

Being a **P@T**  
**personal**  
**academic tutor**  
at Queen Margaret  
University



**Queen Margaret University**  
EDINBURGH

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All the quotes and tips in this document are taken from staff responses to a QMU PAT survey.

## In my role as a PAT, what are my responsibilities towards my students?

- You should act as a facilitator and 'mentor' to your students, encouraging them to optimise their learning opportunities at all stages of their student journey.
- You should help your students to identify the graduate attributes which they are developing throughout their studies and articulate them clearly, for example in personal development plans and portfolios.
- When appropriate you should identify when a student would benefit from the support and signposting to other professional services within QMU such as Student Services who will be able to provide specialist supports. Student Services will also be able to assist with any external referrals for additional supports. The Students' Union can also provide additional and independent support.
- You will act as advocate on behalf of your students and in this role can be expected to make statements, either written or oral, to the Programme Committee (reserved business), Board of Examiners, or others as requested to do so.
- Although most students will be assigned a PAT there are some exceptions, such as students undertaking micro-credentials or other programmes of study that do not lead to a named award. As these students will normally be studying with us for less than a full academic year, they will not be assigned a PAT and will have more limited and mainly online access to Student Services support. For these students, any queries regarding their studies will need to be directed to the relevant module coordinator in the first instance.

## Graduate Attributes

A major part of your role is to help signpost the Graduate Attributes that your students are developing during their time with Queen Margaret University. For ease of reference, here they are:

- Investigative and curious
- Critical and analytical
- Lifelong learner

- Resilient and adaptable
- Self-aware and critically reflective
- Effective communicator
- Emotionally intelligent



- Ready to apply skills and knowledge
- Ethical and professional
- Independent and willing to seek guidance
- Collaborative team member

- Creative problem solver
- Willing to lead and innovate
- Advocate of sustainability and social justice
- Inclusive and respectful of difference

## You can expect the following from your PAT

Your PAT will:

- Be a friendly and helpful first point of contact with the University.
- Make contact, at least once per semester, to arrange an individual PAT meeting with you. Semester one meetings must happen within the first six weeks of semester. This means that you can expect to hear from your PAT within the first three to four weeks of semester one with a note of the arrangements. Some PATS may also arrange group meetings, which are additional to (and not a substitute for) the individual meetings.
- Attend all meetings on time and let you know if they unavoidably need to change the date/time.
- Stay in touch with you between meetings, as appropriate/agreed with you at PAT meetings.
- Respond to messages from you within a reasonable timeframe.
- Set aside reasonable time for the meeting – as a guideline your PAT will plan for around 30-45 minutes, although the exact length of the meeting will depend on the topics you need to discuss.
- Offer advice and guidance on academic and pastoral matters.
- Act as a link with other members of academic staff and as an advocate for you in appropriate circumstances.
- Be aware of the broader network of support services at QMU (as well as some external services) and refer you to these services, as appropriate. You can find information on QMU Student Services at <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services>
- Make sure that there is a record of each meeting. This record is held electronically – usually in email format. Meetings records can be quite brief and will not contain confidential information – unless you agree to this.
- Follow up on any actions that are agreed through the PAT meeting.
- Provide an opportunity for you to comment on the content of meeting records before these are filed as a record of the discussion.
- Maintain confidentiality in line with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

## How are PATs allocated?

School Office  
PAT Allocation Process

School Office rolls students forward making adjustments for:

- Withdrawals/exiting students
- Deferrals/Repeats
- Changes in Academic personnel (with new allocations to replace exiting staff)

As new students matriculate, School Office allocates new students to PATs

- Level 1
- DE Level 2-4

School Office adds PAT to the student record on ISIS. Student can view who their PAT is via the Student Portal.

PAT meeting records should be held in the student file, in the School Office.

