

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS ON TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Purpose

- 1 This Code of Practice sets out the University's policy on Personal Support for Students. The Code applies to all students on taught programmes. This includes all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students on full-time campus based, part-time or distance learning programmes. Students on a Year Abroad, a Year in Industry or who are re-sitting without residence should continue to have access to personal support. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that students have appropriate personal support, recognizing that each student is an individual and therefore Personal Tutor is the primary form of support. .

The Code is reviewed and re-issued annually with any significant amendments being approved by the Academic Policy Committee. The Framework for monitoring the operation of the system is set out in Appendix 1.

Principles

- 1.1 Each department must have in place systems for supporting all students which provide:
 - a) regular academic support;
 - b) crisis support and signposting to relevant university services;
 - c) reflection on each student's progress and development of their academic and transferable skills, using (but not limited to) feedback from assessed work;
 - d) access to careers information.
- 1.2 The responsibility for initiating contact in respect of regular personal support lies with the department.
- 1.3 The responsibility for initiating contact in respect of crisis support or additional requests for guidance lies with the student, but on the understanding that clear arrangements are in place to facilitate that contact. This information should be readily available in module handbooks, online, and communicated to students during induction.

- 1.4 Students and staff have equal responsibility for developing and maintaining the relationship.
- 1.5 Staff providing personal support for students must receive training. Online training is mandatory for all tutors. Face-to-face training is strongly recommended; it is an essential component of new staff induction, and is mandatory for all Senior Tutors. Whilst staff development will usually be provided centrally by the Leicester Learning Institute, there must also be briefings by the department in relation to the content of this Code of Practice.
- 1.6 Personal support training will provide guidance to all members of staff who come into regular contact with students. This training must include appropriate guidance on helping students with development of their academic and transferable skills. It will also include information regarding University services, and how to appropriately direct students to the relevant support service when the matter is outside the tutor's area of expertise (e.g. careers advice or crisis support).

2 Operation of the Personal Tutor System

- 2.1. Each student must be allocated a Personal Tutor at the start of their programme.
- 2.2 The department must notify the student and the University Registry of this allocation, and of any subsequent changes to this allocation. The department must also publish in the departmental handbook the procedures whereby students can apply to change their Tutor.
- 2.3 Joint degree and Major/Minor students must be allocated a Personal Tutor from their Lead/Major department, but must also have access to academic support in both disciplines. Students studying a Year in Industry/Year Abroad programme must be allocated a key contact in their department, and partner institution/company, in addition to their Personal Tutor. Re-sit without residence students should maintain contact with their Personal Tutor throughout the year.
- 2.4 The allocation of staff to the role of Personal Tutor can be undertaken in number of ways, appropriate to the size and mode of the programme, for example, Campus Based or Distance Learning.
- 2.5 Tutors must have knowledge and understanding of the student's programme of study. Departments should ensure that the number of tutees allocated to Tutors is at an appropriate level to ensure that they can have meaningful contact with each of their personal tutees.
- 2.6 Students should be allocated a Personal Tutor within the first week of their programme.

3 Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the Personal Tutor's responsibility to:

- a) establish initial contact with tutees through group or individual meetings or other contact (this should be through a face to face meeting for campus-based students) at the beginning of their programme, ideally within two weeks; this should be regarded as the single most important element in establishing the basis of a sound Tutor: tutee relationship.
- b) Arrange regular one-to-one meetings or formal points of contact with each tutee (for campus-based students this should be face-to-face); for part-time and distance learning students the regularity and mode of contact should be appropriate to the context and approved during the Programme Approval process.
- c) There should be at least four meetings per academic year with two in the first term.
- d) Issue invitations, for example, by e-mail or via Blackboard to attend such meetings or interactions, with a reminder that Tutors are in a position to advise and guide at all times, not just when difficulties occur.
- e) Wherever circumstances allow, respond positively to requests from tutees for assistance in understanding departmental or University procedures, and engage in personal advocacy to support students.
- f) Refer students to the University's central support systems as necessary.
- g) Signpost students to relevant support services when the matter requires special support and/or expertise.
- h) Undertake such other duties relating to student support as may be determined by the Head of Department.
- i) Keep a record of each meeting or significant contact with tutee via the agreed departmental record keeping system.
- j) Attend all relevant training and staff development related to student support and signposting (online and in person) provided centrally or by the department.
- k) Discuss academic feedback.
- l) Report key issues and themes to the Senior Tutor.

