

Personal Tutoring Code of Practice

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PERSONAL TUTORING CODE OF PRACTICE

Aim

To enhance the learning experience, well-being and achievement of Teesside University Students, helping to ensure that each student is known, valued and their respective needs recognised and supported.

This Code of Practice covers all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses (60 credits and above) delivered at the main Teesside University Campus or via TU Online except certain professional courses which have their own code of practice for Personal Tutoring.

Rationale

Personal Tutoring is a key component of the student journey and has the potential to significantly influence the student learning experience and improve retention and achievement.

Objective

The overall objective of Personal Tutoring at Teesside University is to provide a consistent, equitable and structured approach for all students on taught courses above 60 credits to general academic, pastoral and professional support.

The Personal Tutor is a member of academic staff assigned to an individual student as a source of general academic, pastoral and professional support. The Personal Tutor, a key point of contact, will assist students with their transition into, and progression through, their Higher Education studies drawing on learner analytics as appropriate.

1.0 Principles

- 1.1 Personal Tutors provide general academic, pastoral and professional support and are part of a wider network of student support provided from different areas within Schools and across the University (see 2.3). Individual conversations will normally be informed and shaped by Learner Analytics available in StREAM¹ with outcomes recorded in the same place. Other Learning Analytics (e.g., Records of Progress) will also play a key role in shaping conversations with Personal Tutees.
- 1.2 The recommended staff resource allocation for Personal Tutoring is one hour per student per year. Where appropriate Personal Tutors should have group-based meetings with their tutees, this is recognised as good pedagogic practice in helping to build that sense of belonging. The opportunity for individual meetings must be available (see 3.2). The challenges of group-based meetings for students studying through mainly asynchronous online courses are recognised (see 3.7).
- 1.3 The Personal Tutor is an Academic role; the overall responsibility for the allocation of Personal Tutors resides with the School Executive Team. Students will be informed of alternative support contacts should their Personal Tutor be unavailable for a length of time due to unforeseen circumstances, within one week of notification of longer-term absence (see 3.1).
- 1.4 Where possible students will be allocated a Personal Tutor from their general discipline area and the same Personal Tutor for the duration of their course.
- 1.5 All undergraduate and postgraduate students (full time and part time) will be informed of their Personal Tutor no later than one week following the date they started their course and where possible in advance of the start date of their course, to begin to develop the sense of belonging.
- 1.6 New students will normally have their first contact with their Personal Tutors during induction week (or within 3 weeks of the student joining the Course) and returning students will have their first meeting during the first three weeks (see 3.3 and 3.4).
- 1.7 Personal Tutoring should be structured and developmental throughout the academic year and draw on learner analytics to inform and shape the learning conversations with students (see 3.5).
- 1.8 In communicating and interacting with Personal Tutees, Tutors should be as flexible as possible in terms of the methods used, locations and timings. Synchronous meetings can take place either face to face or remotely and consideration given to how asynchronous communications can facilitate dialogue with Tutees. It is recognised that it may not always be possible to offer synchronous meetings where courses cross time zones. All interactions will be captured in StREAM (see 3.6).
- 1.9 Staff Development is provided to support Personal Tutors in their role (see 2.7) including opportunities to seek individual recognition in Personal Tutoring through the UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT) Professional Recognition Scheme.

StREAM is the University's learner analytics platform, please find further information [here](#). The use of learner analytics is designed to support all students in maximising their chances of success and realising their potential. It provides a personal picture of how students engage with learning opportunities, and it provides a focus for coaching conversations with your personal tutor.

- 1.10 Students will be provided with a feedback mechanism in relation to personal tutoring and in exceptional circumstances a student may follow an escalation process to request a change of Personal Tutor (See section 3.1).
- 1.11 Personal Tutors should have a maximum of 40 personal tutees at anyone time. If in exceptional circumstances and to maintain the student experience a Personal Tutor is required to take on a small number of additional personal tutees this should be agreed between the Personal Tutor and the Head of Department.

2.0 Key Responsibilities of Personal Tutors

- 2.1 Personal Tutors should develop and maintain a safe, open and honest relationships with the Personal Tutee promoting effective communication. They will help support the transition into Higher Education; build course identity when in cognate course groups and as appropriate recognising the diversity of the student body.
- 2.2 Personal Tutors should draw on learner analytics (available in StREAM and other learner analytics for example, records of progress) as appropriate, to inform and shape conversations with their Personal Tutees; they must ensure that they record all interactions in StREAM.
- 2.3 Personal Tutors provide general academic, pastoral and professional support. They are part of a wider network of student support provided from within the School and from different areas across the University (SLAR and SLS) and they should signpost students to more specialised support as required and engage with central teams to provide group tutorial sessions where applicable.
- 2.4 Personal Tutors provide pastoral support and guidance to students around settling into the Course, School and University life and encourage engagement in the wider University experience for example extracurricular activities and volunteering. Where appropriate discuss personal management skills (for example: time management, assertiveness, and confidence). Personal Tutors working with other central teams are a key element of pastoral support for students and should refer to specialist services as appropriate (making use of referrals via StREAM), having considered what relevant support they are able to provide to students in the first instance, for example extensions or additional academic guidance.
- 2.5 Personal Tutors encourage and facilitate each student to reach their full academic potential (discussing, as appropriate, progression reports and attainment levels) and encourage academic reflection particularly through stressing the value of feedback and the different forms this may take. This can help to manage student expectations around feedback and differences between summative and formative feedback. Where appropriate discuss feedback received, provide general feedback and appropriate guidance discussing future action required. This could take the form of a group session on utilizing feedback to inform future work and transitioning between levels of study. Personal Tutors are not required to provide specialist academic guidance nor feedback on specific work not set by the Personal Tutor.
- 2.6 Where appropriate, Personal Tutors discuss work related learning and experiences

including placement opportunities and assist students in career/professional planning with preparation for employment and/or further study. The focus of these conversations will vary depending on the student's year of study and course. Signpost, as appropriate, to Student Futures and their work around enterprise, volunteering, work placement and careers and employability.

