Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) – Staff Guidance

Introduction

This guidance has been developed to assist Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) and should be read in conjunction with the current University Personal Academic Tutoring policy. https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/policies/personal-academic-tutoring.aspx

It is designed to offer individual PATs practical information, advice and guidance which will be useful whether new to personal academic tutoring or been involved for some time to;

- Develop your PAT role and support your students effectively considering student retention, engagement, attainment and progression
- Familiarise yourself with the CCCU PAT Policy and other policies/procedures relevant to the PAT role
- Understand how to access relevant CPD and staff development to enhance your practice
- Explore some common issues that students may raise and ways of dealing with them
- Be confident in the range of support offered by central services and other agencies and when and how to refer students to them
- Signpost PATs to the Engagement Monitoring Dashboard to obtain engagement data on your personal tutees.
- Provide you with guidance on how to structure effective PAT conversations across levels of learning in the Handbook in Appendix 1

For further support and guidance about how help your students please also refer to Wellbeing Support Drop In Information and the following student support guidance document; https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/student-support-health-and-wellbeing/docs/Accessing- student-support-brochure-Final-Version.pdf

What do Personal Academic Tutors do?

The role of the PAT is vital to the academic and pastoral support offered by the University; however, staff need to be confident about what is expected of them. Personal Academic Tutors are a key contact point between the University and the student. They can offer more individual support than is possible in formal teaching sessions.

PATs play an important part in Closing our Gap (Degree Award Outcomes) for our Black students and other students identified as requiring support and interventions such as Care Leavers, Disabled students and White Males through our Access and Participation Plan. Principally, this is though their capacity to support engagement and attainment on a one-to-one basis and coach students to success.

Improving Student Outcomes focused on continuation, completion, attainment and progression is a key element of the PAT role as well as to engage students with the Student Learning, Wellbeing and Employability services available at CCCU. Student Outcomes as our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) feature as key action points in our Boards of Studies and Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF) documents in faculties at CCCU

PATs can also have a significant impact on supporting student transitions, building sense of

belonging, equity and inclusion in their roles by scaffolding conversations with their student year on year focused to their continuation and progression and helping students access the broader Christ Church community and professional services support appropriate to their level of learning and aspirations for their future graduate employment.

Building Belonging, Retention and Engagement

Building Belonging, Retention and Engagement is an academically driven and holistic shared enterprise. The focus should not solely be on PATS to support belonging. All course team members play a part with Academic Administration Teams in Faculties.

PATs interaction with students should be supportive and provide personalized contact and language. PAT sessions/PAT activity should not only not to focus on "fixing "students with low engagement and belonging as it is important to engage equally with highly engaged/performing students.

PATs should be aware of continuation, completion and attainment metrics and trends associated with their cohort. Find out more about how to access these metrics via PowerBi.

They should have regular discussions with the Course Director and the teaching team on whole course retention strategies and interventions as identified in Boards of Studies where issues may be identified affecting the engagement of more than one student. PATs should have an understanding of where patterns of low engagement exist and common reasons for requesting an TLA, Interruption or Withdrawal for example.

It is recommended that PATs update their understanding of our university Retention and Success Framework https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/student-retention-and-success/student-retention-and-success.aspx, read LTE resources for academics and attend LTE staff development focussed to Closing Our Gap, Building Student Belonging: Retention and Success and Inclusive Practice which can be accessed via StaffLearn. Further guidance on our Retention and Success (Transition, Orientation and Induction) Blackboard for staff provides up to date information on strategies to support continuation and completion.

Insights provided by Boards of Study and PowerBi reporting should also be interrogated and followed up at a course or individual student level also bearing in mind that we know that groups of students with profiles associated with the following features may require more support:

- Foundation Year students transitioning from L0 to Level 4
- Students transitioning L4/L5
- Students on reassessment with attendance
- Students wishing to Interrupt
- Students returning to study post Interruption
- First assessment engagement (non/partial submissions)
- Students with Exceptional Circumstances, TLA's or LSP's
- Students in student procedures associated with Changes to Study or Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct, Student Complaints
- Students in Fitness to practice procedures
- Black students
- White Males
- Care Leavers

Student Engagement

PATs should implement our Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy and processes, regularly use our [Student Engagement Dashboard](#) and work in course and school levels to review student engagement for the purpose of identifying individual and groups of students at risk of withdrawal. PAT conversations with students who are at risk of poor engagement should align with our Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Process to ensure that students identified as at risk either through low engagement or non-submission of assessment are supported to re-engage with learning through signposting to university services or via a specific re-engagement plan.

Positive Engagement Conversations

These should be supplemented by

- PAT awareness of the context in each academic year- late starters to Blackboard and timetabling glitches for example
- Evidence of low engagement- conversations should be supportive- we have noticed you have not been engaging- is there anything we can help you with to get you on track
- Helping students to understand their levels of engagement and the impact this will have on their ability to progress
- Providing advice on the next steps e.g monitoring attendance and engagement levels
- Raising awareness of the support offered by CCCU

New Students

Students arrive at university with very differing attitudes and expectations, some may be confident in their abilities whereas others might lack confidence in their academic ability and others may have been out of education for a number of years altogether.

