THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

POLICY

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE PERSONAL TUTOR SYSTEM

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Purpose

The Enhancing Student Support project aims to ensure that, over the next decade and beyond, students have access to a framework of guidance and support that builds on the best of current practices, meets contemporary needs, and is of a quality and consistency appropriate to a university of high global standing.

This policy outlines the key roles and responsibilities within the Personal Tutor system, which is one of the strands of the framework.

Overview

The framework is designed to bring about more consistent quality of provision, while also helping students to monitor their progress and performance more systematically and relate these to their longer-term aspirations. It seeks to blend a clear set of University-wide requirements, well-understood by all students and staff, with scope for Colleges and Schools to tailor provision to reflect differences in programme structures, subject needs and professional accreditation requirements.

Scope

From 2012/13, the Personal Tutor System applies to all undergraduate students and to staff in Schools and Colleges involved in student support, in particular the key roles of Personal Tutor, Student as Personal Tutee, Senior Tutor, Dean of Students and Student Support Officers in Student Support Teams. The system is part of the Enhancing Student Support project, which reports via the Student Support Implementation Group to the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee.

INTRODUCTION

The University’s Enhancing Student Support project sets out proposals for a significant strengthening and updating of the arrangements for providing academic and pastoral support to students at Edinburgh. The overriding aim is to ensure that, over the next decade and beyond, students have access to a framework of guidance and support that builds on the best of current practices, meets contemporary needs, and is of a quality and consistency appropriate to a university of high global standing.

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This policy outlines the key roles and responsibilities within the Personal Tutor system, which is one of the strands of the framework. The key roles are:

A. Personal Tutor
B. Student as Personal Tutee
C. Senior Tutor
D. Dean of Students
E. Student Support Officer, which is a role delivered by the Student Support Team in each School.

The roles are set out in terms of core remits, which will be carried out by everyone with these responsibilities. It is important to have clarity of roles and relationships, with a helpful level of commonality in roles and terminology. There will be flexibility in approach by Schools and Colleges to accommodate local contexts\(^1\), and/or pedagogical and professional requirements: additional responsibilities can therefore be added to the core responsibilities and some roles may be held alongside other roles. Differences will need clearly articulated rationales. By having common standards and principles supplemented by local guidance, we can provide students with common expectations and give specific advice in a local context.

The roles and supporting resource materials will be developed through consultations with stakeholders and will draw on existing good practice and examples.

The University will pay particular attention to the boundaries of the roles with each other and with other key roles. Guidance will be produced, along with illustrative examples of responsibilities and tasks. Resources will also guide Personal Tutors and others in carrying out their responsibilities, for example, a repertoire of options in encouraging student reflection on how their learning can underpin their longer-term future development or strategies to help foster a sense of belonging to a learning community.

\(^1\) There are two clinical medical Schools in CMVM (CSCH and MCM) who do not have an active role in delivering teaching or student support - which for the MBChB is organised at Programme level. Support for the MBChB is organised by the College rather than Schools.
A. PERSONAL TUTOR

**Core Purpose**

A1. to assist students in reviewing their academic progress and performance across the various courses that make up their chosen programme of study

A2. to provide opportunities for students to reflect on how their learning within and outwith the formal curriculum can help them in pursuing their longer-term future development

A3. to help foster in all students a sense of belonging to a community of learners

**Main responsibilities**

A4. to provide academic guidance and support, including:
   - welcoming their tutees
   - guiding tutees in their choice of courses, confirming course choice and where appropriate enrolling students on courses
   - advising and supporting students in their studies
   - following the progress of all their tutees

A5. to share with other staff in Schools the process of providing pastoral responsibilities and duties of care for their tutees, referring students to central services and other specialist sources of information and guidance as and when appropriate

A6. to liaise with Student Support Officers and Teaching Organisations

A7. to meet regularly with their tutees, adhering to the pattern of engagement specified in the School's Tutoring Statement, which will include at least one individual meeting per tutee per semester and involvement in group meetings or other activities designed to support their tutees' development as members of an academic community

A8. to respond promptly (normally within three working days) to a request for contact; where this is not feasible, the Personal Tutor should arrange a suitable response

A9. to contribute to the appropriate keeping of records

A10. to provide references for a future employer or programme of study for their tutees

A11. to advise and support tutees in, for example, special circumstances, disciplinary or appeal matters

A12. to undertake training and continuing professional development associated with their role
B. STUDENT AS PERSONAL TUTEE

**Core Purpose**

B1. to reflect on their academic performance  
B2. to reflect on how their learning contributes to their longer-term aspirations  
B3. to engage as a member of a community of learners