- 2.7 Personal Tutors will attend staff development sessions, as appropriate, to fulfil their role effectively. A range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities relevant to Personal Tutoring are provided by different Departments (including Schools) around: the use of StREAM and delivering Personal Tutoring (SLAR), managing boundaries, and knowing when to refer (SLS), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Safeguarding (HR – accessed as mandatory training). Sessions will be communicated via existing channels and available to book via LTE Online.

3.0 Operationalising Personal Tutoring and Meetings with Students

- 3.1 Overall responsibility for the allocation of Personal Tutors resides within the School Executive Team (SET), which may be delegated within the School. Those Academics with the appropriate skillsets for Personal Tutoring will take on the role of a Personal Tutor. Under exceptional circumstances, students may request a change of Personal Tutor (via Course Leader) and a member of staff could request that a student have a different Personal Tutor (via Head of Department). If a Personal Tutor is unavailable for a length of time due to unforeseen circumstances it is important that the student is allocated another Personal Tutor and the student informed at the earliest opportunity (within one week); this should normally be undertaken by another academic member of staff but if not possible (for example, staffing resources) members of the SET can provide cover.
- 3.2 While all students must have the opportunity for individual meetings Tutors should make use of group meetings where appropriate (utilising Personal Tutoring models provided by Schools or Central Teams and where applicable include a member of the Student Learning team to emphasise the general academic, pastoral and professional elements of the process). Group meetings can be particularly valuable at helping to build relationships and develop a sense of belonging. They also make effective use of time.
- 3.3 The Personal Tutor should meet all new students, normally during induction and no later than week 3 of their course of study, for 'introductions' and to explain how Personal Tutoring works at Teesside University. It would be useful to involve members of central teams (e.g., Student Journey) during initial personal tutoring sessions. This is a crucial time where the Personal Tutor can respond to any queries and discuss any initial concerns and/or anxieties students may have. Tutors should clarify the expectations of the role and ensure the student is aware of the wider network of support that is available across the University.
- 3.4 Personal Tutors should make contact with all returning students during the first three weeks of their course, a key focus of this meeting should be their records of progress and achieving their potential, this could take the form of a group session on understanding records of progress (rather than individual) and use of feedback to support academic development at the next level.
- 3.5 Personal Tutoring meetings should be proactive, structured, and developmental and be timely in terms of key experiences throughout the student journey. For example,

meetings prior to the key assessment weeks can be particularly timely and useful to reflect on formative and summative feedback a student has previously received.

- 3.6 Personal Tutors will maintain a record of all interactions they have with their Personal Tutees on StREAM. The Personal Tutoring Code of Practice should be used in conjunction with the Learner Analytic Code of Practice and StREAM support guides in relation to information governance.
- 3.7 Further guidance is available for course teams engaged in the delivery of TU Online courses and modules. This guidance sits alongside this Code and has been designed to assist course teams in their interpretation and implementation of the Code for course delivered through online Learning.
- 3.8 Personal Tutoring should be structured and provide meaningful interactions with students. An example structure for operationalizing Personal Tutoring across the levels is noted below, this is an example of how Personal Tutoring could be structured and course teams may develop their own structure dependent on the students' needs in relation to the course:

Level	Group Theme	Individual	Group	Individual
3	Academic Readiness including Student Learning Team (Within 3 weeks of course start date)	Academic/Pastoral check in (Mid Semester 1)	Utilising assessment feedback (Start of semester 2)	Academic check in (End of semester 2)
4	Academic Readiness including Student Learning Team Within 3 weeks of course/level start date	Academic/Pastoral check in (Mid Semester 1)	Utilising assessment feedback (Start of semester 2)	Academic check in (End of semester 2)
5	Transition to level 5 (Degree classifications). Support available. Within 3 weeks of the start of the level	Personal goal setting (Mid semester 1)	Utilising assessment feedback and preparing for transition. (Start semester 2)	Feedback and transition to level 6 (End of Semester 2)
6	Transition to level 6, getting the most out of your studies, feedback and independent study. Support available. Within 3 weeks of the start of the level.	Reviewing goal setting (mid semester 1)	(Mid semester 2)	Next steps and Graduate outcomes (End of semester 2)
7	Introduction to TU, Postgraduate study and support overview. Academic integrity. Within 3 weeks of the start of the course.	Goal setting. (Timing may vary depending on the duration and delivery pattern of the course)	Determined by course if require, although individual check ins maybe more relevant.	Reviewing goals. (Timing may vary depending on the duration and delivery pattern of the course)