Many students in their first few months will assume that everyone around them is coping well with the transition to university and they might question their suitability to HE or to their course. As a PAT you have the opportunity to put these anxieties into perspective and guide your students through any initial doubts if they have them. You can help the student to feel a sense of belonging, understand realistic expectations, encourage effective study skills and contribute to the overall student experience. For example, you could signpost to our Welcome Hub, the Student Union societies, recommend study skills texts or online resources such as Skills4Study Campus or support a them to navigate the VLE effectively. You can also be aware of your role in our Attendance and Engagement Policy, procedures and use the Engagement Monitoring Dashboard to identify how well your personal tutees are engaging in

their learning and to spot any at risk students in a timely way. The dashboard will also help you to monitor trends within your personal tutor group in relation to engagement.

It is hoped that PATs are able to remain a consistent and a continuous support throughout the length of their student's course and will contribute to the student's journey into employment or further education by writing references and offering informal advice even post completion / graduation.

The conversation starters table in the Appendix will help PATs develop holistic conversations with students. This table is a guidance document for staff which curates appropriate questions for PATs to ask across levels of learning and semester and map the student journey. A student version will be available on our webpages for new and current students with guidance about how to make the most of PAT meetings from Sept 24 which can be accessed here [Personal academic tutor - Canterbury Christ Church University](#). We recommend CD's and PATs circulate this student version to new and continuing students at the start of the year.

PATs are expected to adjust conversations according to the interests and needs of the student(s) and level of learning.

The PAT Policy

The PAT policy is implemented slightly differently in different schools / courses and some local arrangements might cover issues such as;

- How do students know what to expect? (handbooks etc)
- How students are allocated their PAT
- How many students is each PAT responsible for?
- How is sufficient and realistic time for personal academic tutoring allocated in your workload allocation plan?

  Is there a member of staff in your school responsible for leading PATs within your school? Other Policy and Procedures at CCCU where the PAT plays a role are listed below:

  - Interruptions Policy (see Appendix 2 for info on PAT's role in Interruptions) conversations with the student in an advisory context

  - Decisions to Withdraw

  - Exceptional Circumstances- advisory

- TLAs - PAT's have direct actions connected to the process and are the first and key point in [TLA](#) process. There is now compulsory training for PAT's connected to coordinating TLA's - compulsory training refresher session. Find out more information about TLA's [here.](#)

- Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism- PAT's have an advisory capacity, supporting changes of academic practice and signposting to further Library and Learning Skills support

- Changes to Study- advisory, courses of action and implications

- Reassessment and reassessment with attendance, trail and progress (supporting students)

- PSRB/Fitness to study/Placements supporting student engagement with placement and professional behaviors

- Raising a concern process

- Attendance and Engagement Policy

- UKVI Compliance, absence for class

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If you have any outstanding questions about what is expected of you after reading this guide, please discuss this with your Head of School or line manager.

Managing Expectations

Even with a clear policy and a statement of what personal academic tutoring is, this can be interpreted in many ways. This can cause difficulties if staff and students bring different expectations to the relationship. It might be helpful to consider the following;

1. What was your own experience of personal academic tutoring when you were a student?
   - What was the best part?
   - What could have been improved?
   - What qualities did your tutor bring to the relationship?
2. How would you like your students to perceive you as their personal academic tutor? (Friend, mentor, supervisor, parent, counsellor....)
   - Is this achievable?
   - Is this appropriate?
   - What are the barriers?

There is no right answer however it is helpful to be aware of your own style and the likely ways in which students will perceive you and where this might conflict with other roles, expectations and demands where personal academic tutoring is only one part of the overall academic role.

It may be useful to consider adding office hours to your email signature or providing an agreed timescale for response aligned to your school/faculty, to ensure student expectations are managed connected to accessing PAT support.

First meetings

New students will be allocated a personal academic tutor at the start (or soon after) of their course so plan for an introductory meeting as soon as you can. Ideally this first session

should be timetabled into the first week or as close as possible and could be brief 1:1 meeting or a tutorial group meeting. This is not only a good way to introduce yourself and set the scene for future meetings and expectations but if conducted in a group can help students to meet others on their course and settle into university life.

You can use these meetings to explore any issues or anxieties the student is experiencing and answer questions about the University and the course. If conducted in a group you can ask students to discuss their expectations of the course, share experiences of other transitions, provide information about sources of support and explore and share strategies for settling in.

If you are unable to schedule meeting your students during their first week then send each student a welcome note introducing yourself and providing information about where and when they can find you, how to schedule 1:1 meetings and whether you have any 'drop in' sessions they can sign up to.

These first meetings should not take place any later than six weeks into the first semester / trimester of your student's course. This is important to help establish a meaningful working relationship and clarify the purpose and role of the PAT. Students should be aware that you are not just there to help with problems but to offer support for their overall academic and personal development. If your school / course has a designated way of recording these meetings you should use this to note any agreed points and future actions. You should also use the Engagement Monitoring Dashboard regularly to monitor your students' engagement across the academic year.