## When should I hold meetings with my students?

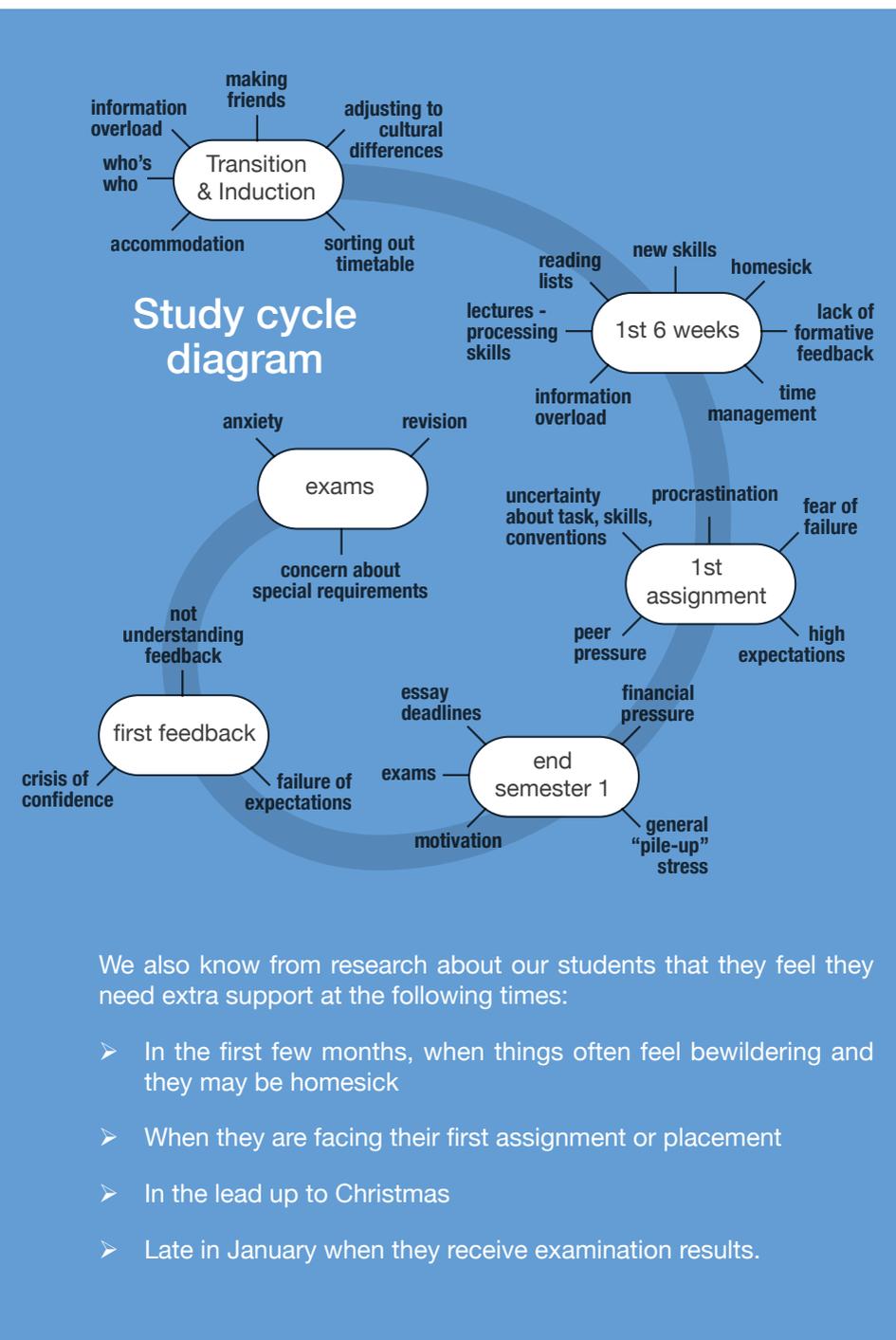
You are required to offer an individual meeting to each of your students within the first **6 weeks of semester 1**.

**Thereafter, you should offer to meet at least once a semester**, or more often if you or your students feel it would be helpful.

If a student chooses not to attend a PAT meeting, it is an expectation that they let you know the reason for this. Whilst we strongly encourage student participation in the PAT Scheme, we recognise that occasionally a student may not wish to take up the opportunity.

You might also consider keeping contact with your students via email, or through setting up a Facebook page or Twitter account for your group of tutees.

