

PERSONAL TUTORING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document sets out the University's requirements and guidance in relation to Personal Tutoring and the respective responsibilities of the Student, the Personal Tutor and the School.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The University has a single model for the provision of Personal Tutor support to students. This has been agreed to provide an outline of the key components of an effective support model which is designed to ensure a consistent student experience and consistent application across all schools. However, the model is sufficiently flexible to meet the differing needs of students in different University Schools within the context of resource constraints, including that of staff time.
- 2.2 The University recognises that support is essential for all students whatever their individual needs, taking account of equality and diversity, including those on different modes of study (blended, online, distance and part-time) where regular face to face contact with academic staff and access to other University professional support services is limited. The Personal Tutor is seen as central to the provision of effective guidance and personal and pastoral support, with tutors working alongside and referring students, as necessary, to appropriate colleagues in other University professional support services.
- 2.3 Provision of effective personal and pastoral support can make an important contribution to the overall experience of individual students. In order to realise their full potential most students need to know that someone is interested in their progress, is willing to discuss it with them and to encourage them to think about their own development and the best ways of achieving what they want to do.
- 2.4 In a situation of greater diversification in terms of type, timing and modes of delivery of programmes and increasing numbers of students, there can be a danger of a lack of continuity. The Personal Tutor, through face to face or alternative methods, can provide a consistent point of contact for the student.
- 2.5 Personal Tutors, by working within the guidelines of the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy, are in a strong position to help ensure that students are treated solely on their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of any irrelevant distinction. Personal Tutors can also help to identify students with specific learning difficulties or disabilities and refer them to the Student Life Disability Service so that their particular needs can be identified and appropriate support put in place. Personal Tutors may also have a continuing role helping the student to monitor the effectiveness of Student Support Plans in meeting their needs.
- 2.6 The University believes that high quality support, face to face and/or on-line can improve retention (particularly in the early stages of study) and increase commitment and attendance with a consequent improvement in overall performance.
- 2.7 Personal Tutoring is subject to internal and external review as a key University quality assurance and enhancement process. Additionally, University funding is increasingly dependent upon student retention and completion. It is therefore in the interest of each School to address the issue of effective academic and welfare support.
- 2.8 The University recognises the importance of this role and the requirements of it upon academic staff. As a result, the University provides training for academic staff to support them in fulfilling the personal tutor role effectively. This includes training on the requirements of the role for all new academic staff, as well as a programme of periodic refresher training for experienced academics.

3. REGULATIONS

- 3.1 Each student shall have Personal Tutor support to provide general guidance on academic and non-academic issues and problems and to suggest other sources of help. That support shall accommodate the needs of students whatever their mode of study. For example, for Distance Learning students only, attendance at a meeting may mean virtual attendance.
- 3.2 In some instances the Personal Tutor shall also provide specific guidance and signpost specific services or sources of help where that need is urgent and apparent.
- 3.3 The role of the Personal Tutor within the University shall be outlined in the Academic Roles Manual.
- 3.4 Personal Tutors shall make clear arrangements to meet or have contact with their students regularly, at least once a semester and twice in a student's first semester of their first year of study at the University.
- 3.5 Students shall be informed that they can, without having to divulge their reasons, change their Personal Tutor and they shall be given information on how to request a change.
- 3.6 Personal Tutors shall keep appropriate record of meetings, or contact with students, in accordance with Data Protection legislation and University guidelines developed by Academic Development Unit.

4. GUIDANCE (RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT)

- 4.1 *The basic responsibilities for the student involve:*
- a) *ensuring that they go to, or make contact with, the Personal Tutor whenever they need help or guidance;*
 - b) *being an active participant in finding a solution to a problem;*
 - c) *notifying their Personal Tutor if they are having any academic, health or personal problems that are affecting their academic work;*
 - d) *to meet or have contact with their Personal Tutor regularly, at least once a semester and twice in a student's first semester of their first year of study at the University.*
 - e) *attending meetings, arranged to address an issue or concern as necessary.*

5. GUIDANCE (RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSONAL TUTOR)

5.1 *The responsibilities of a Personal Tutor are outlined in the Academic Roles Manual and are summarised as follows:*

- a) *being the official 'first contact' for the student and to meet with students regularly to provide advice, support and general guidance on academic and non-academic issues*
- b) *recognising where the assistance required is beyond his/her competence or responsibility and signposting the student to other services or sources of advice and guidance*

5.2 *In order to fulfil these responsibilities a Personal Tutor will need to:*

- a) *make arrangements to provide contact details to students during registration*
- b) *actively participate in the face-to-face or on-line induction process with students*
- c) *ensure students have access to alternative contacts for advice in an emergency if their personal tutor is not available*
- d) *maintain records of meetings or other means of contact with students in accordance with Data Protection legislation and University guidelines*
- e) *make clear arrangements to meet or have contact with their students regularly, at least once a semester and twice in a student's first semester of their first year of study at the University.*

- f) *be familiar with the services that are available both within and outside the University (e.g. Student Life, counselling, Library)*
- g) *liaise with academic colleagues in respect of students who need additional programme support*
- h) *monitor student progress and direct students to appropriate individual support if students are not progressing satisfactorily, and to familiarise him/herself with the processes and procedures relevant to student progression within the University*
- i) *respect the student's right to confidentiality, make this right clear to the student, and get permission from the student should it be necessary to discuss his/her difficulties with others; (In certain exceptional circumstances, disclosure may have to take place against the student's wishes for avoidance of significant risk. Personal Tutors are advised to seek advice from Student Life Directorate)*
- j) *directing students to appropriate support for the development of study skills*
- k) *respect each student's right not to seek or accept support or guidance, even though this might be to their disadvantage, on the understanding that they recognise this possible disadvantage*
- l) *make students aware that at any point they can ask for a different personal tutor without having to divulge their reasons*
- m) *act as a student's advocate where appropriate and contribute to requests for student references*
- n) *be aware of, and work in accordance with, any regulatory frameworks linked to specific programmes*
- o) *comply with the University's Equality and Diversity policy when undertaking all activities*
- p) *undertake appropriate professional development to equip him/herself for the different elements of the Personal Tutor role (information provision, educational guidance, listening skills, on-line tutorial support etc.).*

6. GUIDANCE (RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL)

6.1 School responsibilities will involve:

- a) *Implementing and monitoring the system of face-to-face or on-line Personal Tutor support;*
- b) *ensuring that each student has appropriate support;*
- c) *ensuring that support provision and the Personal Tutor role within the University are explained in the School Handbook or equivalent source of student information;*
- d) *organising opportunities for students to meet or make contact with their Personal Tutor during registration period or as soon as possible thereafter and ensuring Personal Tutors are advised when students are assessed to be at risk or are reported as causing concern;*
- e) *ensuring that sufficient time is programmed for Personal Tutors to meet or have contact with their students regularly (at least once each semester and twice in a student's first semester);*
- f) *agreeing to guidelines on record keeping and confidentiality;*
- g) *implement a reallocation process for cases where student and Personal Tutor do not work well together;*
- h) *providing feedback on effectiveness of the system to identify improvement opportunities.*

7. FLOWCHART/DIAGRAM

Not applicable.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- 8.1 Policies, Principles and Regulations for Personal Tutoring are determined by Senate on the advice of Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee.
- 8.2 The Academic Development Unit provides central staff development on Personal Tutoring and advises Schools on local staff development.
- 8.3 Schools oversee the operation of Personal Tutoring on their programmes.

9. REVIEW DATE

9.1 May 2015.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

10.1 For more information about personal tutoring please contact Academic Development Unit (Human Resources Division).