Iain to improve the systems, but on the other hand, the PATs are a little bit more empowered to make a noise when things aren't working for them.

Bookshelf

The bookshelf contains the downloadable forms; links to web pages and other documents which have been mentioned in this resource. Click on any of the items to access. These can be downloaded and printed. Some of these may be updated in the future so you should check periodically that you are using the most update version of these documents. When using the downloadable forms, please ensure you adhere to your local academic partner Data Protection Processes, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Scroll down to browse more bookshelves.

Academic partner contact lists

[Academic partner student support contacts \(PDF\)](#)

[Academic partner librarians \(PDF\)](#)

[PAT contact per academic partner \(PDF\)](#)

Downloadable information

[The range and limits of PAT support \(PDF\)](#)

[The Personal Academic Tutor Role \(PDF\)](#)

[Class Rep guidance \(PDF\)](#)

[Higher Education Leadership Foundation: Effective Listening \(PDF\)](#)

[Higher Education Leadership Foundation: Top tips on to do lists \(PDF\)](#)

[PAT Access to Additional Student Support Online \(PDF\)](#)

[Initial contact form \(Word\)](#)

[Interim contact form \(Word\)](#)

[Student progress review form \(Word\)](#)

[Research Ethics Policy & Process \(PDF\)](#)

[PAT process for allocating PATs and recording in SITS](#)

[Guidance for Resit Requirements](#)

[Mental Health e-Learning](#)

Weblinks to further resources

[Student Records Office Guidance: Sharepoint](#)

[University's Careers and Employability Centre](#)

[Essential student skills](#)

[University of the Highlands and Islands strategic vision and plan 2015 - 2020](#)

[UHI academic standards and quality regulations](#)

[How to cite and reference](#)

[Copyright licensing](#)

[Learning & Information Services](#)

[Library and learning resources](#)

[Finance and personal concerns](#)

[International students](#) (Pages 8 and page 12)

[Disability matters](#)

[Mental Health Toolkit](#)

FAQs

Below is a list of frequently asked questions. Click on the question text to **reveal** the answer; click the question again to **hide** the answer. To refresh the screen click F5.

Q: Who is responsible for assigning a PAT?

A: This is the responsibility of the student's HAP. Each AP will have their own internal process for ensuring this happens in an appropriate manner.

Q: What does HAP mean?

A: HAP stands for Home Academic Partner. The HAP is the academic partner at which the student is based and enrolled. The HAP is expected to:

- Be an Academic Partner of UHI
- Enrol students on their programme
- Provide the student with a local induction
- Provide appropriate library¹, VC and PC access
- Provide pastoral support e.g. information on funding, counselling
- Provide a Hosting Manager
- Provide rooms/labs/workshops² etc. as required for course and facilities for exams and assessments.
- Collect fees
- Ensure each student has been provided with a Personal Academic Tutor.

Q: Does this mean that the HAP provides a PAT and the programme team also provide a student advisor? Who would be the named contact in SITS?

A: No, definitely not. Each student has only one PAT and that is the PAT provided by their HAP. Programme teams should not be providing any such duplicate role. It is the PAT as specified by the HAP that will be recorded in SITS.

¹ It is recognised that under certain circumstances inter library loans and provision of electronic text may be required to support hosted students. Flexibility is required for students studying in rural locations where books take longer to arrive via post.

² In a situation where a HAP does not have laboratory or workshop facilities to support a particular programme then students on that particular programme should not normally be hosted at the HAP.

Q: If a student is not based within a UHI AP e.g. they are studying on a wholly online programme and live in England, who assigns their PAT?

A: The student's HAP would be the recruiting academic partner. It would be the responsibility of that HAP to provide a PAT for those students just as they would do for any other.

Q: Are PATs assigned to HN students as well as degree students?

A: Yes. The introduction of the PAT role related to all UHI HE students.

Q: Do PATs need to have subject specific knowledge directly relating to the subject studied by their students?

A: PATs will be expected to have an understanding of academia, programme structures and relevant quality guidelines but does not need to be expert in the subject studied by their students, although they could be.

