P@T FAQs

What if something is recorded about a student in first year and then it is no longer relevant? Can the student request it is removed from their file?

Absolutely, and this goes for any information that the student requests to be removed. The student has rights under the DPA (Data Protection Act 1998) to ask for any information held on them to be deleted. Obviously if this relates to a criminal records check we may need to advise that the information is required for other purposes and cannot be deleted but generally, yes it must be deleted.

Is email acceptable to send confidential communication? The email is marked as confidential, the student ID is used and a brief summary of the discussion is included to file in the School Office file?

Email may be used to send confidential information where there are no other options. Ideally, this should be done through QMU accounts so it is "internal" in nature. The email should be marked as confidential and addressed to a particular person and not a group/department email address. Student ID should be used and the School Office will print the email and place it in the student file in a sealed enveloped and marked confidential (the reason for this is that, once in the student file, it will be obvious who the email is about).

Is it OK to have PAT email communications with students via their non-QMU email addresses?

This can be done only when specifically requested by the student, such as because they are not on campus and so wish to use a personal email account. The student should be made aware that confidential information sent through this route may not be secure.

Please try and follow the following "safety" rules:

1. Check you have the recipient email address correct.
2. Put in the subject line the words "private and confidential" – do not put in the subject line what the subject of the email is!
3. In the tag option for the email (where the high/low importance stuff is), press the other options button and under sensitivity choose 'confidential'
4. Put a header along the top of your email as follows: "This email contains confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete this email and do not read its contents". There is no guarantee this will work. You could also ask the person to notify you that the information has reached the wrong hands and confirm they have deleted it.

How do we lodge records with the School Office and keep them confidential?

The School Office holds a range of confidential information and as part of its day-to-day working it is understood that confidentiality will not be breached. PAT-related information should be marked for the attention of the named Programme Administrator and the information will be filed in hard copy in the centrally held student file. If each report is put in an envelope with the Matric number, programme and level on the front, it can easily be filed away, without having to refer to the detail of the report itself. Going forward, it is hoped that the software *Document Manager* will

be used to store all student-related information electronically, but the use of this system will not be available until 2014.

Some programmes already use electronic files to store student information, so please refer to your programme administrator about your programme's preferred method.

Why is it necessary to record confidential information? Is it useful for appeals and ECs if the student gives permission? Are there any other reasons?

This information is used for appeals and ECs, and complaints to an extent. However, always tell the student that you will record the info and give them the option to say "please don't". Often the information comes by way of email so we have it written down anyway. QMU is considered to be a "data controller" and therefore all employees technically control what happens to data. We therefore have a duty to protect data automatically, whether we solicited it or not.

Can we have online templates?

Digital versions of the templates are available at:
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qm/AZindex.htm#p

Do we have to use the templates provided?

Using the templates is not obligatory if you have some other tried and tested means of engaging students in the PAT and PDP process, and recording meeting outcomes. Some programmes, for instance, have a learning contract which helps students to focus on similar things. The main thing is to focus discussions and have an ongoing record of progress.

How many PATees should we have?

This varies from division to division. In some cases, PAT'ees' are simply rolled forward and newbies allocated equally across PATs. In some cases, HODs decide on distribution, and in others Programme Leaders will inform the School Office about how to divide up students among the available tutors.

Does the scheme apply to postgraduates as well as undergraduates?

It is primarily aimed at undergraduates, both new and continuing. The principles apply equally well to postgraduates, although fewer postgraduates engage with their PATs.

What do we do about confidentiality when a student gets a new PAT? Do we pass on information from the previous PAT meetings or not?

Information from PAT to PAT should always be done with the consent of students, as they may want to start afresh. Personal information in the file may well be sealed and so information should be passed on only where it relates to academic progress.

To add information to these pages or pose new questions, please contact Sally Anderson in CAP