**Personal Academic Coaching (PAC) at USW**

**Staff Handbook 2020-21**

**Universal Design Version**

Personal Academic Coaching (PAC) at USW.

Staff Handbook 2019-20.

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# **1 Introduction:**

‘If students feel like staﬀ believe in them, and care about the outcomes of their studying, they seem to gain both self-confidence and motivation, and their work improves’ Thomas, L (2002) Student Retention in Higher Education: The Role of Institutional Habitus*.*

Personal Academic Coaching was introduced in pilot phase in 2016 as a consolidation of the many and varied Personal Tutor and Pastoral Tutorial systems in the University. It brings together best practice from across the University and Sector in a cohesive and consistent approach supported by staﬀ training, and resources such as this handbook.

The University of South Wales is committed to embedding Personal Academic Coaching (PAC) as part of its approach to Undergraduate student experience. That experience depends in large part upon building quality professional relationships between staﬀ and students. This means that students feel known, that people are interested in them and their progress, and that there is kindness, supportiveness, and equality in their relationships. This is widely accepted in the literature on retention and underpins USW’s approach. A key aim of our work on student retention and success is to make students feel at home, to feel part of a learning community and be known as individuals. We need to be able to work with them to consider their holistic experience and achievement across their course, review their individual academic progress and engagement.

Personal Academic Coaching has a key and proactive role to play in the transition to University life and to supporting students through various stages of their journey. In the first term this includes settling in and getting established as part of the USW community and their course. Later on, this will involve raising their engagement with the wider opportunities available at USW including employability, co-curricular and volunteering opportunities. It is about giving students a friendly face throughout their studies with whom they can engage about progress across their whole course. With the blended learning and online environment we find ourselves in, now more than ever students value and benefit from the support that a Personal Academic Coach can give them.

This handbook supports your Personal Academic Coaching activities with your students. It contains FAQ’s, guidelines on academic discussions and also links to helpful resources and flowcharts to assist your meetings.

**Please note this guidance was created before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Certain sections, particularly those relating to office location and physical face-to- face meetings, are obviously not going to be possible at time of writing. However, PAC meetings can and must continue as they did at the end of the last academic year through virtual and online means. If your specific circumstances particularly in relation to arrangements with PSRBs or external partners require flexibility of engagement and approach, then this must be agreed and approved by your Line Manager in consultation with Head of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience.**

# **2 What do Personal Academic Coaches do?**

Personal Academic Coaches (PAC) provide one-to-one and group academic advice and guidance to students throughout the duration of their studies. They get

to know the student focus on their academic performance and success and take a holistic view of progress across a course of study (see Scope of PAC, below).

It is important that coaches get to know their students by name, build a relationship, and take time to find out a little about them, understand their interests and what motivates them, and help them set personal goals and targets.

# **3 Scope of PAC:**

Our expectation is that the Personal Academic Coach provides holistic academic support for students allocated to them, which allows them to join the dots on their progress across their modules and wider engagement.

The core responsibilities of Personal Academic Coaches as part of normal academic practice are to:

* Work with Course Leaders to arrange initial allocation and meetings with students;
* Formally schedule meetings with students;
* Enable students to settle into University, and to engage eﬀectively in their studies through a review of their academic progress and engagement on a regular basis at each level of study;
* Oﬀer a supportive, constructive and accessible point of contact directly related to their course and career aspirations;
* Support students to consider their progress holistically across all modules on the course, through personal reflection upon the feedback and grades they have received;
* Support students to identify their strengths, weaknesses and developmental opportunities reflecting on how they can address these to progress eﬀectively;
* Support students to set goals and targets;
* Encourage student completion of a record of discussion;
* Keep records of attendance and engagement with PAC activity, following up with students and informing the Advice Zone and Course Leader if necessary;
* Be an appropriate point of referral for, and direction to, other support services;
* Support students in considering career ambitions directly and through referral to appropriate University services, including access to careers advice, placement / internship opportunities and extra-curricular activities;
* Where required to act as a personal referee for students in applying for placements, internships or employment.

Coaches should also be familiar with the University guidance on the PREVENT legislation available on the Hub: <https://universityofsouthwales.sharepoint.com/sites/Chaplaincy/SitePages/en-GB/about-prevent.aspx>

###  What A PAC should not do:

* The Coach should not provide counselling, financial advice, disability and dyslexia support, health or wellbeing or any other specialist advice, but rather refer students to the appropriate services.;
* Duplicate the role of Module Leaders/Tutors who provide specific subject advice, but provide holistic guidance on academic matters, learning habits and behaviours, learner engagement and career aspirations in the context of the entire course of study;
* Influence the academic integrity of assignment and assessment processes and timescales. If students have legitimate factors that aﬀect their performance, these can and should be addressed through formal extenuating circumstances and other suitable routes;
* Stray into giving personal advice, based on your or others experiences (If I were you I would..) or asking for details of the students personal life they have not volunteered.

The underpinning principles for PAC are to be found in Appendix 1.

It is also important the students are able to contact Personal Academic Coaches, in the normal way outside of timetabled sessions through Oﬃce Hours as any other student would.

# **4. Why “Coaching”?**

The use of the term Coaching emphasises the type of relationship that we want to foster. One in which students are helped to develop self-awareness and their own ability to solve problems, and to grow through their academic course. The process therefore encourages self-reflection, goal setting, reflection on habits of learning and putting in place their own strategies. The aim of the coach is to facilitate that. As a consequence, the types of conversation that take place are important. They should be facilitative not instructive and should ask open questions that encourage students to identify their own goals, think about their current progress on their course, find their own solutions and consider their learning behaviours.

This is not a passive model where the Coach gives all the answers to students. Students can and must take an active part in planning for their futures, recognising personal strengths, and addressing any issues through honest discussion aiding ownership and resilience.

The conversations should therefore balance support and challenge.

### Reference on the type of questions you can ask are contained in Content of PAC Sessions in Section 12, but a useful reference is the GROW model of coaching covered in Section 6.

# **5 The USW Approach:**

### Our expectation is that all students on all undergraduate courses will be part of the scheme giving full coverage as those students progress through their studies.