Location of meetings

If students need to discuss confidential matters, they will need to know how much time they have with you and be assured they are not going to be overheard so be clear about these to your student. If you have a shared office, you may need to find a more private space to hold tutor meetings. Some institutions have restricted 1:1 meetings to certain spaces to avoid any accusations of harassment on either side, although this is not thought necessary across the board but if you have concerns about appropriate rooms or arrangements for tutor meetings discuss them with colleagues to help find a practical solution such as leaving a door open, meeting in glass paneled rooms or having a colleague close by. With more meetings moving to digital platforms, you can also set up personal tutor meetings this way using, for example, Microsoft Teams.

Written records and confidentiality

It is helpful to review what has been discussed and confirm any agreed actions at the end of a tutorial meeting. You should encourage your students to keep their own written notes and agreed action points either during face-to-face meetings or through a digital tool such as PebblePad. This helps students to take ownership of the decisions made in tutorials and act on them rather than perpetuate a 'parent / child' relationship where you are expected to sort out problems for them. Your school may already have a formal system for recording tutorials. If not an example is included at the end of this guide.

Any recording process raises questions regarding confidentiality - how confidential are personal tutorials expected to be? It is important that students feel they can trust their PAT enough to speak freely when necessary, but it is equally important to be clear about the limitations of this. Clear guidance on information regarding disability is discussed in the next section, however similar principles should apply to other personal information disclosed in tutorials. If it may affect the students' ability to meet the demands of their course encourage them to let relevant staff such as module leaders, course director know about it and signpost them to the ECRF process if relevant. If you offer to make these disclosures on their behalf do not do so unless you have explicit permission to and have discussed who the relevant people are. Whatever is agreed about disclosure to staff, you should never discuss individual tutorials with other students.

You should not feel obliged to keep confidential any information where there is a genuine concern for the student's safety requiring notification to cause for care and concern and student wellbeing or other specialist help. There is a section on specialist advice and referrals later in this guide.

Students with disabilities

It is particularly important for students with disclosed disabilities to meet their PAT at an early stage in their course. You can also encourage your student to register with the student disability service by emailing disability@canterbury.ac.uk you can also do this on behalf of your student with their consent if they would prefer. The option of a Learning Support Plan (LSP) can then be explored to identify any support needs and reasonable adjustments to teaching and / or assessment strategies needed. A LSP is a legally binding document under the Equality Act (2010) so the adjustments outlined in the plan must be adhered to and will be written with the student and a disability advisor and then sent to the students' CD for sign off and distribution as appropriate. The LSP also helps to provide a sound basis for regular progress reviews. Don't assume that all students with a disability will need additional support, many will have effective strategies already in place to manage their disability and will simply require a reasonable level of flexibility and good communication with their PAT. If you have any students with disabilities as personal tutees it is recommended that you complete the online learning module Supporting students (part 1 disability) available on the e-learning platform;

https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/hr-and-od/organisational-and-people-development/e-learning.aspx

Check that you are aware of any of your students with a disclosed disability so that your initial communications can consider this. For example, is your meeting being held somewhere accessible.

- Consider how to ensure that any student who subsequently develops a disability, such as a long-term illness or mental health condition would feel comfortable telling you about this.
- Make note of any questions you may have about working with a student with a disability and discuss these with your line manager or the student health and wellbeing team.

- If you need specific advice, contact the disability services team.

https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/student-support-health-and-wellbeing/docs/Accessing-student-support-brochure-Final-Version.pdf

Legislation protects equality of educational opportunity but has shifted the balance between confidentiality and disclosure. Under the Equality Act (2010), if a student discloses a disability to any member of staff, then the institution as a whole is considered to be aware of this and could therefore be in breach of its duties if reasonable adjustments are not made in response. However, it is not practical or fair to expect all staff (especially part-time or sessional staff) to pass on such information to the correct place. As a PAT you need to be aware of and what to do if a student discloses a disability for the first time during a tutorial meeting. You can get advice from the student support, health and wellbeing team regarding this and see advice above for known disabilities. You should follow up adherence to LSPs with the course and teaching team to ensure adjustments are being made and check with the student that current arrangements are working satisfactorily. As part of this process, a student may be eligible for a mentor that will be explored with them when discussing their disability and needs with disability services.

Support for disabled students - Canterbury Christ Church University

Arranging regular meetings

The University policy states that students should have contact with their PAT in each period of study (semester, trimester, module dependent on course structure) so it should be at least twice a year.

What would you do if one of your students had:

- not been in contact for several months or responded to direct invitations to see you?
- given other staff cause for concern e.g. poor attendance, non-submission or failing work?

It might be helpful for you to discuss these questions with other PATs.

You should be monitoring your student's engagement in their learning using the Engagement Monitoring Dashboard which will give you a clearer sense of if your tutee is remaining engaged but not communicating with you as their PAT. Whether their lack of contact extends to their broader learning in which case they might be at risk of withdrawal or they have some issues with their engagement you can help them with.

Although there are arguments in favor of encouraging students to take the initiative themselves, the disadvantage of this approach is that those in the greatest need of support may fall through the net.

Particularly in the early stages of the course, it is best to schedule meetings for all your students and follow up any non-attendance. Research into retention has shown that an

early appointment for an informal discussion about how the student is settling in will help them make the transition to university more effectively and identify any issues or concerns before they reach crisis point.