**Main responsibilities**

B4. to check their University email account regularly for communications and to respond promptly to requests for information  
B5. to ensure their details are up-to-date on MyEd. To notify the Student Support Officer, Personal Tutor and Teaching Office of any discrepancies in course details  
B6. to participate actively in scheduled meetings with their Personal Tutor and in group meetings, undertaking the prescribed preparatory and follow-up activities (participation in such meetings is not optional, but a formal University requirement, and attendance will be recorded)  
B7. to keep a record of activities and reflections on their progress, performance and longer-term aspirations associated with these activities  
B8. to provide their Personal Tutor and/or Student Support Team with the background information required  
B9. to inform their Personal Tutor and/or Student Support Team promptly of any relevant change in their circumstances and of any problems affecting their studies, and so enable effective support to be offered  
B10. to take due account of advice or information given  
B11. to make themselves aware of regulations and procedures relevant to their studies, and to seek advice where they are unsure of what is required
C. **Senior Tutor**

**Core Purpose**

C1. to ensure that new Personal Tutors are well-briefed about the role and have completed the required training

C2. to help all Personal Tutors in the School to keep up-to-date with developments in provision

C3. to advise Personal Tutors regarding unusual or complex issues

C4. to liaise between the Personal Tutors and the Dean of Students

C5. to liaise between the School and central services

C6. to ensure that the effectiveness of personal tutoring within the School is regularly and systematically monitored

**Main responsibilities**

C7. to have oversight of personal tutoring arrangements within the School

C8. to report directly to the Head of School or Director of Teaching (as appropriate locally) with respect to his/her responsibilities

C9. to liaise with the College Dean of Students

C10. to provide a single point of contact for Personal Tutors, Student Support Officers and the Teaching Organisation seeking advice on “local” matters

C11. to deal promptly and effectively with concerns raised by Personal Tutors and Tutees, advising Tutees in cases where they have been referred by a PT/SSO/Teaching Organisation or where the student has been unable to obtain a satisfactory response from the PT/SSO/Teaching Organisation

C12. to have regular interchanges with student representatives

C13. may include: to consider Personal Tutors’ requests for concessions for students and ensure those requiring College or Senatus approval are referred to College

C14. may include: to participate in the interviewing and advising of students who have failed to make adequate progress

C15. to contribute to the Schools’ annual and periodic quality assurance and enhancement processes, ensuring that appropriate action is taken to address reasonable student concerns and giving all tutees the opportunity at least once per year to comment on both personal tutoring arrangements and the wider framework of student support in the School
D. DEAN OF STUDENTS

Core Purpose

D1. to have strategic oversight of student support in the College
D2. to liaise with central student services in the development of student support services
D3. to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place in Schools for obtaining feedback on the operation of the Personal Tutor system
D4. to ensure, in collaboration with the QA Dean, that systems are in place so that evidence of the effectiveness of personal tutoring feeds into College quality assurance and enhancement procedures

Main responsibilities

D5. to report directly to the Head of College with respect to his/her responsibilities
D6. to liaise with other Deans in the College, with the Deans of Students in the other Colleges and with relevant Vice-Principals and Assistant Principals
D7. to ensure that adequate training and professional development for their roles is undertaken by Personal and Senior Tutors and to collaborate with the Institute of Academic Development regarding the design and delivery of this training and professional development
D8. to coordinate, meet and advise Senior Tutors and others in key support roles
D9. to collaborate with Heads of School in undertaking the Head’s responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate framework of student support and guidance is in place and working well within the School
D10. to ensure that there are opportunities for regular interchanges with Senior Tutors about their interactions with student representatives and periodic College-wide opportunities for interactions between the Dean of Students and student representatives
E. **STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER**

**Core Purpose**

E1. to provide a point of contact for students in order to provide information in response to routine queries

E2. to maintain appropriate records and make sure that these are made available to staff who need updates

E3. to provide administrative student support

**Main responsibilities**

E4. to assist with the allocation of students to Personal Tutors and the recording of this

E5. to provide information to staff and students on matters relating to student support

E6. may include: during Induction, to confirm students’ attendance on EUCLID and register course choices for them (including students studying abroad)

E7. may include: to enrol students for exam-only as advised by Personal Tutors

E8. to process changes on EUCLID to reflect approved minor concessions

E9. to identify students in potential difficulty and ensure there is follow-up by the Personal Tutor or the Teaching Organisation

E10. to assist and provide information to, in particular, the School’s Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors

E11. may include: to despatch School-level information to incoming students, and organise School Visiting Days, welcoming and other events

E12. to collaborate with the School’s Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors in providing pastoral care for students, referring students to central services and other specialist sources of information and guidance as and when appropriate

E13. may include: to liaise with Personal Tutors, organising arrangements for the individual and group meetings between PTs and their tutees