3.2 Role, responsibilities and appointment of the Senior Tutor

Appointment:

- a) between three and four Senior Tutors should be appointed per college.

- b) Nominations for the role should be confirmed and approved at each College Academic Committee. The Academic Policy Committee (APC) should be notified of each appointment.
- c) The length of term for a Senior Tutor is 3 years. This term is renewable.

Role and Responsibilities

- a) The role of the Senior Tutor is primarily to monitor the implementation of the Personal Tutor system in accordance with this Code of Practice.
- b) In liaison with the department(s) in their area of responsibility, Senior Tutors will be responsible for the monitoring and implementation of an attendance system, confirming that Personal Tutors and their tutees are meeting regularly as per this Code of Practice.
- c) Senior Tutors will be responsible for identifying general trends, such as good practice and commonly reported matters, from Personal Tutors and Tutees. To aid this process, they must offer the opportunity for both Tutors and tutees to offer feedback at least once per year.
- d) Senior Tutors will be responsible for reporting general trends to College Academic Directors who, in turn, will report to College Academic Committees.

Senior Tutors will be the first point of contact for Personal Tutors. Reasons for contact include:

- a) if the Personal Tutor feels ill equipped or needs further guidance in supporting a student;
- b) if the Personal Tutor needs support, guidance or signposting after meeting with a student with a sensitive issue. This could include signposting the member of staff to a university support service.

Senior Tutors will be the point of contact for Personal Tutees if:

- a) a change of Personal Tutor is requested;
- b) a Personal Tutee wishes to escalate issues relating to process

Senior Tutors will liaise with key staff contact responsible for supporting Joint Honours and Major-Minor students.

3.3 It is a student's responsibility to:

- a) Respond to contact from their Tutor (contact here includes invitations to face-to face meetings, telephone conversations and e-mail).
- b) Take the initiative in instigating meetings or contact if the need arises, seeking timely advice from their Tutor when faced with academic, course assessment, personal or other issues which require support.
- c) Bring examples of work and feedback to meetings, when appropriate, to discuss academic development.

3.4 It is a department's responsibility to:

- a) draw the attention of staff and students to this Code of Practice annually and circulate any additional departmental guidelines via departmental meetings;
- b) ensure that relevant information concerning tutees is passed on to tutors in a timely manner;
- c) implement a programme of scheduled meetings between Tutors and tutees across the academic year, including recommendations regarding the main focus for each of these meetings, see Appendix 2 for an example.
- d) Have an agreed and published arrangement for dealing with students requiring immediate advice or assistance; this means that, when a Tutor is not available, there should be a clear alternative contact. Such arrangements for crisis support should be clearly publicized to students, academic and administrative staff.
- e) Ensure that, if a Personal Tutor becomes unavailable for any reason for a significant period of time, a new Tutor is allocated and that this is advised to the student and to Registry. This includes students who are re-sitting without residence.

3.5 It is a College's responsibility to:

- a) in the case of joint or Major/Minor degree students, ensure that liaison takes place across the departments to ensure students have access to appropriate support;
- b) appoint a Senior Tutor figure who acts as a liaison between all departmental, Personal Tutors, and College Academic Committees (CAC), and is a central point of contact for Personal Tutors if they need further guidance or support;
- c) allocate Personal Tutoring hours in Staff Workload Models.

3.6 It is the Institution's responsibility to:

- a) provide training to all members of staff who are Personal Tutors, or staff who have regular contact with students.

4 Monitoring

4.1 Operation of the Personal Tutor system should be a standing item for student-staff committees and departmental staff meetings.