Another advantage of setting a fixed time for subsequent tutorials is that both the PAT and student can prepare in advance. For example, looking over the students assessment results, identifying successes and areas for improvement which will help focus the meeting.

Lots of courses will have key times in the year when many students are facing common issues such as around exam time and this might be a good time to arrange group tutorials to deal with queries collectively rather than on an individual basis.

- When is the most suitable time in your course for regular 1:1 or group tutorials?
- What topics might be discussed at each stage of the course?
- Are there any key points in the academic cycle where a group tutorial could help address common issues?
- Are there opportunities to encourage students to help themselves and each other through engaging in peer mentoring, Academic or Personal Development Week events and the StressLess scheme?

A pre-determined agenda can form part of tutorial meetings at different stages dependent on the course structure. For instance, towards the end of Level 4 discussing module results and transition to Level 5 or discussing module choices at appropriate points in the cycle. Meetings could also focus on preparation for placements, dissertation topics or employability and career plans.

It is good practice to use final tutorial meetings to agree a summary of achievements and qualities the student has developed to keep on file to help with any future reference requests. The Graduate Attributes might help to frame this; https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/strategies/graduate-attributes.aspx

Unscheduled meetings

Students may need to see you outside of any scheduled meetings and this can be managed either on an ad-hoc basis as and when students contact you or using a drop-in system at particular times. Many PATs try to be accessible but feel overwhelmed by constant interruptions and demands, so it might be useful to think these questions through before deciding on a system that suits you and/or your team.

- How do you feel about saying 'not now' when a student says they need to see you urgently without an appointment?
- How can you tell if it is a genuine emergency?
- Do students feel they can only come to you if they have a problem?

There are no simple answers but do think carefully and talk to colleagues about the advantages and disadvantages of having a completely 'open door' policy. It is important that students feel cared for as individuals, but this should not undermine their autonomy and

sense of personal responsibility as adult learners or your own entitlement to a manageable workload. There is lots of other support available to students in the university so you should not feel the PAT role is unmanageable. If you are having trouble with the role, it is important to raise this with your line manager.

Other things to think about;

- What system do others in your team use?
- Average length of time allocated to PAT meetings?
- How do students make appointments with you, and do they know how to do this?
- Is it easy for students to contact you from off campus?
- Do you prefer a particular method of contact (phone or email for example)?
- Could any aspect of your system be improved?

Exceptional Circumstances

The standard EC process for students to apply for Exceptional Circumstances for short term issues can be found here. However if a student has a disability that will affect their learning and assessment in the longer term, they should access student health and wellbeing and develop a Learning Support Plan (LSP). If a student is experiencing other ongoing issues such as bereavement, family issues, housing issues or any other situation that could have an impact on all or some of their work in the medium term they should be offered a Temporary Learning Agreement (TLA). TLAs are student initiated and students are advised to discuss the potential for a TLA with their PAT.

Well performing students

It is hoped you will have many well performing students who work hard and are managing well. These students sometimes do not need to access much support from their personal academic tutor or other services, however, should not be overlooked. You can still support them to improve their grades further, discuss their ambitions for employment or further study, signpost them to careers and enterprise hub, further study options or consideration for example internships or research fellowships. You can also nominate students for prizes and awards available both available in your subject area or Faculty but also externally too.

Listening and other tutorial skills

Two of the most important skills you will need as a PAT are listening and questioning. Most experts recommend using open-ended questions to initiate discussion 'How are you finding the different aspects of the course?' will usually be more productive than 'Is everything okay?' This helps prevent simple yes, no answers and allows the student an opportunity to explain more about how they are getting on. Unless the student is obviously distressed it is also useful to spend a few minutes setting an agenda for the meeting if this has not already

been established. Ask them what the key things are they would like to cover or use a standard format, for example asking about progress since the last meeting, recent highlights, issues and questions, agreed action points. See the Appendix for a more focused range of questions you can use across levels of learning to support retention, success and progression.

It is equally important to foster independence and responsibility in our students to allow them to explore for themselves the issues raised, whether academic or personal, and develop their ideas about what to do. A common difficulty for PATs is the temptation to see oneself primarily as a source of information and advice. If so you may jump in too soon and simply tell the student what you think they should do. Instead try to avoid being too directive, attend closely to what they say and their body language and hold back your own comments or questions until they have had time to say what is on their mind.

After the student finishes, repeat the main points to reassure them you have been listening intently and understood what they said. You may want to ask one or two open questions to help them to clarify the points they have made or the underlying issues, for example;

- What are you aiming to achieve?
- How will you know you have achieved it?
- Tell me more about…..
- What would you do differently if there was a next time?
- What could you do to ensure this happens?

These types of questions frame perspectives in a positive way rather than a problem focused way and come from the concept of solution focused coaching for students (Lochtie, McIntosh, Stork and Walker 2018). There is a whole chapter about Solution Focused coaching for Students in their book "Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education" if you wished to read more including some case studies. Towards the end of the meeting, it is worth agreeing any actions and if appropriate set a time for the next meeting to follow up on progress. Try to allow a few minutes after the meeting to make any notes for yourself and include thoughts about how the session went and how this could have been improved. If you got permission from the student, you could record the session as a reminder of your discussions and your awareness of the dynamics of these sessions.