The study cycle diagram on the next page will help you pinpoint times when it might be useful to meet to provide students with practical assistance or simply encouragement.



We also know from research about our students that they feel they need extra support at the following times:

- In the first few months, when things often feel bewildering and they may be homesick
- When they are facing their first assignment or placement
- In the lead up to Christmas
- Late in January when they receive examination results.

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This is the schedule that works for me:

- In induction week
- Towards the end of semester one
- In the first two weeks of semester two, once they have obtained feedback from semester one assessments
- Before and after first days of placement
- Close to end of semester two, especially if they are level 4.

”

## What format should PAT meetings take?

As a minimum, all PATS will offer each student one PAT meeting per semester. You may also wish to schedule some group PAT meetings. These will be in addition to the individual meetings. One suggested model is provided below.



## One-to-one meetings

it is a minimum requirement that you offer to hold a one-to-one meeting with each student once per semester. You should make contact with students to explain the PAT arrangements within the first three to four weeks of semester one. Whilst group meetings can be useful to supplement the one-to-one meetings, students may be reluctant to bring up real issues in a group setting. You will probably cover things very much along the lines of the diagram on the next page.

It is important to be pro-active in organising meetings with your students. This is one way of signalling to them that there is more to the PAT system than simply crisis management. In turn, this may encourage them to attend meetings more regularly and take a more active role in planning for meetings and taking action after them.

Sometimes the layout of our building can make it difficult to find appropriate spaces for individual meetings with students. If it is proving difficult to find a room in which to meet, bear in mind that Student Services have a small numbers of rooms that can be used for this purpose. You could check with them whether you could make use of one. You can also meet the student online via teams if meeting in person is difficult.

The University's Academic Workload Allocation Methodology suggests an allocation of three hours per year for each student. This allows for two meetings of up to an hour and preparation time. Typically, meetings take around 30 to 45 minutes. However, in practice the duration and number of meetings per student will vary, depending on the matters to be covered.

## Group meetings

You may choose to do your first PAT meeting as a group session. Research shows that providing opportunities for early social and academic integration with peers and staff can be an effective means of ensuring student retention and success. A group meeting with all PAT students can help achieve this.

### Do's and Don'ts for your first group meeting

#### • Do

- keep input and general information brief – students are already overloaded.
- keep the session social and interactive.
- make time at start and finish for the students to interact.
- refer to support services as a positive resource not as an emergency service.
- encourage individual follow-up appointments in semester 1
- notice who's involved and who's not, anyone who looks uncomfortable or unsure and follow up if necessary.

#### • Don't

- give out loads of information.
- spend all the time talking or see it as a mini-lecture.
- assume that a nil-response to your questions means that the students don't have any queries.

## Using icebreakers for group meetings

A well designed icebreaker should facilitate social contact and encourage an atmosphere where students can ask their own questions. Encouraging new students to talk and listen to each other is a quick and effective way of providing some basic reassurance that other students feel equally baffled/unsure/ reassured by aspects of the transition.

There are many possibilities for icebreakers and you'll probably have your own favourites but here are a few suggestions:

- In pairs, think of two questions that you would really like answered by the end of the session.
- Join up with another pair and see collectively which questions you can answer yourselves.
- Put questions you're unsure about and/or don't know the answers to on a post-it and return it to the facilitator who can deal with them in the rest of the session.
- In pairs, think of one positive, and one not-so-positive experience from your first week or two. Feed back to group – PAT can comment or just encourage comparisons
- In pairs introduce yourself to your partner and then they introduce you to the group (this could be daunting for many new students – but useful in other tutorial contexts)

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I have used extracts from the handbook to make handouts for my tutees.

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## Part-time and distance-learning students

Part-time students may need the input and encouragement of a PAT even more than full-time students. It is very important, therefore, that you arrange to meet with your part-time students regularly, even though these meetings may take more time and effort to arrange.

Likewise, the studying success of distance-learning students can depend heavily on a sense of belonging and the support offered by the institution. The role of the PAT is crucial in helping these students overcome their sense of isolation and keeping them motivated.