We have set out to create a consistent approach to PAC. This guide gives you an outline of the role and of University expectations regarding what the Personal Academic Coach will do and the way that they will do it. The Student Experience Plan clarifies that:

### ‘Personal Coaching should be a proactive, integrated, structured and should build relationships between staﬀ and learners. Students should not have to rely on having to access tutors themselves. It should be based on a ‘mentoring’ approach and embedded into their academic programme. It must be mainstreamed. Engagement of learners, including attendance, should be expected and this expectation set early. Learners should know that there will be follow up if they disengage, with support to re-engage’ *(Student Experience Plan, 2016)*

The timing of PAC sessions is also important. Research into student retention has shown that the optimum timing for such conversations for Level 4 and Level 3 - when students may be struggling and considering withdrawal - are at induction, the end of Term 1 in November/December, January and towards the end of Term 2 in March/ April\*. You may also be aware of critical times on your courses where students would welcome the opportunity to talk about their progress e.g. around key assessment periods and on receipt of grades following feedback.

Our baseline commitment includes:

1. That all new undergraduate students will be allocated a Personal Coach post enrolment. This includes Foundation Year / Level 3, Level 4 / Year 1, as well as direct entry to Level 5 / Year 2 and Level 6 / Year 3.
2. That in Year 1 / Level 4 or Year 0 / Level 3 (or Level 5 / Year 2, Level 6/ Year 3 for direct entry) they will meet with their Personal Coach during, or shortly after, induction in order to help get them oﬀ to a good start and to settle in.
3. That they will remain with the same coach, where possible, through the majority of their studies, to build eﬀective relationships and feel that their individual journey is well understood.
4. If appropriate, for Year 3 / Level 6 the role of PAC may be combined with that of Dissertation or Major Project Supervisor. It must however take a holistic approach considering whole course performance and professional / career support not just on that module.
5. That for all years there will be a minimum of two one-to-one meetings a year with their Personal Coach on the pattern outlined, in addition to any normal induction activity.
6. Individual student tutorial sessions will be of 20 to 30 minutes duration.
7. A record (see Appendix 2) of the sessions should be generated by the student with a copy given to the coach.
8. That where possible the sessions are formally timetabled within the course to avoid clashes with taught sessions.
9. That the coaching sessions provide a space for holistic reflection on course progress, goal setting and future learning strategies, assessment and feedback, making the most of the careers opportunities and co-curricular oﬀer at the University, to build learner confidence and personal capacity.

### Pattern of Meetings:

As a result of feedback, the pattern of meetings has been amended. The group or individual meeting shortly after induction is required for “New” students but now optional for those already studying and progressing from previous years. A further two individual meetings during the academic year should coincide with points where data tells us they are most likely to withdraw usually in Autumn and Spring Terms.

For “New” students at any level the following pattern should be used:

1. During or shortly after induction: A group or individual tutorial where each student will be allocated and meet their Personal Academic Coach, agree expectations and timings of meetings;
2. Late November/early December\*: an individual student meeting after induction, immersive learning and the first points of assessment;
3. Late February/early March\*: an individual student meeting when grades should be available for work completed in the first part of the academic year.

### For following years only two one-to-one meetings should take place. The first being in term 1 to aid transition and progression between levels, and another in term 2 to review in-year grades, progress and achievement.

*\**Note: This applies to Full-Time “mainstream” Undergraduate Students studying in an Academic Year pattern of September/October to May/June. It is recognised that some courses have diﬀerent start dates and durations will not follow this. These can necessarily adopt a diﬀerent pattern, but must adhere to the number of meetings, duration of sessions and documentation.

It is recognised that the University has models of delivery to larger groups on site across the UK through blended and peripatetic means, many of which are delivered in partnership with PSRBs and other organisations over multiple sites. In these areas where the daily supervision and mentorship arrangements exceed that of PAC, and where USW “leads” provision but does not deliver entirely, then an adaptation of PAC can be applied. This may involve group rather than individual meetings, but with the stated option that every student can be seen individually if they require it.

# **Using the GROW Model for PAC:**

GROW is one model of goal setting and problem solving used in coaching and management in diverse contexts and situations. Standing for Goal, Reality, Options and Way forward, it breaks down the elements of any issue to identifiable stages to facilitate progress and completion. In the context of Personal Academic Coaching, it can be used to help students take active responsibility for their own progress, through questioning that draws the solutions from them, rather than the coach giving them a pre- determined solution that they might not own or value.

### GROW stands for:

Goal – What does the student want to achieve? Work together to set short, and long-term goals and record them on the PAC Record Form for review in future sessions.

Reality – Where are they in relation to their goals? What skills do they already have that might help them in this?

Options – Help them explore the options available to them.

Way forward – Student to decide choice of option. Then create a plan of action of how to achieve the Goal set.

GROW encourages individuals to take control and responsibility of their own progress, monitoring, reflecting, planning and taking appropriate actions. It helps them to understand and appreciate what their strengths are and how they can examine areas for improvement.

### Facilitate students in developing their own skills in critical analysis, judgement and decision making through:

* Listening to what your tutee is sharing with / telling you.
* Being a non-judgmental “safe space” and sounding board for ideas.
* Focusing on positive and constructive encouragement with their studies and career ambitions.
* Asking questions that help students look at options, assess and review them, finding the best solution for them as individuals.
* Being aware of the individual “What would work for you”, “What are your Personal goals?”, “What is the best way for you to get there?”
* Ending with clear goals and ways forward that they own and buy into.
* Reviewing these when you meet next.

GROW discourages coaches giving all the answers for everything. You can control their classroom experience and guide them to other support, but trying to solve everything creates a dependent relationship that you cannot sustain, and long term does not help them progress and flourish as resilient individuals and autonomous learners.

