

PERSONAL TUTOR SCHEME POLICY

1. The University demonstrates distinctiveness in its commitment to the Personal Tutor Scheme as a means of providing academic advice, support and guidance to all students on undergraduate and postgraduate provision for the duration of their studies. This policy sets out the principles of the Personal Tutor Scheme and the roles and responsibilities of personal tutors and students.
2. The following internal and external reference points have informed the development of this policy
 - a. Internal reference points
 - [The Student Charter](#)
 - [The Strategic Plan 2017-22](#)
 - [The Academic Strategy 2017-22](#)
 - [The Student Engagement and Attendance Policy](#)
 - b. External reference points
 - The Higher Education Academy [UK Professional Standards Framework](#) (UKPSF) (part of Advance HE)
 - [The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) UKSCQA/02 March 2018
3. You will find further information, including operational guidance and other resources, on the Tutor Portal via Student Records Online.

Context / Background

4. The Personal Tutor Scheme is a quality enhancement mechanism for the provision of academic support, advice and guidance to students.
 - a. All University of Gloucestershire students are entitled to a personal tutor for the duration of their studies.
 - b. Students tell us that individual support for learning is extremely important to them. For many students the individual support and academic advice they receive outside the module is of equal importance to the more formal teaching and support for learning that takes place within a module.
 - c. There are three elements to the role of the Personal Tutor:
 - Active support for the student's engagement with academic study, co-curricular activity and the wider university community
 - Focused, systematic, data-informed, personalized academic support and timely intervention for engagement and learning
 - Timely academic advice around university regulatory and administrative processes, particularly in relation to progression
 - d. Engaging with the formal and informal learning opportunities that are offered by the course or subject community is a key component of attaining the best possible academic outcomes. Therefore, the University expects that students will proactively engage with their learning opportunities, including teaching activities and the guidance offered via their personal tutors. Failure to engage with their studies will not end well, so it must be the first duty of the personal tutor to support student engagement with their course, co-curricular activity and university life and to help the student to identify opportunities and to recognize and remove; or at least mitigate the impact of, any barriers to that engagement.
 - e. The learning data provided through the tutor portal will enable personal tutors to monitor:
 - Module attendance
 - VLE engagement
 - Assessment submission and outcomes
 - Library usage
 - f. This information, when combined with the personal tutor's knowledge and understanding of the student as an individual, will enable the personal tutor to work with each student to help them to reflect upon and

understand the way in which their learning behaviour may be influencing their learning outcomes and to agree any necessary action required. The range of information that is available to personal tutors enables them to undertake an early intervention with a student if they feel this is necessary.

- g. Success relies upon mutual trust and working together to fulfil respective responsibilities. [The Student Charter](#) explains these expectations. Students must take responsibility for their learning and understand that attaining an academic award, like any other worthwhile achievement, requires focus, hard work and determination. Helping a student to stay focused, and systematically supporting this process of learning and development over an extended period is the work of the personal tutor, and it requires skill and commitment.
- h. Providing sound academic advice in relation to University administrative processes is an ongoing task that requires a thorough understanding of academic regulations, processes and procedures and a familiarity with the course the student is studying. The personal tutor needs to understand how course maps work so that they can confirm the student has registered for the correct modules at each level of study.
- i. In addition, the provision of timely academic advice, giving students early warning of potential decisions they may need to make and providing support for academic decision-making required once the student has received module assessment outcomes and / or the outcomes of MBEs / APBEs, is a key responsibility for personal tutors. Personal tutors need to be aware of the impact of potential exam board decisions on their personal tutees and ensure that they are talking to students about possible decisions they may need to make ahead of Board of Examiners as well as ensuring that an early meeting / conversation is provided once the outcomes of Boards of Examiners are published.
- j. The Personal Tutor Scheme is one important means of supporting students but staff in professional departments, e.g. librarians, colleagues in Student Services, are also crucial contributors to academic success, and students should be encouraged to develop good working relationships with these colleagues.
- k. Knowing when it is appropriate to refer a student to a specialist area within Student Services is also very important. **Personal tutors are not expected, or indeed encouraged, to provide guidance on personal issues and it is important that all students are aware of this and understand that there may be times when their personal tutor can serve them best by referring them to colleagues with specialist knowledge and expertise.**
- l. In order to protect the experience of students and staff, the maximum personal tutor group sizes that will normally apply and the maximum number of groups a tutor will usually be allocated has been considered and this information is published within the operational guidance for the Personal Tutor Scheme.

