

## Personal Tutor Policy

### **1. Background.**

The original Personal Tutor policy was presented to, and accepted by, Academic Board in May 2008. This policy (2011) represents an updating, but without major changes to the underpinning principles of personal tutoring.

### **2. Key principles for successful personal tutoring**

Successful personal tutoring comes from developing a mutually beneficial relationship between tutor and tutee. To build that relationship there should be clear roles and responsibilities on both sides.

Personal tutoring should be defined as group or individual guidance given to students by academic staff, with a focus on personal and academic development and progression on their overall programme of study. The key principles of personal tutoring are:

1. All students have a named personal tutor
2. All personal tutors are members of academic staff
3. The personal tutor will concentrate on a student's personal and academic development and progression on their overall programme of study
4. All personal tutors will be able to direct students to support facilities available within their own School and the University
5. The personal tutor is not expected to be an academic specialist in all areas in which the tutee is studying
6. The personal tutor will have an understanding of, and commitment to, improving student learning

### **3. Generic personal tutor role description**

Decisions about which members of staff shall perform the role of personal tutor will be the responsibility of each School Management Team in line with Work Load Allocation guidelines. In order to carry out their responsibilities tutors will be expected to undertake the following:

1. Maintain regular communication (virtual and/or face-to-face) with each of their designated tutees at least 3 times throughout a year (for full time undergraduate study) and at each significant phase for all other modes of study (including part time, postgraduate and work based learning). The first communication must be at the start of any study.
2. Keep a record of that communication
3. Inform students, their academic school and the University (via SITS or appropriate e-systems) of their availability (virtual and/or face-to-face) for personal tutoring

4. Follow up students who are not making satisfactory progress or who are at risk of withdrawal
5. Assist students in their personal and academic development, planning and progression. In a three year full time undergraduate study this might be by:
  - at level one helping students with their orientation to HE and their chosen subjects, and developing their learning by such activities as reviewing and acting on assessment feedback
  - at level two developing professional and employability skills including activities such as placement learning
  - at level three helping students successfully complete their studies, this might include the writing of references
6. Offer students advice and guidance to help students liaise with other staff and support facilities in their school and the University
7. Maintain awareness of other sources of support within their school and University
8. Undertake any required staff development on personal tutoring

#### **4. Expectations of students**

In order for personal tutoring to be beneficial and meaningful students will be expected to undertake the following:

1. Maintain regular communication with their personal tutor
2. Prepare for and engage in any personal tutoring related activities
3. Contact personal tutors if there are any issues that may impact on their academic performance or pose any risk to their progression or withdrawal
4. Act on any recommendations and advice offered by personal tutors

#### **5. Boundaries**

Staff should make students aware of their respective roles and expectations at the start of their relationship. This includes, for example, availability both virtual and/or face-to-face, issues such as confidentiality and record keeping. These boundaries may have individual, school and programme specific requirements but all should reflect the University Personal Tutor Policy as a minimum requirement.

#### **6. Advice and guidance for personal tutoring**

To make sure that all those involved in personal tutoring are clear about what is expected and what are the benefits of personal tutoring. Therefore the following must be produced and updated:

University

- A web based policy statement including roles and responsibilities for both staff and students that set out the University minimum standard
- A directory of generic support facilities that link to other web based resources

- A template and guidance for school specific personal tutoring handbooks and web information

#### School

- School specific personal tutoring on-line guidance available to all staff
- Statements of specific personal tutoring arrangements on school web sites for both staff and students
- Guidance on school specific support facilities that are linked to the university web site

### **7. Best Practice**

It is clear that there are local areas of best practice that should be shared across the university, for example, the use of student portals / WOLF topics in various Schools to facilitate personal tutoring and the use of SITS to tell students who their personal tutors are.

It is also important to be able to hear student views on personal tutoring and to be able to respond to any changing needs of the University's diverse student body. Therefore a question on personal tutoring should be considered in any internal student satisfaction survey.

### **8. Anticipated next steps**

Approval is requested for continued implementation from September 2011, ensuring the minimum requirement that every student has an identified Personal Tutor.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Personal Tutor Role across the University shall be the joint responsibility of the Dean of Students and the Institute for Learning Enhancement.

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