### Try and avoid:

* Analysing the sources of problems for them – guide/nudge/influence but don’t tell. “what do you think is the source of this issue?”, “What do you think your options are?”, “Which is the most “appropriate solution” for you given current circumstances?”.
* Leading the tutee in a certain direction based on what you think, not what they have said or shared.
* Giving direct advice – draw it out of them – it must be their idea, they have to want to do it, ‘own” it, and see the value in it for themselves.
* Imposing your own opinions and worldview on them.
* Asking more than you need to know, particularly regarding their personal lives. Be aware of boundaries.

GROW is just one of many strategies that can be used in PAC including OSCAR (Outcome, Scale, Choices / Consequences, Action, and Review) and CIGAR (Current Reality, Ideal, Gaps, Action, and Review). If you have others, please share with colleagues!

# **7 Review and Monitoring:**

Ongoing monitoring of individual student engagement with the course should be the subject of everyday conversations between Module Leaders, Course Leaders, PACs, and regular Course Team meetings. Identifying those students who are not engaging or at risk of discontinuing, supporting them succeed in their studies, and referring them to appropriate advice and support services is core to what we do here at USW.

In formal terms PAC is a policy requirement at USW under the framework of the Student Experience Plan, 2030 Strategy and is subject to monitoring on a regular basis.

The ownership of the scheme, and the responsibility for fully implementing, reviewing and monitoring its application and eﬀectiveness lies at school level. It should be reflected upon through routine school management activities, such as faculty executive meetings, and through standard quality processes, including annual monitoring.

Schools will be asked to report throughout the year in continuous monitoring and through Faculty and University Learning, Teaching and Enhancement (LTEC) Committees on the implementation, operation and eﬀectiveness of the scheme in their areas.

# **Inputs into PAC Sessions:**

There are various inputs that can be used to inform PAC sessions:

1. The learners’ own views/self-perception of their progress.
2. Performance/marks on assignments to date.
3. Feedback on assignments, particularly where themes emerge across the course where specific study advice might be needed.
4. Upcoming assignment challenges.
5. Engagement with, and attendance at modules.
6. Wider engagement on the VLE, use of library etc.
7. Enrolment and engagement with careers advice, Grad Edge, Employability and Placement and Graduate Attributes
8. Engagement with co-curricular activity including societies, volunteering etc.
9. Following successful trial of the learner analytics tool Data Explorer with PACs and other staﬀ last year, this is now available for to all who wish to use it.
10. Drawing together various engagement data including grades, VLE, computer and facility use, it represents these visually to learners and coaches, to facilitate a conversation about engagement, success and risk.
11. Of course, the data is only of value if the quality of the conversation is good. To give structure and direction to sessions, PAC training and student record covers the use of the GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward) Coaching Model as a method of structuring plans that have real outcomes and meaning for the student. (See section 6).

# **9 Working with others:**

The coach is of course only one part of an ecology of support for our students. As a consequence, it is important that coaches are fully aware of:

* How and where to refer students with specialist advice requirements that are outside the remit of the coach such as Advice Zones for guidance on module changes and mitigating circumstances study skills advice that students can access (These are provided as hyperlinks in referral charts for each Campus on Connect). Module tutors to refer students for subject specific advice.
* Careers and placement advisors for general guidance on careers support.
* The Student’s Union for advice on clubs, societies, volunteering and extracurricular activity.
* Your Course Leader for any issues that emerge from the coaching session that require a course level intervention.
* Academic Manager and/or Head of School for issues that need wider School or Faculty support, or where students are raising issues around their experience that require wider discussion beyond the scope of the PAC scheme.

# **10 Disclosure of Personal Information and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):**

Under Data Protection Regulation students can access the majority of information held by the University on them. The record of your meetings are designed to be kept between yourself and the students, but you should inform them where it will be stored, and which staﬀ will have access to it if needed.

Likewise, the Data Explorer Dashboard includes a note function for staﬀ to record agreed actions in each session which they can ask to see. The system contains the facility to e-mail these to students, and it is advised that coaches take advantage of this.

During your tutorial sessions students may mention or discuss sensitive information such as personal circumstances, medical conditions or other issues not directly related to their studies.

While respecting their right to confidentiality, in these circumstances you need to make clear to the students that under your duty of care for them, you will need to direct them to appropriate trained support staﬀ.

Should issues arise that might put the student’s studies, or those of their fellow students at risk, or they are likely to harm themselves or others, under that same duty of care, you may need to share information with other staﬀ or support services. As such, in the best interests of the students you cannot guarantee total confidentiality of information divulged, and this should be made clear when and where it is appropriate to do so.

# **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **Why Personal Academic Coaching? Why now?**

PAC replaced existing academic and pastoral tutorial systems that existed on every course in the university in diﬀerent forms. It is not “new” but a reshaping of previous practice. In designing PAC we encountered systems that far exceeded the current arrangements with twice termly or monthly meetings with individual students. Likewise, there were systems that were voluntary and clearly did not meet the needs of students. From best practice in the university and the sector, it was recognised that focusing on a more limited number of quality rich conversations at key pressure points in the Academic Year was more consistent and eﬀective.

It should be recognised that in the current climate where all students pay the same fees, they expect and demand equal support and advice on whatever course or campus they attend. With increasing challenge from students as well as the Competition and Market Authority (CMA), it is essential that students have the same access to, and quality of support. PAC creates a clear, cohesive and consistent approach to this, underpinned by training, and common resources that support staﬀ fully.

### **What training will I receive?**

You will receive core training on process, procedure and approach at Campus Level. As part of this you will gain an initial awareness and recognition of the most common sensitive issues, so that you are confident in referring students to the appropriate Student Support Services. It will, however be in the context of directing them to use the relevant resources and support and working with colleagues to signpost this to students. Further specific sessions on equality, learning diﬀerences and mental health will be covered separately by appropriate support departments.

### **Who will allocate me my student group?**

Full-time academic staﬀ will be allocated a number of students from courses on which the academic staﬀ member is currently teaching, and the student is enrolled on.

Your Course Leader and Academic Subject Manager will work with you to allocate your PAC group at induction. If it is possible to allocate the student prior to enrolment and inform them, then you should do so. The allocation is based on numbers, applications and individual staﬀ workloads, negotiated individually with your line manager.