It is expected that a PAT will fit one of two profiles:

1. A member of academic staff acting as a PAT for students studying a wide range of subjects. This is particularly likely in smaller APs with a number of students on a programme of study for which the HAP does not employ a module leader for any modules relating to their programme".
2. PATs who are most probably lecturers on the programme in question or a related subject area.

N.B. whilst a PAT will often be a subject expert in their students' programme of study the PAT is not expected to bring that subject expertise to bear. When subject specific questions arise, the PATs' agreed responsibility is to refer the student to the Module Leader, co-deliverer or Programme Leader as appropriate.

Q: Does the remitted time allocation for the PAT role relate to the whole year or just the teaching weeks?

A: The PAT is the PAT for the whole of that academic year. As remission can only be given from timetabled time the remitted time allocation can only be applied to teaching weeks – you can't remit from something that isn't there. There is no expectation that any sort of aggregation of time spent on the PAT role out with teaching weeks should be applied.

Q: How does the time allocation relate to part-time students?

A: All part-time students should have a PAT. The remitted time allowance relates to a student FTE therefore this would be applied on a pro-rate basis for part-time students. It

is recognised that the definition of a part-time student ranges from a 'dabbler' doing one unit or module only to a cohort of students on a structured programme. There may be a need to refine that recommendation further or provide further guidance. This will be considered and actioned if necessary at the end of this academic year. Meanwhile, we would ask APs to take a pragmatic approach during 2012/13 to ensure that the appropriate level of service is both provided and serviced.

Q: Who is responsible for international students i.e. assigning the PATs and also dealing with stuff like the border agency requirements?

A: Each international student will have a HAP and it is the responsibility of that HAP to assign a PAT to those international students just as they would for any other student. Each academic partner will have either a designated individual or department with responsibility for ensuring legislation is complied with and becomes process. They will work with departments and teams within their AP to ensure any such requirements are reinforced. There will be a natural interaction between the PAT and the aforementioned individuals and departments e.g. the PAT may need to flag up poor attendance.

Q: I realise you have provided pro-formas for PATs. How long should we keep the completed documents for?

A: Please comply with the recommended practice within your own academic partner.

Q: How will a ML or PL know who a student's PAT is and how will a PAT know who other PATS are?

A: The PAT details for all students will be recorded in SITS. UHI records will allow a member of staff to: enter a student's id number to find out who the student's PAT. There will also be a report function to show which PATs have current students attached to them.

Q: Are students able to change the PAT details in SITS?

A: No, that won't be possible.

Q: How will the PAT role be monitored?

A: The implementation of this role will be monitored in a number of ways including auditing and use of the annual quality monitoring process.

For example:

- Regular reports will be run on a regular basis in 2012/13 to ensure the PAT details are being entered in SITS. Omissions will be identified and followed up.
- The effectiveness of the PAT role may also be evidenced via the annual quality monitoring process.

- The Student Support Team will be working with PATs to ensure the role is implemented successfully and provide support for the PATs. This will allow issues that arise to be identified and resolved quickly and efficiently.

Q: Who has responsibility for initiating the withdrawal process? The Module Leader (ML), Programme Leader (PL) or PAT?

A: The withdrawal process is detailed in section 16 of the Academic Standards and Quality Regulations (2012/13). This is supported by the Withdrawal/transfer proforma that must be completed for all students withdrawing from their programme of study. You can see from those documents that both the PAT and the PL have a role in the withdrawal/transfer or suspension process. The role of the ML in this respect would be to flag up concerns e.g. about poor attendance or lack of achievement with the appropriate PAT so that an appropriate course of action may be taken.

Q: Who is responsible for contacting a suspended student before they return?

A: The following guidance is provided within Dr Heather Fotheringham, the UHI Student Retention Coordinator's paper:

Returning after a period of suspension

Students approaching the end of a period of suspension will be contacted by UHI Student Records Office asking them to confirm their intentions regarding return to study. Their options will be:

- to re-enter their original programme (if still available) at an appropriate point;
- to re-engage with study at UHI but negotiate entry to an alternative programme of study;
- to request a further period of suspension;
- to request permanent withdrawal.

If a student does not respond to confirm their intention to return to study, they will be permanently withdrawn by the University.

Improving as a PAT

Despite the skills and knowledge we amass through our experience it is sometimes useful to have a few helpful reminders and resources to refine what we do and how we do it.