You may find that you need to hold your meetings by telephone or Teams, or keep in regular contact via email, in order to give part-time and distance-learning students the same level of support that you give full-time, on-site students.

Meeting templates, which can be used to guide discussions, are available on the Quality web site A-Z under P (Personal Academic Tutor) <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/current-student-a-z/>. There is one form for initial meetings and another for follow up meetings. These forms have been developed by staff with experience of being a PAT and can be adapted to suit your requirements.

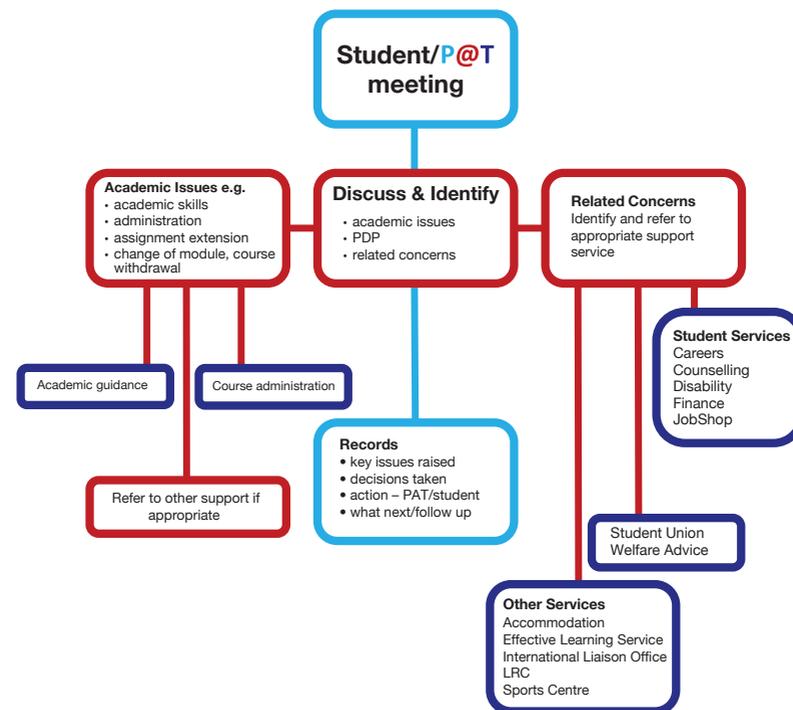
The template provides a structure for the session which allows a student to feel 'someone here listens', even when contact time is limited. Then you need to put into practice your most effective listening and questioning skills.

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You may find it helps to use an online scheduling system, such as **Doodle** to organise meetings with your students. (<https://doodle.com/en/>)

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## Guide to Student PAT meeting



## Listening and questioning techniques

The techniques below are all worth bearing in mind, as they not only help pick up any early concerns which can affect student retention, but encourage students to develop confidence and independence in thinking through their own solutions.

- Paraphrasing a concern back to a student helps their sense that you are listening, and invites clarification
- Open questions encourage further exploration, and the voicing of the 'real' issue. E.g.

*Could you say more about this?*

*What are your feelings about this?*

*What would you like to happen next?*

- *More specific 'closed' question, expecting a precise answer, are important for clarifying specifics*

*When did this happen?*

*How long will this take?*

- A brief summing up of what has been said helps the student gain an overview, and ensures you are both clear about the key issues
- Talking through options is important, even when, in some cases, these may be limited. Although guidance and input from a PAT is important, students should be allowed to identify and think options through for themselves.

The ideas above help map out the progress of a possible brief meeting. If a student needs further time and thought on an issue, it is probably best to arrange another brief meeting, although limits and deadlines, and a clear sense of the structure and what it allows, is more helpful than well-intentioned advice to 'take your time'.

## Meeting with student in distress

Student distress may come to your attention in a variety of ways. Some students will tell you if they are experiencing difficulties and will ask you directly for help.

You may also realise from changes in someone's behaviour, appearance, attendance or academic performance that they may be in some difficulty.

You may notice evidence of drug or alcohol abuse or self-harm.

You may also be alerted to problems by concerned classmates or friends of the student.