Roles and Responsibilities

5. Personal Tutors will be expected to:

- a. Ensure their work as a tutor is informed by:
 - The Personal Tutor Scheme Policy
 - The Academic Regulations for Taught (or Research) Provision
 - The Engagement and Attendance Policy
 - Current personal tutor scheme operational guidance
- b. Act as a significant point of contact between the University and the student, affording an opportunity for each student to feel known and supported.
- c. Check student module diets at the beginning of each level / academic year.
- d. Monitor information and data about student engagement and undertake proportionate and timely interventions with individual students where they believe this is necessary.
- e. In meetings, help students to identify any additional actions required to enable them to work wisely towards the achievement of their academic and employability goals.
- f. Be mindful of the need to provide timely academic advice re progression decisions – in principle conversations, presenting potential scenarios should commence ahead of MBEs / APBEs.
- g. Encourage student awareness of and engagement with co-curricular opportunities.
- h. Refer students to the appropriate area of Student Services for support with specific personal issues.

- i. Log all meetings with students within the meeting log on the Tutor Portal. Where possible records of individual meetings with students should be kept, using the facility on the Tutor Portal.
- j. Maintain confidentiality if asked to do so unless there are exceptional reasons that make it necessary for them to share specific information.

6. Students will be expected to:

- a. Engage with the Personal Tutor Scheme and their personal tutor.
- b. Be aware of the annual pattern of meetings with their personal tutor, attend these meetings and respond promptly to all communications from their personal tutor.
- c. Complete University administrative processes in a timely way, e.g. enrolment, selecting module choices etc. and report any difficulties experienced in completing these processes promptly.
- d. Be pro-active in contacting and communicating with their personal tutor if they need academic support and advice, e.g. to inform their decision-making around progression.
- e. Work with their personal tutor to reflect upon and learn from feedback on their engagement with their studies and the outcomes of assessment; identify helpful action, commit to this action and ensure that it happens.
- f. Help their personal tutor to get to know them so that their personal tutor can understand the particular challenges they face in achieving their study goals and can provide the support they need or refer them to other individuals or services within the University who are better able to do so.

7. Senior Tutors will be expected to:

- a. Ensure all students in the School have a personal tutor; this includes making sure that the personal tutor arrangements are in place for students whose circumstances are less usual, e.g. students returning after placement, part-time students, and students transferring from other courses.
- b. Monitor the extent to which students in the School are engaging in regular Personal Tutor meetings as per the operational guidance for the scheme.
- c. Represent students with mitigating circumstances to the University, most usually at Boards of Examiners.
- d. Work closely with relevant professional departments.
- e. Allocate groups of new students to personal tutors prior to the beginning of the academic year.
- f. Address any issues that arise that relate to the operation of the Personal Tutor Scheme within the School, e.g. organising cover for staff absences.
- g. Address any issues with individual tutors referring upwards to ASLs and HoS as appropriate.
- h. Arrange a buddying scheme for new and continuing personal tutors in the School.
- i. Provide professional development for personal tutors on an annual basis.

8. Academic Subject Leaders will be expected to:

- a. Have oversight of the smooth running of the Personal Tutor Scheme within the Subject Community.

9. Heads of School will be expected to:

- a. Have oversight of the smooth running of the Personal Tutor Scheme within the School.

10. The Director of Quality Enhancement will be expected to:

- a. Support senior tutors to enable them to provide staff development prior to the beginning of each academic year for new and continuing personal tutors in their School.
- b. Update the operational guidance for the Personal Tutor Scheme prior to the beginning of each academic year.

Policy Updated in September 2019 by Dr Amanda Pill, Director of Quality Enhancement.

For more information, please visit: [the Tutor Portal guidance](#)