

PERSONAL TUTORING

Definition

At Heriot-Watt University, the term 'personal tutoring' describes the scheme whereby a member of academic staff is assigned to an individual student to provide the first point of contact for those who require advice or assistance on both academic and non-academic matters (with advice on referral to professional service sections where relevant for non-academic matters).

Personal Tutoring is one element of the University's student support system.

Expectation

All students must be assigned a named member of academic staff as their personal tutor, whom they can contact in relation to a range of academic or pastoral matters.

Responsibilities of the Personal Tutor

- To advise tutees of their availability. For campus based students, personal tutors should offer times for meetings, for example, during office hours or by appointment.
- To be pro-active in making contact with students, having particular regard for differing degrees of need and those making the biggest transition, for example: new undergraduate entrants; those moving from one environment/country to another; and those perceived to be at risk of disengaging from their studies through absence or poor performance in assessments.
- To be pro-active in making contact with students at critical points, for example: at the point of entry, with induction and setting up lines of communication; during the initial period of studying in a new environment; if poor performance in assessments is a concern; or where personal difficulties are highlighted (with advice on referral to professional service sections).
- To be aware of and advise tutees on further relevant sources of professional advice and information available within the University. Tutees who have a disability, including medical or mental health conditions or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, should be referred to the relevant section where there is expertise, such as Student Wellbeing/Student Support Services; Student Success Advisors; or the designated School Disability Contact. Contact information can be found on the University's Health and Wellbeing webpages.
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing.htm>

Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers

This briefing paper has been produced by Student Wellbeing Services and is one of a series related to Learning and Teaching. The briefing papers aim to provide a concise, informative overview of key policies, and include links to relevant procedures and templates.

Training and Guidance for Personal Tutors

- Training is mandatory for all staff in the personal tutor role.
- The *Personal Tutor SharePoint* provides a global resource for all personal tutors at Heriot-Watt and includes such information as suggested discussion topics and relevant University policies.
- Personal Tutors can also consult the *Quick Referral Guide* for their campus.

Personal Tutor Contact Points for 2020-21 for new and continuing students (see also Supporting Personal Tutoring in 2020-21)

Semester 1

- Start of semester – Welcome Week (new and continuing students) or Teaching Week 1 (continuing students)
- Consolidation Week 6
- Teaching Week 10

Semester 2

- Start of semester (for all students but for new students, the initial meeting at the start of the semester is particularly important).
- Consolidation Week 6
- Teaching week 10

In addition, personal tutors and tutees can contact each other throughout the year if required and do not have to wait until the next scheduled contact point.

References and Further Information

Contact: K.MacAskill@hw.wc.uk

Personal Tutoring SharePoint

<https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/PersonalTutoring>

The Quick Referral Guides for each campus can be accessed via the SharePoint site.

Supporting Personal Tutoring in 2020-21

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/learning-teaching/policies/supportingpt.pdf>

Learning and Teaching Policies and Procedures:
<http://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm>