



The British University in Egypt

Personal Academic Tutor Guide

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Introduction

As a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) you will play a key role in supporting your tutees' learning experiences throughout their time at University. You will need to offer motivation, guidance and support in an approachable and professional manner. Your students will find that engaged and proactive PATs are of great value and benefit to them and meaningfully enhance the student experience.

This guide is designed to support you in your role as a PAT and help to ensure that you are prepared in terms of roles and responsibilities, good practice and general related information.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the PAT

PATs will be primarily responsible for developing and maintaining contact with their allocated tutees. 1:1 and group sessions with tutees should provide assistance and advice on academic matters, as well as general guidance on personal development.

The role of the PAT includes the need to:

- Develop and sustain a supportive relationship with your tutees
- Set boundaries and expectations around your role with your tutees
- Clarify the ways in which students can communicate with you and your teaching colleagues
- Provide advice and assist on personal and academic planning, development and progression.
- Follow up with tutees who are not making satisfactory academic progress
- Provide advice on Academic Regulations
- Provide advice on expectations of the degree programme including assessment requirements, module choices and progression criteria
- Publish and keep to your regular weekly office hours
- Keep records of attendance and communications with tutees and follow up on absences
- Respect the confidentiality of discussions with their tutees as appropriate
- Record attendance at tutorials and maintain accurate and secure records of any sensitive discussions with their tutees using appropriate systems
- Be aware of, and establish communication with, student support services on behalf of tutees as necessary
- Provide references for tutees on request

The role of the PAT does not include:

- Counselling students on wellbeing or mental health issues. In such cases students should be referred to the Student Hub
- Academic support at a module level which should be referred to the relevant module leader

PATs will be provided with a list of their tutees with contact details on the SRS. The list is provided by the Student Affairs team.

Frequency of Meetings

As a minimum, all PATs should arrange to meet with their tutees within the first week of term, normally during Induction week. Student attendance at the first meeting is compulsory. This process is designed to ensure that all students know who their PAT is and can build and maintain a professional relationship. A second mandatory meeting should take place in teaching week four (TW4) to discuss how tutees are settling in, to remind tutees about the role of the Personal Tutor and where they can find help and support.

PATs should also arrange to meet with their tutees within the first week of the second semester to review their marks profile and assess academic progress. Student attendance at this meeting is also compulsory.

Minimum frequency of PAT meetings is set out in the table below:

Year	Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2
Preparatory Year	Induction Week/TW 1 – Mandatory meeting	TW 4 – Mandatory meeting	TW 1 – Mandatory meeting (marks review S1)

Recording Student Attendance

Student attendance at PAT meetings should be recorded in the SRS. The SRS allows tutors to record two different types of meetings with students - Personal Meetings and General Meetings. 'Personal' meetings can be used by tutors to record the dates of meetings, any issues raised and any additional steps to be taken (called 'progression plan' on the SRS). Notes of meetings and topics discussed that are confidential in nature should be kept to a minimum, where possible. In addition, tutors can also capture 'General Meetings', again, tutors can add the date, any issues discussed and any additional steps to be taken.

Attendance at 'Personal' meeting will be followed up on with the Academic Services team.

Best Practice

The student experience can have a profound influence in shaping not only an individual, but also their perception of The British University in Egypt. A positive experience requires frequent encouragement and support and as a PAT you will play a vital role in that process. Encouraging and developing your tutees to engage in reflective practice on both an academic and personal development level is an integral part of what the PAT aims to do.

In terms of good practice PATs should:

- * Recognise that being a PAT is a key role and a normal responsibility of an academic in a UK-style University setting.
- * Know your tutees by name
- * Meet with your tutees as regularly as possible but, at a minimum, three times a year.
- * During the first meeting outline the roles and responsibilities of the PAT and establish the PATs role as providing a first point of contact for tutees. You may wish to have a group meeting in the first instance.
- * Be open and approachable with your tutees. Make it clear that you, as your tutees' PAT, and also as a representative for the University as a whole, care about the students' academic and personal welfare and their individual academic journey.
- * Take notes of any meetings, include issues or concerns, and follow up at the next meeting or between meetings if necessary.
- * Keep informed and up to date on academic regulations and processes relating to academic good practice, attendance, IP, AMCs, tutees' module choices.
- * Monitor your students' academic progress in advance of meetings and offer meaningful subject-related guidance where necessary, or steer them towards colleagues better placed to offer such guidance.
- * Contact tutees whom you are concerned about or whom you feel are struggling in terms of academic engagement or attendance.
- * Know your tutees well enough to be able to provide a reference for them on request.