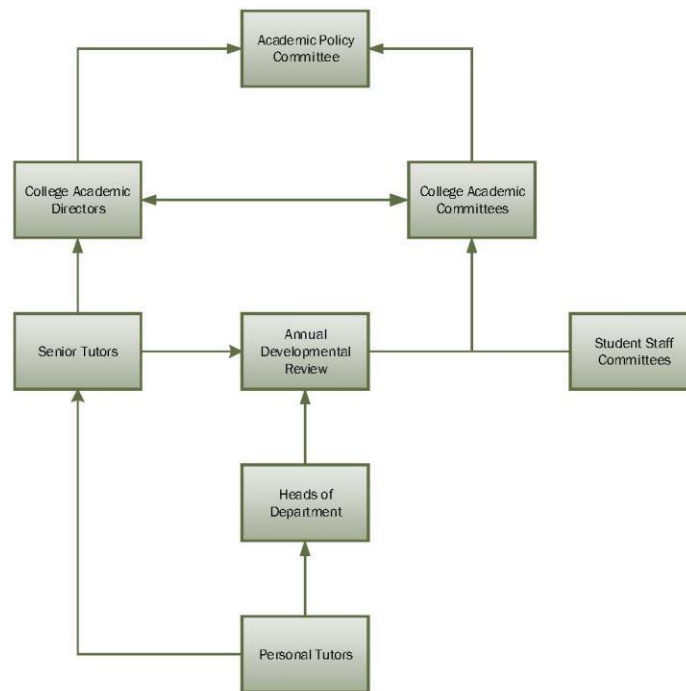
4.2 As part of the Annual Development Review of their programmes, Senior Tutors should report annually to CACs regarding the operation of the Personal Tutor system within their area of responsibility. This report should include:

- a) the maximum number of Personal tutees allocated to any one tutor;
- b) any training or induction activities offered to tutors and the perceived effectiveness of that training;
- c) how the department has monitored personal support for students;
- d) the chosen model used for Personal Tutoring, providing evidence that the model is effective.
- e) Between three and four Senior Tutors should be appointed per college for a three year term which is renewable.

4.3 CACs should include information on personal support for students in their College reports on Annual Developmental Review to the APC that good practice and any issues can be disseminated across the University.

Appendix 1: Personal Tutoring Reporting and Monitoring Framework

Personal Tutoring Reporting and Monitoring Framework



Appendix 2: Example programme (3 year, campus-based)

The following is offered as one example way in which meetings between a personal tutor and their tutees could be constructed. It is intended to offer inspiration for discipline and context specific development rather than as an “off the shelf” template.

Year 1

Meeting	Term/timing	Format	Content
1	Autumn Week 1	Group	Main focus: Introductions: Who’s who? Role of the tutor. Checking contact details accurate and complete. Student and PT responsibilities within the scheme. Expectations, difference school v university. Note: Opportunity to request personal meetings if want to discuss confidential information.
2	Autumn Week 6 (approx.)	1-2-1	Main focus: student sends/brings feedback on first coursework assignment for discussion. Tutor provides guidance on what the feedback means and explore with the student ways in which they can improve. PT should not have to read through the work but should simply offer an interpretation of the feedback that has been provided. This advice and guidance will help in preparation of next work. Other activities: check on how student is settling into University and if there are any specific problems.
3	Spring Late Feb	1-2-1	Main focus: Discuss first semester exam results. Other activities: Promote importance of using summer vacation to develop skills and experience. Suggest drafting of CV.
4	Summer First week	Group	Main focus: Advice on module selection for subsequent year(s) Other activities: Additional exam advice.

Year 2

Meeting	Timing	Format	Content
1	Autumn Week 1-2	1-2-1	Main focus: Welcome back, different expectations in year 2
2	Autumn e.g. Week 8-9	1-2-1	Main focus: Feedback on two pieces of coursework. Other activities: Preparation advice for Jan exams, Advice about securing summer vacation work.
3	Spring e.g. Week 19-20	1-2-1	Main focus: Project and module selection advice. Exam feedback Other activities: Student to bring a copy of their current CV. Advice from tutor. Filed by tutor, student encouraged to send a revised version whenever they have one.
4	Post-exams	Group	Main focus: General catch-up, advice about dissertation.

Year 3

Meeting	Timing	Format	Content
1	Autumn Week 2-3	1-2-1	Main focus: Review exam performance. Encouragement and advice about getting going with dissertation. Other activities: Planning for life after university. Applying for PhDs? Findaphd.com
2	Autumn	1-2-1	Main focus: dissertation progress Other activities: Catch up re application for jobs/further study
3	Spring e.g. Weeks 12-13	1-2-1	Main focus: Discuss project write-up, CV update, early intervention on Final exams
4	Post exams	1-2-1	Main focus: General catch-up. Post exam discussion. Careers advice, CV update. Advice about asking for references. [updated CV to be logged with tutor AND dissertation supervisor for future reference writing]