### **What approach do I need to take as a Personal Academic Coach?**

Both staﬀ and students that have taken part in the scheme highlight that friendly, human interaction with students with clear boundaries is the key to success of the scheme. PAC provides an opportunity to develop a rapport with students and to create a positive, supportive and tracking model that enables students to fulfil their academic potential. The nature of the dialogue should seek to allow students to reflect upon their activities, set their own goals and put in place their own strategies to achieve them.

Developing this meaningful relationship has proven to provide positive results for both staﬀ and students.

The term Personal Academic Coach is carefully chosen to reflect the role as defined in relation to academic success and professional progress of the student. It should not be confused or compared with the wider field of accredited professional coaching but as a local terminology that enhances engagement and the supportive intention of the scheme. Likewise Personal Academic Coaches cannot and should not provide counselling, financial advice, disability and dyslexia, health or other wellbeing or mental health advice.

### **What do I do if the student fails to respond to a meeting request?**

A personal reminder in class or through other Course Team members or Course Leader will often be the most eﬀective method. If a pattern of absence is clear then an e-mail reminder, and if no reply is forthcoming then your usual procedure for contacting absent students, should be used involving Advice Zone or the Progression Team if appropriate.

### **How do I know if Personal Academic Coaching has impact?**

The pilot targeted courses considered a number of variables: low NSS scores, low retention levels, large student cohort classes, professional courses, courses with established tutoring systems and some high performing courses. Research was conducted that included staﬀ and students that took part in this pilot and they reported positive developments in engagement and facilitating a ‘rich dialogue interaction’. Staﬀ and students acknowledged that having an allocated time to have a face-to-face discussion about academic progress has been both valuable and revealing and a positive step towards creating a better University community. As part of wider strategies and actions around retention, for the vast majority of the courses involved this was also reflected in positive eﬀect on student engagement and retention.

PAC is evaluated for eﬀectiveness in training, delivery and operation on a constant basis through feedback and monitoring at all levels in line with the continuous monitoring process. If you have any suggestions on any improvements then please contact your Faculty Head of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience.

We already have our own Tutorial system. I don’t think PAC applies to my course. How do I find out? For reasons outlined above, it is not acceptable to decide to just “Not do PAC” at course level, as this has serious and wide-ranging implications.

PAC is part of The Student Experience Plan which has been ratified by the Academic Board of the University and applies to all Undergraduate courses in the University. Taught Post-Graduate Courses may adopt PAC on a voluntary basis if they wish, but Post- Graduate Courses aligned with research have their own supervisory arrangement which are defined and governed separately.

If your course is heavily regulated by an employer or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) whose arrangements exceed the requirements of PAC, as defined in Appendix 1: Principles of PAC at USW, then your course may be exempt from its use. This exemption can only be agreed by your Deputy Dean or Dean in discussion with your Head of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, so if you have any doubt you should consult them. Thus far only two areas, Nursing and Policing, have been granted an exemption.

# **Content of PAC sessions:**

Each year and stage of a course presents its own challenges for students, whatever their subject area. Below are some prompts that reflect the issues that may be at the forefront of their minds at diﬀerent points of their course that you may find useful in your discussions.

These are indicative, but give a sense of the open type of questions that encourage student personal reflection and planning. Where a student is repeating a year of study, PACs are advised to refer to the additional question set available with other PAC resources on the CELT website.

If the timing of meetings in the year have been moved to accommodate disciplinary practices PACs are invited to select an appropriate range from the first and second individual meeting prompts shown in the next few pages.

**Content of PAC Sessions at Levels 3 & 4:**

| First Meeting Group Level 3 / 4 – Induction: |
| --- |
| Below is General Guidance Suggested Format, Actions and Questions, but feel free to add your own or extract from those given as appropriate. | Background |
| Introduce yourself as PAC, Location (Room Number when on-site) and how you can be contacted (E-Mail, Desk Phone number – you are advised not to give out your personal mobile number, but there is no University Policy on this).Getting students to introduce themselves briefly to you and each other.Explain what Personal Academic Coaching is, what students can expect:* Set parameters and boundaries
* Signpost Advice Zone Shop, Finance, Wellbeing and Student Union. Do they know what help is available and where to get it?
* Identify the weeks and days in which the next two Coaching Sessions will be taking place (before Christmas in Term 1 and in Term 2)
* Let them know how and when you will be confirming what time their session is
* Deal with any initial issues.
 | During the induction period a proactive relationship should be encouraged with the student to develop a good rapport with them from the beginning.Provide an overview of PAC and set out the benefits to them, as well as the expectations in relation to attendance at the mandatory 1-2-1 meetings and the engagement you expect from them.The benefits of such relationships will help student retention, belonging, creating a stabilizing force, encouraging a new ‘academic mind set’ and analytical skills both in and away from the classroom/lecture hall.Encourage the students to prepare for their 1-2-1 personal coaching sessions by reflecting and evaluating their progress throughout the first year. Introduce them to the expectation that they will create actions and targets for the next term or assessment period. |

| First One to One Meeting Level 3 / 4 – Before end of First Term: |
| --- |
| General Guidance Suggested Format, Actions and Questions | Background |
| How are you settling into the course and University Life? | Your first Individual Meeting should draw from the student how they are transitioning from a school or college to the new environment of the University, celebrate any early positive experiences and help them find ways to address any issues they may have.How is the student engaging with their studies and the University in terms of their course, accommodation, finance and socially? Do they need to be referred to appropriate support? Are there course based activities they are not aware of that might help them integrate or re-engage better? |
| What did you think of induction and did it provide the information you needed? | Make sure that the student understands the information provided to them about the university. Do they now have an overall picture of the course, it’s modules and how it will help them to gain skills over time and extend their knowledge and understanding of the subject?It may also be helpful to clarify how they can get additional information or support as required. Finally, give them a sense of how the course team is structured and the roles within it i.e. year tutor, course leader, module leader each of whom can support and guide the student as appropriate. |
| What has enabled you to be successful so far? | Discuss their experience of the immersive learning activity. Has this activity helped you transition onto your course in HE?If they have received their first mark, ask them how they feel about this, and how they can reflect and build on this first feedback experience. For example, what is their perception of the grade obtained verses the eﬀort they put in? Have a discussion to help manage their expectations around this. 70+ = 1st class etc.We know some students struggle with initial feedback, so discuss how early this is in their journey and the perspective they should put this in, in terms of a 3 or 4 Year Course. |
| Is the course what you expected? | We know it is early days but we also know that students leave if they think they are on the wrong course. Most courses start with introductions to a wide range of areas of the subject but allow for greater specialization as they progress. If this is the case then clarify the pathways that will be available and how this might allow them to focus as they work through the course.It may be that they struggle with certain aspects of the course already, so can they be referred to module leaders or study skills staﬀ to help?Ultimately if it is clear that the student wishes to leave the course, while we do not want to persuade anyone to stay who is on the wrong course, if possible ask if they might consider transferring to another appropriate course within the institution. Try and direct them to the appropriate Course Leader to discuss their options at this point. |