You have probably observed a wide range of teaching styles in lectures and seminars, but tutor role models are usually more limited. If possible and with student permission you should seek to sit in on tutorials with a colleague to observe, you should also seek to have one of your tutorials observed. This can broaden your experience and help you identify effective good practice. See the peer observation and review pages for more detail about using peer observation effectively.

https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/policies/peer-observation-and-review.aspx

Another way to explore different tutoring styles and approaches is to discuss anonymous case studies with colleagues which can highlight different attitudes, beliefs and provide

alternative perspectives on student issues. This will help you benefit from others' experience and if appropriate this can develop into a mentoring relationship.

Common Concerns

In addition to improving your personal academic tutoring style it is helpful to think about the kinds of concerns students are most likely to present so you can have relevant suggestions and contact details ready. These fall into a number of potential categories:

Problems with academic work

- Worries about course choice – It is common for new students to wonder if they have chosen the right course. This may be related to other anxieties and will be overcome as they settle into University life. You can help students by enabling them to deal with any of the issues outlined below. However, in some cases it may be necessary for a student to review their course choice. Careers and Enterprise Hub staff can be helpful here in offering unbiased advice and students can access The Careers and Enterprise Hub here.

Difficulties with particular modules – encourage the student to discuss this with the module leader in the first instance. However, if they are reluctant to for any reason you can discuss general issues with them to help them understand the underlying problem (inappropriate module choice, academic difficulty, issues with staff or peers) and to explore possible solutions with them as this will help them to cope better in the future.

- Difficulties with general academic skills – There are many opportunities for students to improving their general academic skills, for example completing Skiils4study campus activities, engaging with the learning development team, using online resources. These opportunities should complement rather than replace any module specific guidance given which is integrated within modules and handbooks. You can direct students to this web page for more information and direct links: Learning Skills Hub.

- Time management – This is another common problem particularly in the first year. Students have sometime been used to reminders from parents and school to complete work and meet deadlines and mature students who have not studied at HE before or not studied for a long time are sometimes more used to structured working patterns and days. Students can sometimes find it hard to manage multiple deadlines and autonomy over their study time on their own. As a PAT you can help them draw up a realistic work plan at the beginning of each semester and encourage them to take responsibility for this themselves. The Skills4Study campus suite has a time management module that all students have access to.

- Problems with other students – This sometimes arises either through problems in shared accommodation, working in groups in modules or friendship issues on campus. Avoid taking sides and help students to work towards a compromise if they are having trouble with groupwork. Like other transferable skills the ability to work in groups and teams takes some practice and support. Students can complete modules on the Expect Respect page. For other peer issues use the student support brochure to guide students to further help, mediation and reporting of bullying and / or harassment.

Financial difficulties

These are increasingly common areas of difficulty and can have a cumulative effect on students' work with stress and anxiety associated. Some students might feel they are combining too many hours of part time work with studies to cope with this whilst others might not have enough opportunity to work to help support themselves financially.

Use the following guidance to signpost students appropriately to the right services.

Accessing-student-support-brochure-Final-Version.pdf (canterbury.ac.uk)

Personal problems

If you have built a good relationship with your student, it is natural that they will view you as their first port of call if they have personal issues aside from any academic ones. It is important that you are aware of the support services offered to students to ensure you can signpost or refer them to appropriately. It is not the PAT's role to become a personal counsellor to a student experiencing personal problems. When a student comes to you with medical, financial or other personal issues listen sensitively but avoid giving well-intentioned but non-professional advice.
Instead, use open questions to help the student clarify the issue in their own mind and encourage them to contact student support services, link below.

Student support advisers and wellbeing support - Canterbury Christ Church University

Specialist advice and referrals

If you have concerns about your student's wellbeing there is a comprehensive range of support available that your student can access, follow the link to find out more information about the available services and how your student can access them.

Student support advisers and wellbeing support - Canterbury Christ Church University

Student engagement

The Engagement Monitoring Dashboard and the Student Engagement in Learning policy are there to support PATs monitor a range of engagement activities that students are reasonably expected to be engaged with. However, Student engagement covers a wide range of activities a student might engage in and not just in PAT sessions or data driven markers such as submission of assessed work. For further information regarding the range of engagement you would expect from a student and what non-engagement might look like follow the link below;

https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/policies/Student-Engagement-in-Learning.aspx

https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-enhancement/student-retention-and-success/Student-engagement-dashboard.aspx

Student engagement is also monitored by Faculty Administration Teams particularly if a student is at risk of withdrawal. PATs are expected to work with their Admin Teams to identify these students so that timely intervention can be put in place where necessary. Likewise, PAT's can inform Academic Admin where they have identified at risk students so that contact can be made. Where students may have been at risk but are able to re-engage (following interruption, period of absence etc) PATs will need to continue to monitor engagement and provide additional support to help students re-engage as necessary.

Sources of specialist advice and support

These webpages contain helpful information and guidance some of which has been signposted to you earlier in this guidance and some you might find helpful as additional resources.

