

# Personal Tutoring Code of Practice

---

Document Title: Personal Tutoring Code of Practice			
Version No.	2.0	Policy Owner	Student Learning & Academic Registry
Superseded version	1.0	Author Role Title	Academic Registrar
Approval Date	11.06.18, 07.07.21	Approved by	Academic Board
Effective Date	20 September 2021	Review Date	2023-24



## **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) at Teesside University except certain professional programmes 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 to pastoral, general academic and professional support.

The Personal Tutor is a member of academic staff assigned to an individual student as a source of pastoral, general academic 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 pastoral, general academic 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). Conversations must be informed and shaped by Learner Analytics available in StREAM<sup>1</sup> 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 may 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 (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 enrolment for that student.
- 1.6 New students will normally have their first contact with their Personal Tutors during induction week (or the first week of the student joining the University) 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## 2.0 Key Responsibilities of Personal Tutors

- 2.1 Personal Tutors should develop and maintain a safe, open and honest relationship with the Personal Tutee promoting effective communication. They will help support the transition into Higher Education; build course identity 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 pastoral, general academic 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 and they should signpost students to more specialised support as required.
- 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 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. 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). 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; 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 may make use of group meetings where appropriate. 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. 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.
- 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 including a brief outline of discussions that take place and any actions agreed.
- 3.7 Further guidance is available for course teams engaged in the planned online provision of 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 planned online Learning.