University of the Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean

Submission to Student Support Initiative Award 2016

Online resources for Personal Academic Tutors

EO Student Support team with EDU

1) Outline the project or initiative and what makes it innovative and inspiring (max 300 words).

The Personal Academic Tutor online resources project aimed to develop online resources to assist in the induction of new Personal Academic Tutors and act as a guide for existing Personal Academic Tutors (PATs).

The PAT role is crucial to the student experience across all of the university colleges and the creation of this resource significantly increased support for PATs across the university.

It was envisaged that the output from the project would be a self-directed online learning resource placed within its own web space and accessible to all staff from all locations by using a defined url http://staffresources.uhi.ac.uk/pat

The project approach reflected the PATs requests for a resource that is readily available and simple to access using any internet capable device. The then current PAT induction resources and guides were located in a number of places including the UHI intranet site and contained in a self-enrolling Blackboard module. The route to accessing resources was not always clear and some PATs who do not use Blackboard were at a significant disadvantage.

The existing text based induction resources formed the main content for the web based PAT induction resource with additional content provided by the project members. Layout and feel would be similar to the recently completed award winning Essential Student Skills resource.

2) Detail how the project or initiative was delivered, from the planning stage through to its successful conclusion (max 300 words). Include details of timing* and funding.

The project approach was based on the assumption that the majority of the source content for the resource was already available. This was in the form of content from the existing PAT Resource Pack and content within the Blackboard site as well as QAEC approved documents on the role and expectations of PATs.   Further contextualised content was developed including PAT case studies in the form of a number of audio or video clips provided by current PATs.

It was also assumed that any additional requirements for new content – particularly arising from the process of developing the online content - would be provided by university staff.

 The structure of the content allows for new case studies and exemplars to be added in the future, thus creating a growing learning resource, reflecting the changes in practice within the university.

The project was fully funded from the EDU core budget and EO student support staff time

3) Outline the project or initiative's outcome(s) within the university and beyond with relevant supporting evidence, metrics or testimony where appropriate (max 400 words).

1. To produce a set of contextualised, self-directed, online staff resources for Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) (representing two learning hours) accessible via a URL by first semester 2015.

2. To collaborate with relevant stakeholders to gather case studies and video/audio clips to include in the final resources.

3. To review the project outputs at the end of the project by including a discussion on evaluation at the final meeting of the project.

The completed resource was launched on 10th September 2015. The resource can be viewed at http://staffresources.uhi.ac.uk/pat A link to the resource will also be available via the UHI Toolkit. The resource will be enhanced in the future by case studies of PATs in practice from both staff and students – this would provide an ideal opportunity to create a growing, collective resource for PATs to contribute to over time. By simply adding these to the Bookshelf they could ensure the currency and collaborative nature of the content over time.
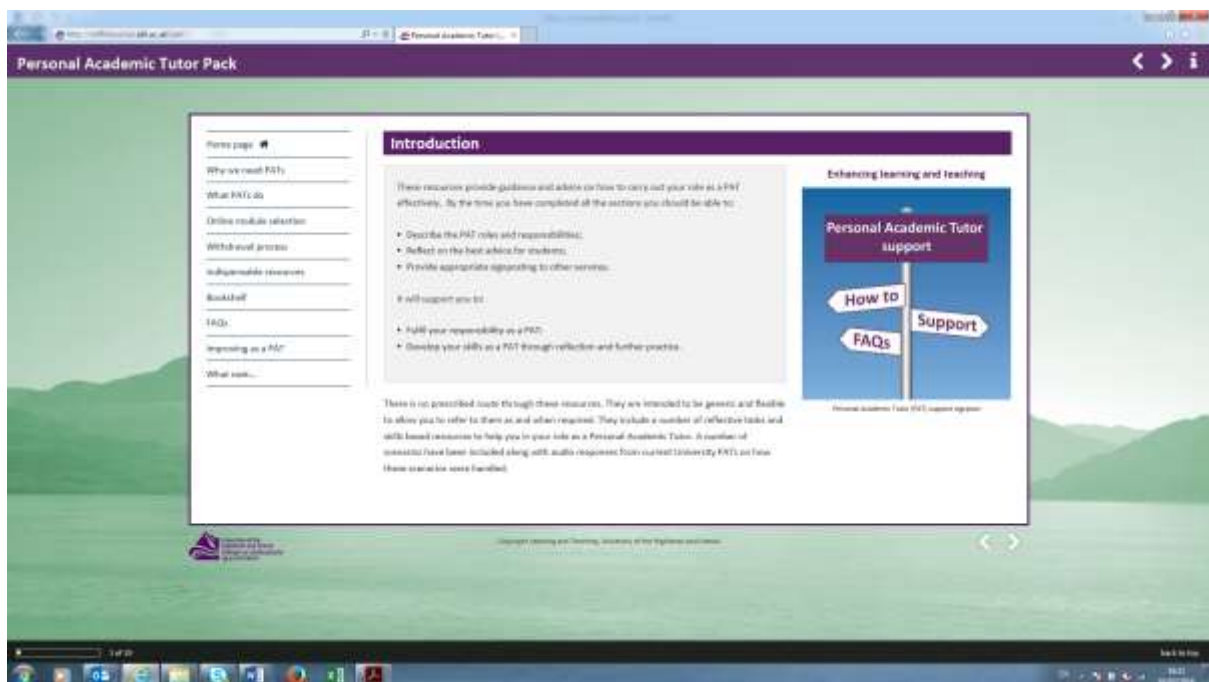
In summary the project delivered on time, met the key outputs and provided enhancements to the original text based content. These enhancements included audio, video and skills-related resources provided by the Leadership Foundation of Higher Education Good Practice. A range of useful documents have been collected within the Bookshelf such as lists of academic partner contacts and downloadable forms. Going forward, these can be updated easily without compromising the integrity of the of core content thus allowing the resource to be kept current.

The resources have been well received by staff and uptake has been positive.

Google analytics data showing uptake by the 350 university PATs measured by page visits over the months following launch is as shown below

September 2015	702
October 2015	289
November 2015	574
December 2015	356
January 2016	637

February 2016	433

Sample screenshots from the online resources

To view the full resources please visit   http://staffresources.uhi.ac.uk/pat

Ian Horne Student Support Manager   18 March 2016