| General Guidance. | Background. |
| --- | --- |
| What new skills do you think you will, need? | Is the student clear on the way they will gain knowledge and apply it across all modules to build their overall skill base e.g. Subject specific, time management, report/essay writing?Do they need any additional support to enhance their learning and success at this level? (study skills? DDS?) |
| What are you looking forward to? | This starts to develop a rapport of shared goals and enables you to get to know the student’s interests, ambitions and expectations of their course. |
| What are you going to take away from this session and do next? | What personal goals has/is the student going to set themselves to achieve in the short, medium and long term. These may be course related, or about networking with Student Union or other students (if this is an issue), or aspirational goals for the future (personal research on subject / career)? |
| What are your personal goals, short, medium and long term | They may not yet have any, but how are they feeling about their choice of course? Do they have a clear idea of what it means to be a professional in their subject area? Are they starting to scope what this will look like within their chosen profession? Do they understand how engaging with, and working hard on their course will get them there? |
| What do you want to achieve at University? | Do they already have an idea of the breadth of their subject? Do they appreciate the overall course journey, and that this is an early stage from which they progress? Even at this early stage what are they doing to engage beyond their classroom in wider networks of fellow students in the University and wider community. |
| What is diﬀerent about University life for them and how are they feeling about that diﬀerence? | Do they know where to get support – are members of the course team approachable/contactable? Alert them to the oﬃce hours/open door/email norms for their course (this detail is also available in the Course Handbook). |
| What else have you engaged with at University? | Are there any course based groups or activities (year 1,2 or 3) that you are or would like to be involved in?Have you joined any societies or clubs? Would you like to start one? Do you know who to contact? [www.uswsu.com](http://www.uswsu.com/)Have you registered for Grad Edge and used any of the employability tools’ |
| What is working well for you at the moment? | Have a positive conversation about any achievements so far and try and evaluate their learning experiences at USW. This question may give you the opportunity to discuss forthcoming modules, events or enhancement activities.Are there subjects they are particularly enjoying at this early stage, and how can they build on this through personal research or extra-curricular activity. |
| What isn’t working well for you at the moment | Students may raise concerns about course-related matters. If so, your PAC role is to support them find a resolution – remembering to use the appropriate referral processes for both academic and pastoral issues that are raised. For example, if a student says they are struggling in a particular module assessment, suggest that they talk to the module leader/teaching team member. If the student raises an issue around fees, use the referral flowchart on the CELT website to point them in the direction for the correct support service. If you hear similar concerns expressed by a number of your student tutees, consider how these might be discussed in Course Team meetings to see if there is a pattern of issues.Are there any areas they are struggling with, what support might they need, or how might they reflect and take action to address these? |

| General Guidance. | Background. |
| --- | --- |
| What do you want to achieve at University? | Do they already have an idea of the breadth of their subject? Do they appreciate the overall course journey, and that this is an early stage from which they progress? Even at this early stage what are they doing to engage beyond their classroom in wider networks of fellow students in the University and wider community. |
| What is diﬀerent about University life for them and how are they feeling about that diﬀerence? | Do they know where to get support – are members of the course team approachable/contactable? Alert them to the oﬃce hours/open door/email norms for their course (this detail is also available in the Course Handbook). |
| What else have you engaged with at University? | Are there any course based groups or activities (year 1,2 or 3) that you are or would like to be involved in?Have you joined any societies or clubs? Would you like to start one? Do you know who to contact? [www.uswsu.com](http://www.uswsu.com/)Have you registered for Grad Edge and used any of the employability tools’ |
| What is working well for you at the moment? | Have a positive conversation about any achievements so far and try and evaluate their learning experiences at USW. This question may give you the opportunity to discuss forthcoming modules, events or enhancement activities.Are there subjects they are particularly enjoying at this early stage, and how can they build on this through personal research or extra-curricular activity. |
| What isn’t working well for you at the moment | Students may raise concerns about course-related matters. If so, your PAC role is to support them find a resolution – remembering to use the appropriate referral processes for both academic and pastoral issues that are raised. For example, if a student says they are struggling in a particular module assessment, suggest that they talk to the module leader/teaching team member. If the student raises an issue around fees, use the referral flowchart on the CELT website to point them in the direction for the correct support service. If you hear similar concerns expressed by a number of your student tutees, consider how these might be discussed in Course Team meetings to see if there is a pattern of issues.Are there any areas they are struggling with, what support might they need, or how might they reflect and take action to address these? |