- * Make it clear to your tutees that they have a responsibility to engage with you and their studies, this is not at school or college environment and students will be treated as young adults.
- * Make clear the ways in which they can contact you (e.g. emails, office hours), how to report any concerns (personal or course-related) and what to do in an emergency situation (for example, contacting the Senior Tutor in your absence)
- * Clarify that the university has other support mechanisms for different aspects of their welfare (e.g. personal health, well-being etc.)

Prompt Questions for PAT Sessions

For many of your tutees, especially in the Preparatory Year, this may be the first time that they are in a learning environment where the expectation is on them to act independently. This may be daunting for them, and they may be unfamiliar with what to expect in a University setting. You may find that during the first PAT session, or the first PAT session of each year, your tutees may be shy or not forthcoming. Below are some prompt questions that you may wish to consider using to begin to open a dialogue with your tutees.

Preparatory Year Prompt Questions

- How are you finding University so far?
- Do you understand the role of the PAT?
- Is there anything worrying you?
- Did you enjoy the induction activities?
- Have you joined any Clubs yet?

Common Academic Issues

Students may be unfamiliar with higher education academic practices such as Academic Misconduct (AMC) and Impaired Performance (IP) or may be reluctant to ask for help or to address issues in a direct manner. PATs need to be aware of the range of issues that students may face and need to provide an equal opportunity for all students in terms of guidance and support. Below are a few of the common academic issues that PATs should familiarize themselves with and where to find further information on those issues.

You should refer to the [Academic Services](#) section of the BUE webpages for further information on:

- Impaired Performance (IP)
- Academic Appeals
- Student Handbook
- Copy of the UG Academic Regulations
- Academic Misconduct
- Assessment Reviews
- Student Attendance Policy

It is a good idea to touch upon the topic of plagiarism and good academic practice as early as possible with your tutees so they are clear about academic expectations and possible implications.

You can find specific advice on BUE Academic Honesty and plagiarism [here](#)

If you cannot find the answer to information you are looking for or something is unclear you can contact the Academic Services team on AS@bue.edu.eg.

Other Sources of Student Support

In some instances there will be challenges that present themselves where more specialist support may be necessary and you should direct your tutees to the Student Hub. These circumstances might include chronic or long-term conditions or issues around mental health and wellbeing.

You should refer to the Student Hub section of the BUE webpages for further information on:

- General enquiries related to Employability services
- Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty (DSL) services
- Student Counselling and Wellbeing services
- Academic Success services

You can contact the Student Hub team on thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg

Confidentiality

PATs should always try to maintain appropriate confidentiality. However, staff may not always be expected to give absolute assurances of confidentiality to their tutees. Student cases may be discussed with colleagues within the University as appropriate to ensure actions are taken in the best interest of the student. Whenever possible, information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. If a situation arises where you feel it might be appropriate to share knowledge with a colleague, one way forward might be to ask your tutee if it is OK if you pass what you have learned on to colleagues, explaining why you might want to do this and how the colleague might be in a better position to support her/him.

Training for Personal Academic Tutors

All PATs should attend training sessions provided by the University Staff Development Unit to help them better understand the role, the associated responsibilities and how it feeds into a commitment towards improving students learning and support.

Training will include further information on best practice as well as the handling of private or confidential information shared by students.

Further Guidance and Feedback

If you are in need further information about being a Personal Academic Tutor then you should contact The Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President Teaching and Learning, Head of Department, or your Faculty Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning.

Any feedback on this guide or specific queries, please contact The Office of the Provost on Provost@bue.edu.eg.