Expect Respect - Canterbury Christ Church University

Policies and procedures - Canterbury Christ Church University

https://secure.canterbury.ac.uk/staffnet/staff/causeforcareandconcern/

Student support advisers and wellbeing support - Canterbury Christ Church University

PAT staff development

HR and OD have a numbers of staff development opportunities that are relevant and useful for developing your personal academic tutoring skills see their pages for further detail https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/hr-and-od/organisational-and-people-development/organisational-and-people-development.aspx

There are also online learning modules designed specifically for staff supporting students, follow the link to the e-learning platform.

Support for staff

If you ever feel in need of additional support for yourself please follow the link
Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health (canterbury.ac.uk)

Good practice examples especially of issues / problems and how they were resolved

It is difficult to give accurate examples of what good practice might look like in a concrete way as every student and every PAT is different. However below is a couple of examples of how you might go about a 1:1 conversation with your students if they raise a particular issue.

Anita – A 29 year old female student who is the parent of one primary school aged child, is capable and on target to earn a 2:1 undergraduate degree. She is currently in year 2 (level 5) and you have been her PAT since she started and developed a good relationship despite not seeing much of her. She emails you and requests a meeting which has now come around.

Almost as soon as you sit down together she becomes tearful saying 'I can't do this anymore, I'm not good enough, I don't know why I thought I was capable of going to Uni'

Firstly you offer her a tissue and an opportunity to say why she believes she is not capable.

Anita describes the difficulty of being a parent whilst also managing University work and a part time job.

You: It sounds like it has been hard going for you but as you say you are still here, well done!

Anita: Thanks, it has been a bit of a struggle for me lately, I have managed to submit my work but haven't received my feedback yet. I have an exam in two weeks and don't feel very well prepared for it. Things are just a bit overwhelming at the moment.

You: Okay, lets review where you were last time we met and think about how you can prepare for your exam whilst waiting for your other module feedback.

Anita: I was consistently receiving marks of over 60% but then my last assignment was 58% and I'm worried this next one is going to be lower and then the exam lower still, feels like it's all sliding.

You: Okay on a scale of one to 10 where 10 is the maximum effort, how much effort did you put into the last assignment you just submitted?

Anita: Probably about a six because of my other commitments.

You: Okay so what could you do to maybe bring that up to a seven for your exam revision?

Anita: Maybe spend one more evening this week and next week on revision, maybe also take a day off from work to spend with my family to compensate.

You: That sounds very fair and I think with this plan you will feel better prepared when the exam comes around and remain on target with your marks, you are a very capable student.

Anita: Thanks, sorry for breaking down it just feels a lot to do in one go.

You: Of course, you have a lot of responsibilities but by breaking tasks down you can find space and this will in turn help you focus. Remember to visit the library pages to support you in preparing for exams and the Skills4Study Campus module on exams skills might help.

https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/students/study-skills/revision-and-exam-techniques.aspx

Fred - An 18 year old level 4 student arrives for a pre-scheduled PAT meeting 10 minutes late.

Fred: Yeah, sorry I'm a bit late I got a bit lost and wasn't sure where we were meeting, I bumped into Mia (another student) on the stairs and she told me where you were.

You: Well thank you for coming and apologising for being late, how are things going?

Fred: Yeah okay

You: Tell me the two things you enjoy most about the course.

Fred: Erm….dunno really…looking forward to the practical sessions.

You: Okay, what about things you are enjoying now?

Fred: (Shrugs) it's okay I suppose

You: Okay what about things you find hard or don't enjoy?

Fred: There's so much reading and lots of topics to cover, I find the writing hard too.

You: Well it does take hard work to get a degree and academic writing and reading are a big part of that. What do you enjoy doing outside of University?

Fred: Going out with new friends, watch Netflix, I go kick boxing once a week.

You: Your eyes lit up when you said you go to kick boxing, what's so good about it?

Fred: I like the challenge, the competition and I'm quite good at it so have won a few medals. I've transferred to a local club and they have asked me to help teach the younger kids so I feel welcome there.

You: So what do you like best, the teaching, the competition or just keeping fit?

Fred: All of it really

You: So what skills do you use in kick boxing that you could apply to Uni work?

Fred: Erm… not sure, I suppose I'm quite disciplined, I go every week and I like encouraging others to get good at it. I've worked hard to get better at it. I chose to come here partly because of the reputation of the local club.

You: So if you took the same approach to Uni work how would that look for you?

Fred: I suppose it I was more disciplined in Uni work I would get me reading done by setting some time aside to do it each week. I could do the same with writing when assignments are due.

You: Would That work for you? Setting specific time aside?

Fred: I think it might, I hadn't thought of it like that before but if it works for kick boxing it would probably work for Uni stuff too.

You: Right, I think you could go away and have a go at drawing up a weekly schedule that does exactly that. Put in your commitments for kick boxing, Uni attendance, some time for keeping up to date with reading and assignment prep / writing time. We can then meet again in a couple of weeks to see if it is working for you.