| General Guidance. | Background. |
| --- | --- |
| How do you think you could do things diﬀerently? | Now that that they are past immersive learning how are they managing their time with multiple tasks and assessment deadlines.Are there strategies they can put in place (timelines, planning, timetabling, Gantt chart, etc.) that will help them visualise and manage their workload eﬀectively. |
| What are you going to take away from this session and do next? Give me 5 actions can you set yourself to take your progress to the next level. | What personal goals has/is the student going to set themselves to achieve in the short, medium and long term. These may be course related, or about networking with Student Union or other students (if this is an issue), or aspirational goals for the future (personal research on subject / career)?Have they tackled similar situations before? How did they go about it?You could ask them ‘What is your next step going to be and/or ‘When are you going to start’Be clear of their role in defining the action points and that these will be the basis of discussion in your next meeting. |
| Are they considering Work Placements or Erasmus exchange? If so the sooner they consider this and apply, the better. | Careers and Employability have a range of short and extended placement opportunities that occur throughout the year and during vacation times.Erasmus Schemes in each Faculty provide Year Long or Half-Year Exchange opportunities with a number of partner institutions at Level 5 / Year 2. |
| What is their way forward for the next few months? | What personal goals are they going to set themselves, and who can help them reach them. These may involve not just Academic Staﬀ, but fellow students, SU or Advice and other support services? They will need to set deadlines for setting these actions in motion that they can review in your next meeting. |

| Second One to One Meeting Level 3 / 4 – Before end of Second Term: |
| --- |
| Below is General Guidance Suggested Format, Actions and Questions, but feel free to add your own or subtract from those given as appropriate. | Background. |
| How have things gone since the last meeting? | A positive conversation about any achievements so far, reflecting on their academic studies, modules completed or in process. Wider points including how they feel they are integrating. |

| General Guidance Suggested Format, Actions and Questions. | Background. |
| --- | --- |
| Follow up on any points discussed in November.Where do they feel they are in relation to their goals and action points? | From the action points agreed at the last meeting, what progress has been made by the student, any successes that they can celebrate and any issues that they still need to address or work on. What do they need to do and who might they approach to help them in furthering their ambitions? |
| After setting their goals the student should have decided on the option to take forward, encourage them to formulate a plan of action about how they will achieve their goals. | They are formulating their plan, the PAC role is to facilitate this activity. |
| Ask the student if they have any forthcoming coursework submissions or examinations? | How are they managing their time in completing these? Do they have a timeline / plan for completion, any revision and other work commitments they may have? If not encourage them to do so. |
| What is working well? What are the positive aspects of their experience so far that they could reflect on?Try and evaluate their learning experiences at USW. | Do they need any support with planning or how to plan for revision? Can this come from study skills, or the module leader. |
| Discuss Module Options for Level 5 as appropriate | As the year progresses, it is key to engage with the students about their options for Level 5/Year 2. Have a conversation with them about their thinking in relation to what option choices are available, and how they see these fitting into their future career plans. |

**Content of PAC Sessions at Level 5:**

| General Points: |
| --- |
| In addition to previous questions the following may be useful prompts at this level: | Background |
| During the first meeting, students should be encouraged to reflect on their achievements in their first year of study. and look forward to the next. A common exercise for this has been “A letter to myself in the previous year” in which the student writes to their younger self advising them of what things they will be encountering, including advice for how to address issues and identify opportunities. This encourages them to celebrate achievement and to identify any outstanding issues that they may still need to address.If they have chosen options what are they, and are they clear on the content and purpose of the subjects chosen?Another focus should be on where they see themselves in relation to their subject and as a professional in the world of work. In addition to the opportunities their courses will give them in Live Projects and visiting speakers, how will they make eﬀorts to identify and network with people who could be helpful in finding a placement and future career opportunities.In this and the November meeting, the PAC should provide advice, help and support the student may need with this, and start preparing them for future career plans. In particular advising the student of our USW careers and employability team/support.Careers and Employability. | If Level 4 is about gaining the basic skills and underpinning theories to engage in their subject Level 5 / Year 2 is typically where they should be expanding and developing the range and depth of those skills through increasingly complex task and specialist study through limited optionality.This year should also be where they should increasingly be seeing themselves in a workplace context, whether through live projects, preparing for short or year long placement, or Erasmus exchange.Taking the initiative in mapping the landscape of employment locally, nationally and internationally they should be identifying likely employers, with help from their course, careers service and employability team. |
| The sessions should also encourage the student to consider developing their CV and examining their online presence in social media to aid them in this, and providing them with the tools necessary for employment after graduation. Again the Careers and Employability Team can help them with this. | Do they already have a part-time job (the majority of our students do)? If so what skills do the already have? Interpersonal, technological, group working, money handling or dealing with the public.How can these map to their subject or profession and make them more attractive for potential placement opportunities? Should they already be looking at potential employers and targeting them for part-time or freelance opportunities. |

| **First One to One of Level 5 – Before end of First Term:** |
| --- |
| In addition to previous questions the following may be useful prompts at this level: | Background |
| Generally, how is it going? | An open question, reflecting on general progress and concerns. What were their expectations of study in this year? Are they being met, and if not what action are they planning to take to address them. Should they be talking to module tutors about sources of further information in specific subjects, or suggesting speakers they might like to see on their course? Are there Course, Campus or University events or societies that might help them in this. |
| How they have found the transition from Level 4 to 5? | Have they found a ‘step-up” in the level and complexity of the assignments they are being asked to complete? If so how are they dealing with this? Are there additional ways in which they can engage in subjects beyond the University? Associations, events or professional bodies whether local or online that might complement their studies. |
| During the meeting, perhaps a discussion about how their degree classification is calculated to ensure they recognise the value of strong level 5 academic achievement.Have a positive conversation about any achievements they have had so far at this level. | The University currently operates a dual calculation system which takes either the numerical average of final year study or a percentage of second year grades into account – whichever is highest. By ensuring a strong performance in this year they can positively aﬀect their classification.They should by now have had a first point of assessment, including any optional or specialist options that may involve more in-depth study of an aspect of their subject. How are they finding this? Is there already an idea of an aspect of the subject that they enjoy or may wish to specialize in later? How might personal research enhance this? |
| How are they planning to take the initiative in engaging with their subject and intended profession? | Students should be encouraged to network with people who could be helpful in finding a placement and future career opportunities. The sessions should also encourage developing the student’s CV and providing them with the tools necessary for employment after graduation. |
| A discussion and information around the Erasmus scheme may also be necessary if the student is considering studying abroad. | If they are interested then they need to contact the staﬀ member responsible in your Faculty. |