Whichever method of communication you decide to use make sure you communicate this to students and that they know how and when to contact you. Don't assume that they will know how to contact you or that they will find this information from another source.

Listening to the experiences of PATs, the following four skill areas were highlighted as particularly important. For each skill area you'll find general guidance to support these aspects of being a PAT.

Communication

Higher Education Leadership Foundation: Effective Listening



[Good Practice for leaders and managers](#)

The results of a recent survey suggests that PATs tend to use email or face to face meetings to communicate with students. PATs have told us how important active listening is so here is a resource from the [Higher Education Leadership Foundation: Effective Listening](#) who have kindly allowed us to include a small number of resources from their Knowledge Bank.



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Confidentiality

University's Data Protection Policy

When a student discloses personal information to the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), it should remain in confidence. However, if the PAT feels that, in the student's best interest, the information should be shared with others, for example if the student has additional support needs and requires specialist support arrangements, the student's agreement must be obtained first. All staff must comply with the [University's Data Protection Policy](#).

Exceptions

- Where information disclosed suggests that the student is involved in illegal activity or in serious breach of Academic Partner policies.
- Where a PAT has concerns that the student may cause harm to himself/herself or to others.
- In these circumstances, each Academic Partner should have a nominated person, such as a Student Services Manager or someone within the Senior Management Team, whom the PAT can contact.

Managing your time

Where possible it is a good idea to meet students as a group to cover common issues. How you meet with students and for how long depends on what works best for you. Here are some examples of how some PATs have met with students:

- Timetable 15 minute sessions with each student;
- Provide 3 half hour sessions over a year;
- Provide a regular appointment for queries.
- Meet with students as a group to cover common issues

Make sure that you set realistic expectations at the start and decide how and when you are going to be available.

Ten Tips for To-Do Lists

A number of PATs have said that the role can be very demanding and time-consuming especially at particular points during the semester. A quick google search or a search on UHI Library will demonstrate that there are lots of freely available online resources on time management. Here is one example from the [Higher Education Leadership Foundation](#) who have kindly allowed us to include a small number of resources from their Knowledge Bank.



[Good Practice for leaders and managers](#)

Time management

The time management resources created for our students may also be just as helpful to you. Here is a link to this section in the suite of [Essential student skills](#).

Record keeping

Records of these meetings must be kept in confidence and made available to others only with students' permission

It is helpful to use a pro-forma to record the main points of scheduled individual meetings in writing which include outcomes or action points. This information may be needed if a student needs to support a claim for mitigating circumstances or make an appeal.

You should keep a record of any interactions with students outside of formally scheduled meetings. A written record of student ID, time of contact, issue discussed and brief summary of advice given and any actions. This can be helpful should a student need to gather evidence for an appeal or mitigation later in the year. Keeping good records also ensures you have a note of when a student has contacted you, what it was about and what you said.

Data Protection

Record Keeping (within 'Improving as a PAT')

The GDPR sets out seven principles for the lawful processing of personal data. Processing includes the collection, organisation, structuring, storage, alteration, consultation, use, communication, combination, restriction, erasure or destruction of personal data. Broadly, the seven principles are:

- Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
- Purpose limitation
- Data minimisation
- Accuracy
- Storage limitation
- Integrity and confidentiality (security)
- Accountability

The principles are at the centre of the GDPR; they are the guiding principles of the regulation and compliant processing.

Data controllers are responsible for complying with the principles and letter of the regulation. Data Controllers are also accountable for their processing and must demonstrate their compliance. This is set out in the new accountability principle.

The full version of the seven principles gives more detail about the principles and their application.

Personal data shall be:

- a. "processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');
- b. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes ('purpose limitation');
- c. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation');
- d. accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy');
- e. kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or

statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals ('storage limitation');

- f. processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality')."

If you have any questions about data protection at UHI please contact the Data Protection Officer: dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk.

What Next...

We hope that this resource supports you in fulfilling your responsibilities as a PAT in the University of the Highlands and Islands. They have been design to be easily accessible, to provide quick access to key information and to support the development of professional skills through reflection and further practice.

If you would like further information on being a PAT or if you would like to share examples of your practice with colleagues by contributing to this resource, please contact:

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