**It is important to meet promptly with students once you are aware there might be a problem.** Early intervention is crucial in tackling any issue that is causing a student distress/difficulty and can help to minimise the effect of students' personal circumstances on their academic performance and progress.

Do not feel that you alone have to "solve" the issues that are causing the distress and if you would like support in addressing the student or want to talk the issues through with someone, Student Services can help with this. A confidentiality agreement is in place enabling Student Services and PATs to discuss students at risk to ensure the best support is provided for the student.

If you as a PAT feel out of your depth or overwhelmed with what the student is telling you, please feel free to contact Student Services to discuss. They will be able to provide support to the student and support you in your role.

If you want more information about how to support students in distress please access the "Distressed Student Guide" on the intranet <https://myshare.gmu.ac.uk/services/student-services> or contact Student Services.

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Sometimes simply listening to the students' worries is enough to enable them to think about a specific issue with more clarity.

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## Meeting templates

Finding a way into discussions at PAT meetings can sometimes be difficult – particularly for the first meeting. To break the ice and help get things started, you can provide your students with a meeting template that they can fill in and bring with them to your PAT meetings. A basic meeting template developed by staff who have PAT experience is provided at <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-a-z-index/>. The form is particularly useful in helping your students to recognise positives - the broader skills they are developing and their achievements - at a time when they may be finding the university experience daunting.

You can either download and use this form as it is, or modify it to suit your specific requirements. Whilst it is not mandatory to use one of the published meeting templates, they can make it easier to keep records of your PAT meetings.

## Keeping records of your PAT meetings

You should agree with each student the arrangements for record keeping. Some PATs write the record themselves and provide it to the student for comment and agreement. Sometimes, the student is responsible for preparing the meeting records. Records can be quite brief, for example in the form of an email summarising key points and actions. You should lodge a copy of any completed meeting records and agreed action plans with the School Office. These will form the basis of discussions for subsequent meetings, and will also form a permanent record of your meetings, so that if at some stage the student has to have a new PAT, they will be fully informed.

As these meetings are an essential part of our support and development structure for students, it is important that students are followed up if they miss a planned meeting. You should email them to find out what their reasons are and reschedule the meeting. If this still does not yield results, this should be flagged up to the Programme Leader.

When sending records to the School Office or communicating with them or students about PAT meetings, you should bear in mind the confidentiality principles on the pages which follow.

## Confidentiality

At QMU, good practice in confidentiality is governed by the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act/GDPR. The guidelines below are based on general good practice. For further guidance, PATs should approach the University's Data Protection Officer. Ensuring confidentiality is vital in encouraging students to come forward and seek help when they need it. Students need to know that any information they give will be treated with respect and passed on only with their agreement to those who need to know.

- If a PAT is in receipt of sensitive information which has implications for the student's academic progress, the student needs to be clear about what will happen with that information. This includes who is told, what they are told, why they are told, and where the information is to be held or stored. The student needs to understand any steps to be taken, and give their consent to the information being passed on to the appropriate parties.
- If the information does not have immediate implications for their academic work, the PAT may want to recommend another source of support or information. The PAT will need to discuss with the student what information to share.
- Confidential information about students should be marked 'confidential'.
- For safety reasons, it is never a good idea to promise to keep information secret. There are circumstances in which there might be a need to break confidentiality without the student's consent:
  - If it is felt that there could be safety issues for the student or for others
  - If there is a legal requirement to disclose information.

**There is an information sharing agreement in place which enables student services staff and PAT's to share information when there are concerns about a student. You can see it here <https://myshare.qmu.ac.uk/services/student-services>**

## Where can I refer my students if I cannot help with the issues raised?

The PAT role is to provide advice, guidance and support on academic matters, but students will often raise other support issues. In specific instances, when boundaries of responsibility seem unclear, working through a few stages on an issue can help you both to identify a course of action:

- Encourage the student to focus on how an issue might be affecting academic performance
- Explain and arrange the practicalities that can be put in place by subject staff and be clear about any limits to these, for instance in the case of extensions
- Identify further support needs and suggest who to contact, or provide information for the student to follow up.