| **Second One to One of Level 5 - Before end of Second Term:** |
| --- |
| In addition to previous questions the following may be useful prompts at this level: | Background |
| Are you undertaking a placement or Erasmus exchange opportunity? | Follow up with students who indicated they may be undertaking a long or short Work Placement studying abroad in the earlier meeting about their planning and preparation arrangements.What do they intend to get out of this opportunity? How will they work with the company or institution to help them achieve this? Are there key individuals / mentors in those organisations that can help them do this? How will they record, reflect and evaluate the experience (perhaps as a basis for enhanced CV? |
| What are you considering as the subject for your final year dissertation or project? | Based on general or optional study at this Level is there an area of interest that might form the basis of their Major Project or Dissertation (depending on course). What personal research and preparation can they make now to act as a good foundation for this. Might it involve links to employers or placement? |
| What are you Module Options Choices for Level 6 (If applicable). | Based on their experience this year, are there obvious pathways the would like to follow at Level 6? Will they be taking these to broaden their experience in diﬀerent subject areas, or gain more specialist knowledge in a specific area? |

Guidance for student(s) who are repeating modules at Level 5 or 6:

Resits are an opportunity to complete outstanding assessments without further teaching, during the defined resit period for your course. Repeats are a final opportunity to pass failed modules during the next academic session. Students repeating a module are expected to attend all teaching sessions and take all elements of assessments for that module and may not carry elements of assessment passed at the first attempt. Repeat modules normally incur a fee whereas a resit does not

| Suggested Prompts | Background |
| --- | --- |
| Discuss with the student why they think they were not successful in passing the previous year and what support mechanisms might be appropriate to help them succeed this year. | This will help identify areas of concern and clarify any support that may need to be put in place, as well as any referrals that may need to be made, to provide the student with the best chance of success. These may be to the module leader, study skills or Advice Zone. |
| Look at the students results profile (with the student) to identify any areas of academic concern. | For example, good coursework results and poor exam results may mean that referral to Study Skills for exam preparation may be appropriate, or if the exam results are good, but the coursework results are poor, then referral to Study Skills for their report/essay writing support.studyskills.southwales.ac.uk/ |
| Advise students that they should visit Student Money Advice Team in case there is any financial implication to the repeat and if there is support available for them. studentmoney.southwales.ac.uk/ | Repeat modules incur fees, and diﬃculty obtaining funding can cause problems beyond the diﬃculties students would normally face. The earlier they engage with support services such as the Student Money Advice Team the better their chances of resolving issues’ |
| Ask when their first assignments are due and ask how they intend to successfully submit. | How are they managing their time in completing upcoming assessments? Do they have a timeline/plan for completion? Do they have any other work commitments? Do they need any support with planning or how to meet upcoming deadlines?Time Management resources are available – studyskills.southwales.ac.uk/academic-skills/time- management/ |
| Inform the student who their Information Librarian is, and explain how they can support them. library.southwales.ac.uk/contact-us/faculty- librarians/ | The library is a vital resource so often underused. Encouraging students to get the most out of this can be critical to success. |

| Guidance for student(s) who are repeating modules at Level 5 or 6 (continued): |
| --- |
| Suggested Prompts | Background |
| Reiterate the importance of attendance and engagement. | This is especially important as repeating students often feel they do not need to attend the module classes, as they have already attended the year before.Students can be withdrawn for lack of engagement and attendance in class forms an important part of this. In addition, full engagement will greatly improve their chances of success. |
| Ensure the student understands that they can only repeat a module once and will be discontinued from the course should they be unsuccessful again. | Highlighting the importance of passing repeat modules is essential. Ensuring all deadlines are met is especially important as failure to submit work for repeat modules is likely to mean no resit can be oﬀered, which can lead to a discontinue from the course. |

| First One to One of Level 6 - Before end of First Term:In addition to previous questions the following may be useful prompts at this level: |
| --- |
| Are they returning after a placement year?. | Encourage the students to engage fully with teaching sessions to maximise chances of success.Missed assessments can have serious consequences especially when students have no further opportunity to retrieve.Run through the modules the student is undertaking and the assessments associated with them from the Course Handbook. This will help the student understand the work they are expected to complete during the academic year and clear-up any misunderstandings about what they have do.Integration in to a new cohort is a significant factor of successful completion as they often struggle to feel that they belong, meaning they are at a higher risk of dropping out.Discuss with the students how they intend to reintegrate in to a new cohort and the importance of this. It is important for them to: Make new friends and establish eﬀective study groups andre-establish eﬀective working relationships with the course team. |
| Are you entering the course from another institution? | An increasing number of students are coming to us from partner and other institutions, and encountering a diﬀerent environment where a lot more is expected of them in terms of autonomous learning that prepares them fully for employment or higher study.As well as checking that they have had a full induction experience, a discussion about this transition and making sure that they feel welcomed in their new home at USW is an important function of the early PAC meeting.Ensure the student understands that to improve chances of success they will need to:* Fully attend and engage with all teaching sessions;
* Undertake all elements of assessment associated with their curriculum;
* Know their curriculum and timetable;
* Know their assessment deadlines.
 |
| Final year project/dissertation progress – is it well under way? | The focus should be upon supplying/supporting them with the necessary advice and tools needed for research in dissertation assessments and/or major projects they will be completing this year.The action planning element of the PAC record form becomes vital here, and it can help them look at the work they have to do holistically across all modules, prioritising what needs to be done in the year ahead.Splitting large tasks up into smaller units, setting milestones and benchmarks with phased deliverable outcomes and clear deadlines, that they can recognise and celebrate as a measure of progress as they go, is a useful strategy for this. |

