

**University of Brighton**

Personal, Academic Tutoring Policy

1 Statement of intent

The University believes that its students should have regular opportunities to review the academic, personal wellbeing and employability aspects of their development as they progress through their course. Personal and academic tutoring complements both direct course delivery by academic staff and specialist support by Student Services. It involves systematic contact throughout their degree with an appropriately supported member of academic staff.

This is to ensure that appropriate advice and support are provided, student concerns are quickly identified and causes of student withdrawal are minimised.

2 Student entitlements

All students of the University of Brighton are entitled:

- 2.1 To take part in an induction process which prepares them for their course of study and gives information concerning both their course and the support systems that are available. As a minimum this should include the following information :
- A statement that each new student is assigned a personal tutor on arrival, and where information about who a student's personal tutor is can be found; for example school notice boards or studentcentral
 - A description of how students meet their personal tutor for the first time, and the nature of arrangements for subsequent meetings; the description might include reference to a booking system for meetings, regular 'surgery' hours, or the use of email for setting up meetings or resolving issues online
 - A description about how personal tutoring arrangements differ as students progress from year one of the course; for example, while arrangements might be formally timetabled for first year students, second or third year students may be encouraged to take more responsibility for maintaining regular contact.
 - A statement about the availability of personal tutors; individual tutors should publicise times when they are available and times for meetings; for example by use of studentcentral and/or the use of social media.
 - Information about other sources of guidance and advice within the school and the University at large. Students should be made aware of other school arrangements such as Head of School, Year Tutor, Programme leader and other staff such as Student Support Guidance Tutors and disability tutors, to whom they may speak as an alternative to the personal tutor if they so wish. Students should be told where they can find out about the University-wide specialist support services such as Counselling, Chaplaincy, Careers, Disability, Student Advice, and Study Skills. Students should also be made aware of the Student Union.
 - A statement about the confidentiality of meetings with personal tutors, with the proviso that matters that have to be dealt with officially may need with the student's approval, to be referred on and/or placed 'on the record'.

- 2.2 To have access to the above information in a variety of formats, such as the course handbook, on-line and an introductory letter from the personal tutor to tutees.
- 2.3 To have a member of staff (not necessarily a tutor on the student's course) regularly available to offer personal tutoring support, as defined in 1 above. This should normally be one individual for the duration of a course, based in the student's home school, although there may be occasions where it would be more appropriate for a student to change personal tutors for academic reasons.
- 2.4 To have their professional development profile or student profile incorporated into the personal, academic tutoring session.
- 2.5 To have access to personal tutoring support from their allocated member of staff as a formal session at least once per term or semester. This should be scheduled in a way appropriate to the specific mode of learning and may include comparable arrangements for those courses associated with professional standards/requirements
 - For first year students the first meeting should be scheduled to take place by week 5 of semester 1 with another meeting scheduled to take place to discuss progress based on marks from the first term or semester
 - Meetings with second years should be scheduled within 5 weeks of their returning
 - Arrangements for students in their third or subsequent year may be more flexible, reflecting other sources of academic support available e.g. project supervision
- 2.6 To be given reasonable (at least two weeks) notice of their scheduled personal tutoring sessions, with reasonable efforts being made to ensure students attend the meetings to which they have been invited.
- 2.7 To have in place procedures which will be followed if they fail to attend scheduled meetings (for example, what efforts will be made to contact them, whether the SSGT be alerted if they are not responding, and what checks will be made on their academic performance).
- 2.8 To have any reasonable request for a change of allocated personal tutor considered seriously, and an alternative proposed where possible.
- 2.9 To be referred by their personal tutor, where necessary, to one or more of the specialist student support services in the University.

3 Staff entitlements

Staff acting as personal tutors are entitled:

- 3.1 To have a clear specification of the personal tutor role (see statement of intent), including how the role fits with other student support roles within the school and university.
- 3.2 To be provided with training where necessary to assist with the specified role, for example procedures to be followed if students fail to attend scheduled meetings (for example what efforts should be made to contact the student,

who else should be alerted if the student isn't responding, what checks should be made on the student's work).

- 3.3 To have access to a designated lead person responsible for personal, academic tutoring within the school for advice on referral issues and crisis situations.
- 3.4 To receive guidance on what records should be kept to record the meeting, for example the student profile (see 2.4), and how to record other information as agreed between the student and tutor
- 3.5 To decline to act as personal tutor to an individual student in exceptional circumstances
- 3.6 To have personal tutoring responsibilities included in academic workload

Staff responsible for leading on personal, academic tutoring within the school are entitled:

- 3.5 To have specialist support and training from the Student Services Department on the boundaries between personal tutoring and specialist support.
- 3.6 To have information updates from Student Services on serious matters relating to student finance and welfare.
- 3.7 To receive training on dealing with crisis situations

4 Commitments relating to Personal Tutorial Support

Personal tutorial support is not a 'stand alone' service, but is diffuse and intertwined with academic support and guidance delivered through the School structure. The delivery of personal tutorial support will reflect the spirit of equal opportunities through the following commitments.

Schools will:

- 4.1 Ensure that the mechanisms for delivery of personal tutorial support will be fair and non-discriminatory.
- 4.2 Ensure that personal tutorial support is delivered sensitively, objectively and in a non-judgmental manner, recognising and responding to a diversity of needs and situations.
- 4.3 Provide opportunities for students to give feedback on personal support issues and take steps to ensure that students are aware of these opportunities such as staff/student consultations having a remit for personal tutoring.
- 4.4 Ensure that an overview of each student's experience is taken and that those following modular programmes are not disadvantaged within the tutorial system.
- 4.5 Ensure that personal tutors are well informed in relation to cultural diversity and other equal opportunities issues.

- 4.6 Inform students with disabilities of appropriate university support services, as part of the schools overall information to students (see 2.1 and 2.2)
- 4.7 Pass on relevant information about individual students with disabilities to the Dyslexia and Disability Team (DDT), who will contact the student to explain the full support on offer. If the student does not wish to receive any support the DDT will record this and explain the implications of this to the student. Confidentiality of the information will remain within the DDT.

5. Implementation and evaluation

Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of Faculties through schools. Implementation of the full list of entitlements and commitments will affect schools differently. Many courses provide more than is set out in the list of core entitlements, especially through informal contact and support. The aim of the implementation of a formalised personal tutoring policy is to ensure that these basic components of personal tutoring are provided to all University students, whatever their academic level, subject of study or mode of study, or geographical location, and to ensure that staff are appropriately supported in delivering this.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Policy will continue to take place from three different perspectives, the perceived impact upon academic health including the impact upon academic staff; the impact upon the quality of student support; and the overall effect of the policy on the University. This will be achieved as follows:

- 5.1 Each faculty annual academic health process will make explicit reference to and analyse the effectiveness of personal tutoring entitlements and commitments, and ensure that student course representatives' views are taken into account as part of this.
- 5.2 The Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Student Services Department and the Academic Standards and Research Division of Registry will ensure annual updates are provided for tutors and other staff involved in support within the schools and will gather feedback, share information and explore mechanisms for the dissemination of good practice.
- 5.3 The Learning and Teaching Committee will monitor implementation of the Policy through consideration of annual academic health outcomes, and will advise the Academic Standards Committee on:
 - policy development to enhance the quality of student tutorial support, taking account of good practice identified internally or in the light of national developments
 - resource implications, including staff development requirements, and the overall effect of the policy on the University
 - other matters as appropriate, such as the impact on retention and NSS scores.

Agreed by Academic Board October 1995
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