

Personal Tutoring for Courses delivered via TU Online Ltd

The following document provides guidance for course teams engaged in the planning and delivery of online courses and modules through TU Online Ltd. It is designed to sit alongside Teesside University's Personal Tutoring Code of Practice and to assist course teams (TU and TU Online) in the interpretation and implementation of the Code for courses delivered online learning. In using this document, please do make sure that you are familiar with the Principles of the Code, available within the Supporting Information of the Quality Framework:

https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/about/public_information/quality_framework.cfm

Teesside University recognises the diversity of our online courses and our online learners and therefore we do not advocate a homogeneous approach to the Personal Tutoring Code of Practice across our TU Online provision. Instead, we actively encourage course teams to adapt the key principles of the Code in flexible ways that best suit their learners and the pedagogical approach of the course. The following are intended as prompts for course teams in Schools and TU Online to work together where applicable to reflect, plan and evaluate their practices around online Personal Tutoring.

Who fulfils the personal tutoring role?

We recognise that in online provision it may sometimes be difficult to clearly delineate between academic roles and learners maybe faced with different challenges to campus-based students, for example, the first point of contact for many students might be the module leader who is currently teaching them. Therefore, we encourage course teams to think carefully about who will provide personal tutoring and when and how personal tutoring responsibilities will be shared among members of a course team.

These supplementary guidance notes should be read in conjunction with and do not replace any aspect of the Teesside University Personal Tutoring Code of Practice.

We strongly suggest that it is better to assign only those staff actively involved in delivery of a particular online course to personal tutees on that course (this may be TU or TU online tutors). It may be that course teams decide to maintain consistency over time by assigning personal tutees to one member of staff throughout the student's period of study. However, it may sometimes make more sense to rotate personal tutoring between members of a course team, dependent on which tutors become the current first point of contact in a module.

Synchronous and/or asynchronous

We recognise that some learners will embrace opportunities for synchronous personal tutor meetings over online platforms, but that this will not fit the personal circumstances of other learners. We ask course teams to think through a personal tutoring strategy that is practical and achievable whilst offering flexibility.

For example, it may be that you decide to focus mainly on an *asynchronous* personal tutoring strategy - delivered over email or through a designated area of your course site - with some opportunity for synchronous personal tutor meetings where this is requested by a student. Conversely, you might decide to focus primarily on *synchronous* meetings – perhaps, where appropriate, in groups as well as one-to-one - whilst also supporting those students who require asynchronous support. Please note Principle 1.2 of the Code: ... “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).”

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In planning your personal tutoring strategy, we recommend that you consider the range and profile of your learners: for example, the time zones in which they are based, their access to technology and broadband, and whether they might be studying alongside professional and/or personal commitments.

Do also ensure that you are providing clear information about how students can access personal tutoring support and the different options available. Please note Principle 1.5 in the Code: “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.”

Embedding Personal Tutoring strategies in the curriculum

Where possible, we recommend that course teams consider how they can embed personal tutoring activities and approaches within the curriculum. For example, information around organising and pacing online studies or Personal Development Planning (PDP) can be provided through online resources, and supported by the design of induction activities and pedagogical approaches that scaffold learning and progression.

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