Fred: Okay I'll give it a go, I do have my IST on my phone so I know when I'm meant to be in but I think I might need to get a diary or set up an electronic one on my laptop.
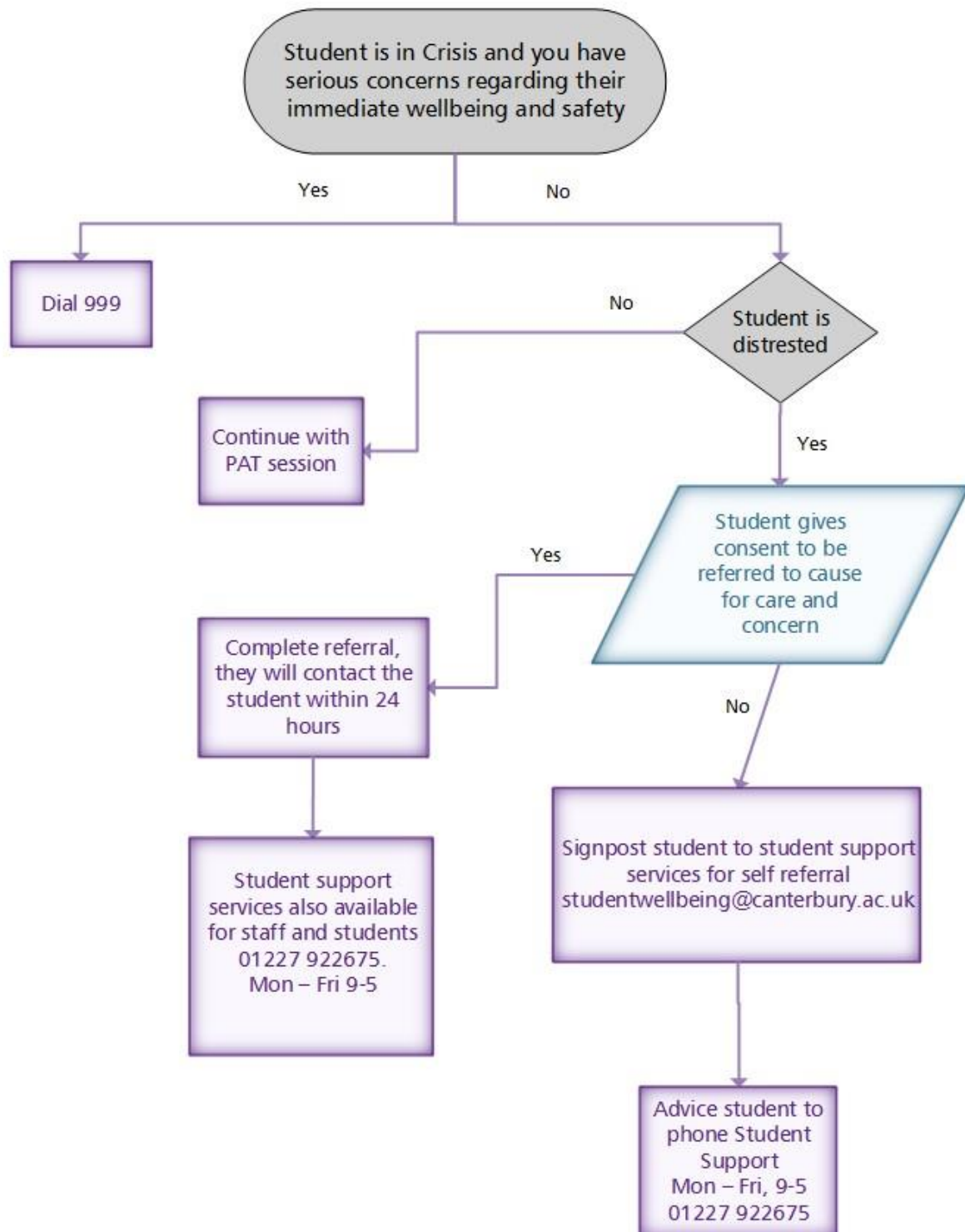
You: Whatever works best for you, I think you will find that there is still plenty of time for socialising and Netflix but hopefully it will help you to stay more organised.

Fred: Yeah I'm not the best with organisation but I'll try.

You: Good, thanks for coming today, I'll send an invite to a catch up meeting in a couple of weeks to see how things are, same place!

Flow chart

Please use this flow chart to determine a course of action should you have immediate concerns when with a student

Student is in Crisis and you have serious concerns regarding their immediate wellbeing and safety

Yes

No

Dial 999

No

Student is distrested

Continue with PAT session

Yes

Yes

Student gives consent to be referred to cause for care and concern

Complete referral, they will contact the student within 24 hours

No

Student support services also available for staff and students 01227 922675. Mon – Fri 9-5

Signpost student to student support services for self referral studentwellbeing@canterbury.ac.uk

Advice student to phone Student Support Mon – Fri, 9-5 01227 922675

Also see; https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/student-support-health-and-wellbeing/docs/Helping-distressed-students.pdf

Record of PAT meeting template

Students Name…………………………………………… PAT Name……………………………………………

Date of meeting …………………………………….

Type of meeting (regular / scheduled / unscheduled) ……………………………………………………

Summary of discussion;

Agreed actions;
1. ...
2. ...
3. ...

Signed:

Student

………………………………….   PAT ………………………………………….

Appendix 1

In ADVANCE of Interruption

In conversation with a student PAT's should work to identify reasons for proposed interruption, other available options, review current academic status (re credits, marks, etc.), latest date of engagement, and whether student has: attempted, passed, or not passed modules (see 7.4.1-7.4.3 Interruption Policy).

If a student contacts a PAT for a conversation about potentially withdrawing the PAT should explore alternatives to an INT, such as a TLA as an element of the conversation and contact the Course Director post conversation.

An INT should be considered as the last resort for a student, and PATs should explore alternative options such as:

- Identifying any pastoral needs or an LSP that might be resolved through appropriate signposting Wellbeing Support - Canterbury Christ Church University
- Identify any Learning Skills Development requirements https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/learning-skills-hub.

- **Identify if the** issue relates to assessments and ensure that course team support is provided to understand how to engage with assessment or that the student should request an extension (if the reasons are appropriate)

- **Identify if the student has any medium to long term health needs or personal circumstances that could be managed via a TLA** https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/our-students/ug-current/academic-services/assessments/temporary-learning-agreement

Financial / Funding implications

It is recognised that a student that takes an INT, is generally financially disadvantaged and so appropriate advice should be sought from Student Wellbeing Services. Finance for financial implications of interrupting

- Where health reasons are cited as the INT reason, this can positively affect student funding as they are entitled to an additional gift year
- PAT's should discuss funding implications and if necessary refer more complex cases to a panel in advance of the student withdrawing (this thinking and process needs further development)

- PSRB programmes will have limited numbers and a return to a specific cohort may not be possible as a result. This may also be appropriate to capped programmes i.e. with certain facilities i.e.. labs etc.

- Student Route implications should also be discussed if relevant to the student profile Implications for [Student Route](#) (formerly Tier 4) students (regulations require them to leave the UK whilst interrupted)

Other rights/restrictions and expectations that require communication before interruption:
Rights:
Access to Blackboard
Access to Student Support Services
Access to Student Computing
Restrictions:
Cannot attend classes
Cannot borrow from the library
Cannot submit assessments
Return in one year (two semesters)
Students allowed ONE interruption during their course
Expectations:
Check CCCU email account fortnightly at least
Complete and sign Return to Study Form

Decision to Interrupt

Once a decision is made in partnership with a student to INT a discussion should be had around:

- **Timescale for return**- (in line with Interruptions Policy) limitations and timeline of communications

- **Conversation about pastoral support on return, change of PAT/ change of allocated group etc**

- **Clarifying process for keeping in touch / resources available during interruption to encourage return** – Welcome Back Hub – Blackboard access, check in every couple of months – meeting before return

- **Signpost students to Student Resources** to support return from interruption : our newly developed Welcome Back Hub has a dedicated section for students returning from interruption which signposts them to support and how to reengage with their learning from an academic and personal development perspective. Work has also been ongoing to enhance our Learning Skills Hub with updated content (supporting transitions across levels) with new modules and accessible content focussed to returning students [Successfully returning to a new academic year - Canterbury Christ Church University](#).
- Student information on interruptions (policy/regulations and guidance to signpost to support) is also available on our current student webpages. [https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/our-students/ug-current/academic-services/student-records-and-registration/changes-to-study#:~:text=If%20you%20take%20a%20break,of%20one%20further%20academic%20year](https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/our-students/ug-current/academic-services/student-records-and-registration/changes-to-study)

Reorientation upon return from Interruption

Students returning from interruption are allocated a PAT, a pre-return conversation and signposting to appropriate support if required.

PATs should work in conjunction with course directors to agree re-orientation plan and share these with students returning from interruption.

PATs should consider and discuss the following aspects of return to study with the student:
- Course may change whilst the student on interruption
- CCCU will contact three months prior to scheduled return to confirm return, if no response within two weeks, may be withdrawn
- If the interrupting student does not return on anticipated date and does not re-register, they will be withdrawn
- Student will participate in re-orientation activities (online or face-to-face)

In line with Section 7 of the University Interruptions Policy, the following administrative process should be followed prior to a student's return to study:

If an earlier return to study is required, due to outstanding assessments in Semester / Trimester 1, the Course Director should consider holding a **return to study conversation** with the student prior to the commencement of this process. If an earlier return to study is required, this should be agreed in advance of Semester / Trimester 1, but in line with the following process.

a. Quarterly, Course Support Teams will raise a list of interrupted students for the Course Director and raise any issues or anomalies with the Registry in Planning and Academic Administration via a shared list. (Section 7.3 of the University Interruptions Policy):
b. Students contacted by email signpost them to the support available below:
   - Confirm by email, return to study details as agreed with the Course Director
   - Signpost student to Student Wellbeing Services (if required)
   - Signpost student to the Library and Learning Developers and Learning Skills Hub (if required)
   - Signpost student to Course Director (required)
   - Referral to Personal Academic Tutor (Compulsory)
   - Communicate the confirmation of return to study with the Registry, including module changes, if required.
c. If **unable to return to study**, the Course Director and Programmes Support team will:
   1. Refer to and apply Section 5. of the University Interruptions Policy to ascertain whether the student has an **exceptional** reason to extend the interruption. Otherwise the student should be withdrawn.

   Or if the student **fails to engage with the return to study** process:
   1. The student will be withdrawn, as per Section 2.2 of the University Interruptions Policy.