| Suggested Prompts | Background |
| --- | --- |
| How are you going to manage your time this year? | Level 6 is often found to be the most challenging (and stressful) for students as they undertake personally led study “supervised” not necessarily “led” by Academic Staﬀ.Though planning and time management should be core to their course, the checking and reinforcement of this by you as PAC can help in identifying any pressure points, and suggesting strategies as they progress.If it is clear that the student is experiencing undue anxiety that may or may not involve outside pressures, the PAC can facilitate timely referral to Advice Zone, Counselling and/or Study Skills. |
| Discuss potential external competitions / networks / events that may be available to showcase their work and talents which may help them gain employment after graduation. | Their course may already involve them in some of these, but are there other opportunities they can personally identify that might further enhance their experience and employability prospects and help them build external networks. |
| Are they taking any actions to actively enhance personal networks that might be useful when looking for employment? | Encourage students to develop active engagement within their potential career context/sector/setting. Discuss support sources as pointers for students to establish an online presence i.e. LinkedIn (see Careers & Employability Hub for further help, resources and support). |
| Are they feeling ready for industry, and if not what actions can they take to make them feel ready? | Encourage the student to identify subject knowledge and skills as well as key transferrable skills from their subject area, and make the link to how these that can be applied directly to employment or further study.In particular, you may wish to reacquaint them with the course learning outcomes as a starting point for the conversation, as well as previous conversations highlighting skills gained.If they feel they are lacking confidence in a particular aspect of skill or knowledge how might they work with Staﬀ to address this? |

| Second One to One of Level 6 – Before end of Second Term.In addition to previous questions the following may be useful prompts at this level: |
| --- |
| How are the final stages of your dissertation or Major Project going? | At this point students should be nearing the final stages of their studies, and this is often the most stressful time of their course. The role of a PAC here is to support the student to achieve the very best they can in the time remaining. There needs to be recognition here that pressure to complete to deadlines is a factor in all professions, and this is normal.A review of their milestones and deadlines from earlier sessions is a good place to start, reflecting on and celebrating work already completed, and looking at strategies to complete what remains. Are there aspects that can be restructured, refocused or abandoned? Should they be having a conversation with their supervisor or module leader for further clarification?In extreme circumstances where it is clear that students’ anxiety is beyond that reasonably encountered, you may need to refer them to the advice shop. |
| What are your next steps? | As well as general performance on the course there should be a focus on the student’s exit strategy.Whether this be employment, placements or postgraduate study the PAC should provide an informative and supportive session in which the student feels confident in their exit plan. |
| How are you feeling about leaving University? | An open question that helps them reflect on the progress they have made in their own personal development throughout the course. Encourage them to review and celebrate the extent to which they have developed skills, knowledge and self-awareness, and help them link these to their intended progression to employment or further study.The University provides many resources that help them make the transition to the world of work, so encourage them to identify these now, rather than at the very end of study. |
| Are they considering further study? | Are they aware of taught MA, MRes, MPhil or PhD study in their subjects? Who are the Course Leaders or Supervisors for these Courses? Could they already be speaking to them about how they might prepare for this? |

# **Appendix 1:**

## The Principles of Personal Academic Coaching:

### The University has set out key principles for Personal Academic Coaching as follows:

1. That the coach should be an Academic member of staﬀ from the course on which the student is enrolled. The conversation will therefore be relevant, meaningful and will help build the community of learning at course level.
2. That where possible the coach should remain with the student on their academic journey from induction through to graduation.
3. The coach should focus principally on student SUCCESS, with performance and engagement on the academic programme of study the primary aim that may include issues of attendance, library and VLE use, success on assessment and, critically, an oversight of feedback across a programme of study.
4. That the tone of the coaching sessions should be on helping learners succeed, and on providing advice and support for success. They should not be punitive in nature, but should be honest and developmental.
5. The coach and the learner should work together to review progress and plan improvement across the whole course of study, not just individual modules.
6. There should be early engagement with the learner, preferably before or during induction, that sets expectations that this is a ‘core’ part of the academic oﬀering
7. There should be a clear and eﬀective partnering with Student Advice Services in order that relevant student information is shared (subject to data protection) and that eﬀective referral takes place where it needs to, including to study skills. The student should be fully informed of this where it is needed.
8. That coaching will embody the values of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF1) and align with the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency QAA Code (Chapter B42).
9. That coaching will assist student personal development moving from more intensive support in Year 1 and 2, moving towards learner autonomy Year 3 principally focused around ‘exit’ issues of employability or further study, as described in the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW3).
10. As such a secondary, but important, function should be in discussing and monitoring individual student engagement with employability and co-curricular activity – so there needs to be integration and good working with these teams.
11. That students will have a minimum number of two coaching sessions per year. Good practice in the Faculties from the pilot phase indicated that the optimum number of meetings for level 4 / year 1 was one group meeting at induction and two meetings at Level 5 / Year 2 and Level 6 / Year 3. Therefore, this guidance is written with that best practice in mind. There should be a planned structure to all sessions with outcomes for the learner and an explicit purpose, appropriate to their point in their learning journey and ultimate destination.
12. That the timing of those sessions should be planned (e.g. around key retention risk weeks, or around key assessment challenges) and be formally timetabled.
13. That there should be a structure to those sessions with a record of coaching sessions kept, preferably integrated where relevant, with the student record system so that it is ‘joined up’. Access to those notes needs to be agreed with the student. The pilot of the PAC Dashboard during 2018/19 will enable us to test the eﬃcacy of online record keeping so please let us have your views of this new system.
14. That the model also allows for quick ad hoc responses by personal coaches where information, discussion or analytics data is showing students ‘at risk’ or who are not engaging with their studies.

Within these principles there should be some flexibility to allow for courses to design model approaches that may exceed the principles defined above, for example in line with professional body requirements

1 <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>

2<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standardsandquality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b> 3<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151028-level-descriptors-en.pdf>

**Appendix 2: Record of PAC Meeting:**

To be completed by student in conversation with Personal Academic Coach:

### Student Name:

Course:

Year of Course:

Personal Academic Coach:

Date of Meeting:

Session Number 1, 2, or 3:

1. **Review of academic and professional progress since previous meeting:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Academic and professional objectives for the next period of study:**

Think **GROW!: Goal** – what do they want to achieve? Work together to set short and long-term goals **Reality** – Where are they in relation to their goals? **Options** – Help them explore the options available to them. **Way forward** – Student to decide choice of one option. Then create a plan of action of how to achieve the Goal set.

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| --- |
|  |

Signed by student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Personal Academic Coach: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is form available as a separate file on the hub.

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Version Updated 28 August 2020.