You should use all the University services at your disposal to get your students the help that they need. Student Services provides support to student with a range of issues such as finance, wellbeing, counselling, disability and career and employability. Students may need your encouragement and support to understand that contacting these services is a positive way forward and not a sign of failure to cope.

In the pages that follow, you will find a summary of the University services available and contact details for all of them.

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Although I don't know all the staff in support units personally, I know that they are an email or a phone call away if needed, and they are always quick to respond, friendly and helpful to my tutees.

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## Accommodation

- Problems with any aspect of accommodation can affect students as they try to settle in and focus on academic progress. The accommodation office is the first point for students with any accommodation queries.

**Contact:** [accommodation@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@qmu.ac.uk)



## Careers and Employability

A degree in itself will not be enough to guarantee a graduate job, so please encourage students to use Careers and Employability from their first year onwards. This gives them time to develop their employability skills, explore career options and position themselves successfully in a competitive graduate market.

We can provide support at all stages in the process. We can help students identify and secure work experience which will enhance their skills. We can support them in exploring career paths and making appropriate decisions. We can advise on applications, including CVs and use of social media as tools to promote themselves and source opportunities. Our resources include information on local part-time opportunities, graduate vacancies, volunteering and internships.

In particular, we recommend referring students to the following:

- Our annual Recruitment and Volunteering Fairs put students in touch with local employers seeking students for part-time work, paid internships or graduate employment.
- Employer Mentoring: The mentoring programme gives committed and enthusiastic students the opportunity to meet with an experienced individual from a relevant sector, who is willing to offer their time, advice and inside knowledge surrounding the world of work.
- Students should be encouraged to access careers information via Student Central, where they can also book appointments and upcoming events.
- If a student is considering leaving QMU before completing their degree, the Careers Advisers can discuss their options in a positive way and help with university or job applications if necessary.
- Graduates can continue to use the Service for their entire working life after graduation. They will be able to access Student Central after they graduate and can explore resources as well as make an appointment with our team for careers advice.

**Student Central:** <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/s/careers>

**Email:** [careers@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:careers@qmu.ac.uk) or [employability@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:employability@qmu.ac.uk)

**Social Media:** Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (search 'QMU Careers and Employability')

**Website:** [www.qmu.ac.uk/careers/](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/careers/)

## Counselling

- We have found that engagement and attendance works better when students refer themselves and make their own appointments. However, there might be some situations where you've had a discussion with a student and they feel unable to take the first step to access counselling. If this is the case, please email us stating that you have the student's permission to get in touch on their behalf, including their full name and student number.
- Depending on student availability, we can usually see them for their assessment session within a working week of them making contact. We can offer sessions in-person or via Teams or phone. We have some evening availability over Teams/phone for students on placement.
- Where counselling is agreed at the assessment session, we can offer up to 6 sessions either in a block or one-at-a-time, agreed on a case-by-case basis
- Any member of staff can contact the counsellor to discuss concerns about a student but please be aware that due to confidentiality we might be limited in what we can share.

**Information:** <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/counselling-service/>

**Contact:** [counselling@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@qmu.ac.uk). Students can email us to self-refer and we normally have a few practical questions to ask before setting up an assessment appointment. If students prefer, they can also call 0131 474 0000 and ask for Student Services when prompted or, visit Student Services and if a counsellor is available they will take their referral in person.

**Bookings:** One-at-a-time sessions and assessments can be at: <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/students>. All other sessions are arranged directly with counsellors

## Wellbeing

The wellbeing service is available to support all students with anything that may be having an impact on their wellbeing.

The wellbeing adviser can offer support, guidance and advice, they may signpost the student to other QMU support services and external support services if appropriate. The aim of the wellbeing service is to facilitate students in regaining their sense of wellbeing and potential to engage fully with their academic studies and student life.

Stay on course support is also provided by the wellbeing service, this is for students who are struggling to engage with their academic studies (attendance, course work submissions, repeated EC extensions) and may benefit from additional specialised support provided by the wellbeing service.

Information: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/wellbeing-service/>

Email: [wellbeing@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@qmu.ac.uk)

Bookings: <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/students>

## Togetherall

QMU is working with togetherall to provide a supportive, online community to support you. togetherall is a digital mental health support service which is available online, 24/7, and is completely anonymous so you can express yourself freely and openly.

In addition to togetherall's online community, you will have access to useful resources and you can work through tailored self-help courses covering topics such as anxiety, sleep, stress, depression, and many more.

You can sign up with togetherall using your QMU email address at <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>



## Disability Service

Support in QMU for disabled students is formalised via an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Devised by a Disability Adviser and with the student's permission, this describes barriers to learning, recommends support from academic and other departments and formalises assessment arrangements.

Disability Advisers also co-ordinate applications for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for eligible students.

Please advise any disabled student who has not already done so to make an appointment with a Disability Adviser as soon as possible in semester 1 to discuss an ILP and other possible support. Students who suspect a disability should also contact the Disability Advisor to follow up their concerns. Students can book appointments direct on Student Central <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/students>

Each Division has an Academic Disabled Student Co-ordinator (ADSC) who is the key subject liaison with the Disability Service. ADSCs support staff and disabled students with advice and guidance and review, confirm and sign off Individual Learning Plans. Both new and continuing disabled students should be advised to meet their ADSC regularly.

**Information:** <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/disability-service/>

**Email:** [disabilityadvisers@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:disabilityadvisers@qmu.ac.uk)

**Bookings:** <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/students>

## Effective Learning Service

It is useful for a PAT to suggest to all new tutees that they look at the ELS website, and drop in to the ELS room early on to see what we offer. We are keen to make early contact with new students, and encourage them to get in touch if they need us later on. Students can also email us to find out more about how we can support them.

An individual PAT referral can be particularly useful:

At a first meeting with a tutee, if a student expresses concerns about adjusting to academic study and the University's expectations – especially if a student is a direct entrant, or an international student.

In first assignment feedback, in relation to a particular area that needs improvement, such as critical thinking, structure, or referencing.

At a PAT meeting at the start of a fresh semester, or level, especially if assessment results have been disappointing previously.

At any time if a student talks about feeling 'stuck', is disappointed with progress or is simply finding it hard to plan and organise studies.

NB The ELS does not provide a proof-reading or 'essay checking' service. When working with students' writing, our aim is to provide feedback that will help students to really understand how they can improve their writing themselves. The most effective use of our service is early on in the semester or in the process of preparing an assessment.

**Information:** <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/effective-learning-service-els/>

**Email:** [els@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:els@qmu.ac.uk)

## Funding

Student undergraduate funding differs for students from Scotland and those from other parts of the UK (RUK). Scottish students receive their funding in monthly instalments from September to May. RUK student funding arrives in three instalments: start of semester 1, early January, and after Easter. The toughest time for these students financially can be around March, before the last instalment arrives.

The university receives Discretionary (formerly Hardship) Funds from the Scottish Government in order to support undergraduate and postgraduate students from every part of the UK who experience financial difficulties during their studies. There is a separate Nursing Discretionary Fund for nursing students. Students who have to pay for registered childcare can apply for support from the Childcare Fund. In addition the university provides an International Hardship Fund to support students from outwith the UK.

When recommending an application to the Discretionary Fund please ask the student to contact [studentfunding@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:studentfunding@qmu.ac.uk) for further information.

Occasionally, a first instalment of loan is delayed, which is particularly stressful for new students. Small emergency payments can be made in this instance – a student in this position should be referred to the Student Funding Adviser in order to apply.

The Student Funding Adviser is based in Student Services and has appointments available over several days a week. The service will always prioritise students in crisis and significant financial hardship. A student can seek help with completing an application form or come to discuss any aspect of student funding. Appointments can be made on Student Central and further information is available there and on the website.

Information: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/student-funding-service/>

Email: [studentfunding@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:studentfunding@qmu.ac.uk)

Bookings: <https://studentcentral.qmu.ac.uk/students>

## Learning Resource Centre

- Do emphasise that students should familiarise themselves with the library early, before assignment pressures build up
- The enquiry desk is there for advice and support – students can make contact in person, by email or phone.
- Urge students to use the search tool “Discover” – it’s a lot more than a catalogue and early familiarisation will improve research skills.
- If your students need help finding resources for their assignment, suggest they contact the Liaison Librarian for their subject (at the Enquiry Desk)

**Contact:** [lrhelp@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:lrhelp@qmu.ac.uk)

## Thinking of Leaving

- The Thinking of Leaving web site is a useful on-line resource designed to provide information and advice to any students who are thinking of leaving. Students can find out about different options such as deferring studies and the implications of these.
- Students with concerns can also contact staff through a dedicated email address. Staff can advise students about their options and where relevant signpost them to other staff and support services.
- If a student decides to withdraw or defer their studies they can download a form to notify the University of their decision. When a student asks to defer their studies, Programme Leaders are contacted for approval. Completed forms are then circulated to relevant staff and the student’s record updated.

**Contact:**

email: [thinkingofleaving@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:thinkingofleaving@qmu.ac.uk)

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/thinking-of-leaving/>

## PALS

PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) operates in several different subject areas at QMU. We do sessions in all programmes in the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management (ASSaM) and for BSc Paramedic Science in the Health School. Check back with us if you are in a different subject area, as we are constantly expanding.

### What is PALS?

PALS Sessions are student led learning sessions. They are a relaxed, fun and informal way to receive support for learning at QMU. Students can use a session either to help them understand something they are struggling with, or perhaps to consolidate and develop the learning they have already completed. We also run revision sessions so they can brush up on their knowledge in the run-up to exams.

The students who run the sessions are known as PALS Leaders and they complete extensive training with the PALS Coordinator, who also offers Leaders support with design and delivery of sessions, and debrief sessions afterwards. Peer observation is also carried out to ensure quality control.

PALS sessions run on a regular basis throughout term, and students will be notified by email, HUB announcements and lecturers about upcoming sessions. Some sessions are also advertised on Student Central.

The sessions are not mandatory – some people just pop along to a session when they have a particular area of study they are struggling with, while others attend every session because they appreciate the extra support and the experience of the PALS Leaders.

You can find out more about PALS here: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/pals/> and you can contact us at [PALS@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:PALS@qmu.ac.uk)



## QMCares

If you have any students who are care experienced, have caring responsibilities or are estranged from their family, QMCares can offer some additional support. QMCares is an informal support group run in partnership between the Student Union and the Widening Participation and Outreach Team (WPO) and it can offer:

- Advice and Guidance to support students on their transition to, and through, QMU
- Help with funding advice and guidance, employment opportunities, and accommodation
- Opportunity to meet like-minded students and supportive staff
- A free QMCares group lunch each semester

To find out more about the range of support available for student carers, care experienced and estranged students, please visit:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-care-leavers/>

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-student-carers/>

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-estranged-students/>

You can contact Callum Maguire for more information at: [qmcared@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:qmcared@qmu.ac.uk)

## Recruitment and International Liaison Office

- The first point of contact for practical support for international students, including finance and visa information.

**Contact:** [rilo@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:rilo@qmu.ac.uk)

## Medical Advice

All students should be registered with a GP.

Advice on local medical services is available from Student Services.

Contact: [studentservices@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@qmu.ac.uk)

## The Students' Union Help Zone

The SU advises students on rules and regulations regarding Extenuating Circumstances, Academic Appeals, Complaints, Disciplinary Procedures and Fitness to Practise Panel. The Students' Union role is to listen to students and provide them with easy guidance on steps to take. Students can ask a member of staff or sabbatical officer to represent them during meetings which they have with staff. However, Union representatives cannot advocate on students' behalf.

The Help Zone is open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm (4.45pm on Fridays) during term time and holidays.

The main contacts are the Welfare and Representation Coordinator and the Student President.

Students may drop in at any time the service is open. If no staff are available to receive them, students will be advised to contact the Union by e-mail to set an appointment.

The service is confidential and accessible by phone, through e-mail or face to face.

Contact: <https://www.qmusu.org.uk/top-menu/advice-support/academic-university-matters>

[studentpresident@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:studentpresident@qmu.ac.uk) [welfare@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@qmu.ac.uk)

