

## PERSONAL ACADEMIC TUTORING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

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### **1 Statement of intent**

The University believes that its students should have regular opportunities to review the academic, personal and professional aspects of their development as they progress through their course. Personal Academic Tutoring complements both direct course delivery by academic staff and specialist support services. It involves systematic contact with students throughout their degree with an appropriately supported member of academic staff, to ensure that concerns are quickly identified, and to encourage and support student engagement, progression and success.

The personal academic tutoring policy ensures that the basic components of personal academic 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 the policy.

Personal Academic Tutoring is defined as the provision of academic guidance which provides a central and stable point of contact, fosters a sense of belonging and sustained engagement. A personal tutor provides overarching guidance which is not related to the content of individual modules, this includes assisting students to understand the value of feedback and aiding them in developing skills to reflect on their own skills and experience. The Personal Academic Tutor works closely with the Student Support and Guidance Tutor (SSGT) who provides support on a range of issues such as homesickness and loneliness, problems with accommodation, transition to Higher Education, stress-related issues and mitigating circumstances.

A personal tutor also provides relevant information about what the university expects of the student and relevant policies and procedures. Further information on the role of the academic personal tutor is provided in the Guidance to Staff which is issued by each School.

There are different models of how Personal Academic Tutoring is delivered depending on the course structure and the discipline. These models include group delivery, delivery integrated into the curriculum and delivery solely through one to one tutorials. The mode and models of delivery will be detailed in the guidelines to students and guidelines to staff issued by each school.

### **2 The Offer to Students**

Students can expect:

2.1 to have a member of academic staff, based in the student's home school, to offer personal academic tutorial support, as defined in 1 above. The University will endeavour to ensure that this is the same individual for the duration of the student's course, however there are circumstances where a change

of tutor is necessary. All University of Brighton students are entitled to have any reasonable request for a change of allocated personal tutor considered seriously, and an alternative proposed where possible.

As a minimum

- a) For students in their first year of study the first meeting should normally take place during the induction process.
- b) Meetings for students in their first year of study will be monitored alongside general module attendance to identify students who require additional support.
- c) Each student at each level of study should be offered a minimum of 3 tutorials a year (group or individual) to discuss engagement, progression, support and academic experience.
- d) Students should be encouraged to keep their own notes of these meetings and agreed actions: schools may wish to make a standard record form available for this purpose
- e) Students are encouraged to set the agenda for meetings with their personal academic tutor.
- f) Group tutorials, whenever possible, are to be timetabled at the start of the semester and included on the students' timetable
- g) Students to be given at least two weeks' notice of any individual personal academic tutoring appointments.

2.2 Guidelines for students will be produced by each school, on a standard template for consistency, and issued to students through student central and social media. As a minimum the guidelines will include the following information about Personal Academic Tutoring:

- a) A statement that each new student is assigned a personal academic tutor during induction and that the information is held centrally on the Course Area on StudentCentral
- b) A description of how students meet their personal academic tutor for the first time, and the nature of arrangements for subsequent meetings
- c) A description about how personal academic tutoring arrangements differ as students' progress from year one of the course; for example, while arrangements might be formally timetabled for level 4 students level 5 and 6 students may have one to one meetings scheduled by their Personal Academic Tutor.
- d) A diagram/visual representation which details the range of support opportunities available to students
- e) A statement about the confidentiality of meetings and its limitations. Information should be disclosed only with consent or where disclosure can be justified in the overriding public interest (e.g. prevention of serious harm), as per the University of Brighton Cause for Concern Procedures <https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Documents/Cause%20for%20concern.docx>
- f) Schools will define procedures which will be followed if students fail to attend scheduled meetings
- g) Students will have any reasonable request, made to the Course Leader or Student Support and Guidance Tutor (SSGT) for a change of allocated personal academic tutor considered, and an alternative proposed where possible.
- h) Students will be referred by their personal academic tutor, where appropriate, to the Student Support and Guidance Tutor (SSGT) for further specialist support.

### **3 Staff offer**

#### **Staff acting as Personal Academic Tutors can expect:**

3.1 To have a clear statement of the personal academic tutor role and how the process is managed within the school, and to be provided with a set of guidelines and resources to assist with the role. This should clarify how the role fits with other student support roles within the school and university, record keeping and procedures to be followed and stating that training, where necessary, is to be provided by the CLT.

3.2 New staff to be provided with Personal Academic Tutoring training (by the CLT) as part of the staff induction process and all staff to have access to a set of resources provided by the CLT.

3.2 To have access to a designated lead person (Deputy Head of School Learning and Teaching) responsible for personal academic tutoring within the school for advice.

3.3 To decline to act as personal academic tutor to an individual student in exceptional circumstances.

3.4 To have personal academic tutoring responsibilities included in academic workload including time for appropriate professional development.

3.5 For tutors supporting students under the age of 18 communication, information and support/development regarding safeguarding procedures.

3.6 To have access to communication and information, as well as specialist support and guidance from Student Services and the Centre for Learning and Teaching - including dealing with cause for concern and crisis situations and the boundaries between personal academic tutoring and specialist support.

3.7 Staff responsible for leading Personal Academic Tutoring (Deputy Head of School Learning and Teaching) within the school can expect:

- a) A clear statement of their responsibilities within the school
- b) To have recognition of the role recognised within the workload and receive communication and professional development related to leading personal academic tutoring.

#### **4 Commitments relating to Personal academic tutorial Support**

Personal academic tutoring is part of a collaborative approach to student support with academic support and guidance delivered through the School structure, as shown on the school support diagram in the student Personal Academic Tutoring guidelines. The delivery of personal academic tutorial support will reflect the spirit of inclusivity and partnership through the following commitments. Schools will:

4.1 Ensure that the mechanisms for delivery of personal academic tutorial support will be fair and inclusive.

4.2 Ensure that personal academic 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 and encourage students to give feedback on their experience of the tutoring through relevant and appropriate mechanism

4.4 Inform students with disabilities of appropriate university support services, as part of the schools overall information to students

4.5 Pass on relevant information about individual students with disabilities to the Dyslexia and Disability Team (DDT), in accordance with the university's Disability Disclosure Policy (<https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/dd/Pages/disclosure-form.aspx>). Upon receipt of this information the DDT 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

Assurance that the policy is being implemented is the responsibility of Heads of Schools.

Implementation of the expectations and commitments will affect schools differently and will be detailed in the guidelines for students and guidelines for staff which support the implementation of this policy. However the minimum requirements outlined in this policy (in section 2) provide parity for the student and a consistent approach to personal academic tutoring.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Policy will place from three different perspectives:

- a) the perceived impact upon student retention and progression;
- b) impact upon academic staff;
- c) impact upon the quality of student experience;

This will be achieved as follows:

5.1 The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), through its terms of reference, will monitor implementation of the Policy. Schools, through the representation on LTC, will be required to comment on policy implementation, which should include the views of student course representatives, effectiveness of personal academic tutoring through retention and progression metrics, NSS/BSS questions which relate to academic support and views of academic staff.

5.2 The Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Student Services Department and the Academic Standards Division of Academic Services will continue to share information and feedback and disseminate of good practice through the Widening Participation Action Team (WiPAT).

5.3 The Centre for Learning and Teaching will monitor requests for training and support for personal academic tutoring and evaluate the workshops and resources provided.

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