

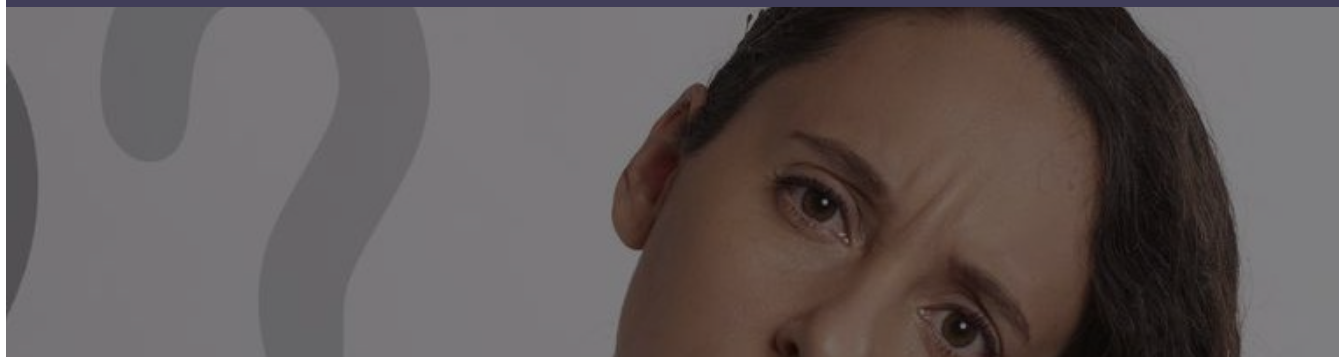



# Your Guide to Personal Academic Tutors (PAT) at the University of Greater Manchester

## What is a Personal Academic Tutor?

Your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) is a member of academic staff within your school whose role is to guide and support your academic, personal and professional development throughout your time at the University. Their aim, as the name suggests, is to provide support based on your individual needs.

Your PAT is your single point of contact for your overall support and guidance but is not related to the content of any individual modules. For example, they are able to advise on your general academic progress, recommend relevant resources and discuss options for any personal challenges affecting your studies. PATs have academic experience and an understanding of the range of support options available at the University and so they are an invaluable source of guidance on your journey through your studies.





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## Who is my PAT?

You should be introduced to your PAT during induction week or your first few weeks of study.

If you're not sure who your PAT is, our [student advisers](#) in the Student Services will be able to help you.



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## When do I meet my PAT?

Although schedules vary across schools and even within courses, you should expect to meet with your PAT for the first time during the induction activities taking place in the first few weeks of your course at the University.

You can contact your PAT to request meetings for advice when you need to. In addition, depending on your specific programme guidance, you may have timetabled meetings throughout the year. You can find a typical schedule of when you can expect to book a meeting or be contacted by your PAT in the Personal Academic Tutoring: Guide for Students (see [Student Policy Zone](#) for this academic year). Please be aware that not all courses follow the academic calendar and some Professional Statutory Regulatory bodies may have their own requirements. Further details are available directly from your PAT or your programme handbook.

If you are an international student or you enrolled later than the first week of study you should find out who your PAT is and contact them to arrange a meeting as soon as possible. Your PAT can then ensure that you receive all the information you need.



## What can I discuss with my PAT?

Meetings with your PAT can focus on anything you feel is important about your academic progress and goals, such as your results and feedback across your modules, but you can also discuss any personal difficulties you may be experiencing, especially if any of these issues are impacting on your ability to succeed in your studies.

Your PAT can help you to identify areas for improvement, suggest opportunities for development, guide you to take appropriate action and signpost you to further specialist support if needed.

In short, discussions with your PAT are opportunities for you to talk through any concerns, celebrate achievements and plan your next steps.



## **What academic support can I get from my PAT?**

Meetings with your PAT will most likely centre around your general academic progress, for example:

1

Supporting you to make the transition to studying at university, progressing through your course and on to higher levels of study

2

Reviewing your academic developments and achievements

3

Helping you to make the most of the feedback on your assignments

4

Identifying any concerns and support needs

5

Referring you for further specialist support if appropriate

6

Advising you on progression options and support for refer/defer work

7

Encouraging you to reflect on your skills and experience

8


Promoting the value of wider engagement in extra-curricular activities.

Your PAT is not there to work with you on your assignments, but if you are struggling academically to complete work, or if you are looking for ways to improve, your PAT can provide general academic guidance.

Any queries about specific assignments should be discussed with the module tutor.







## What welfare and wellbeing support can I get from my PAT?

Sometimes life presents us with personal challenges, for example: financial worries, anxiety, depression, physical illness, bereavement and other traumatic events outside of your control. If you feel your personal circumstances are adversely affecting your studies, or even if you're worried that they may do at some later stage, we strongly recommend that you discuss your concerns with your PAT. Even if they are unable to help you themselves, they are aware of the professional support services within the University and can direct or refer you to these specialist teams if needed.

Keeping your PAT informed also means that they are able to advise you promptly of any implications to your study and guide you on any steps you may need to take, such as requests for extensions to assignment deadlines, the University's Mitigating Circumstances procedure (see [Student Policy Zone](#) for this academic year) and, if appropriate, how to suspend studies and resume at a later date.

How much personal information you choose to share with your PAT is up to you, but be aware that your PAT will need to know enough about your circumstances to provide the most suitable advice for you.

Your PAT will require your consent to pass on your details unless they feel there is a risk to you or others. In this case they will need to disclose the relevant facts to the appropriate teams at the University, for example staff responsible for safeguarding.

## Mental health and wellbeing

The University's Life Lounge brings together specialist Mental Health and Wellbeing services, **free** for all students to access. Although your PAT's role is not to act as a mental health adviser, if they feel you could benefit from this type of support, they are able to refer you, on your behalf, as long as they have your consent to do so.

If you prefer, you can self-refer to this confidential service by completing the online registration form. Further details about this resource and the form are available from the [Life Lounge](#) homepage.



### How do I contact or meet with my PAT?

You can contact your PAT to request a meeting or tutorial via email, in person, and possibly other communication platforms. Once you have met your PAT, you can ask them what their preference is.

## Email —

If you choose to email your PAT make sure to include some initial details about your concerns. Your PAT may then schedule a tutorial, or in some cases simply respond to provide insight, suggestions, resources, or refer you to the appropriate support services at the University.

## In-person —

If your query can be resolved through a brief discussion, such as a quick question about general academic skills, a straightforward pastoral query or requests for information on how to access support, there may be opportunities to call in-person to speak with your PAT. If, however, your query cannot be resolved in this time, you will need to schedule a meeting.

## Other communication platforms —

Some courses may have their own additional means of communication, but your PAT or Programme Leader will introduce these to you in your induction week and early stages of the course if applicable.







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## Can I change my PAT?

You can request to change your PAT by contacting your Programme Leader within your subject area.

Your request can only be granted providing there are other PATs available with the capacity to take on an extra student.

Although you are not required to give reasons for requesting this change you **may** be asked to attend a meeting.



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## Key take aways

We highly recommend that you get to know your PAT. This is an ongoing and collaborative relationship which encourages you to develop the skills and confidence to succeed, but also to ask for support should you need to and so they are an invaluable source of guidance as you progress through your studies.