Personal Tutoring:
Policy and Guidelines

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PERSONAL TUTORING: POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Note: The policy provides a framework for personal tutoring at Heriot-Watt University and the guidelines provide guidance to Schools on how personal tutoring will operate in practice. **For academic year 2024-25, please read the Policy and Guidelines in conjunction with [Personal Tutoring - Key Elements for 2024-25](#)**

PART 1: POLICY

1. 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.

2. Personal Tutoring: Definition

2.1 At Heriot-Watt University, the term 'personal tutoring' describes the scheme whereby a member of academic staff is assigned to an individual student as a 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).

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

3. Personal Tutoring: Policy

3.1 Appropriate forms of personal tutoring are available to all students, irrespective of mode or location of study.

3.2 Schools are responsible for the organisation and management of personal tutoring.

3.3 Students are advised by the School of the nature of the personal tutoring support available for their mode, location and stage of study.

3.4 Appropriate training and guidance is made available to staff undertaking the role of personal tutor.

PART 2: GUIDELINES

Responsibilities of Student Wellbeing Services (Registry and Academic Support Directorate)
- To develop staff training resources for personal tutoring.
- To offer regular training sessions on personal tutoring for campus-based staff at all locations (face to face and online).
- To collaborate with Schools to ensure that effective liaison is established in support of students.

Responsibilities of the School
- To ensure staff undertaking the role of personal tutor have the opportunity to undertake appropriate training.
- To allocate to each student a dedicated member of academic staff who will fulfil the role of personal tutor, and to supply to the student contact details for their personal tutor. Personal tutors should normally be drawn from staff in the same discipline area as the student.
- To promote continuity of personal tutoring provision. For example, Schools should ensure students are reassigned to new personal tutors if their personal tutor is temporarily unavailable.
- To ensure students are made aware of the purpose of personal tutoring and are advised that their personal tutor may be used as a first point of contact on a wide range of academic and non-academic matters (with advice on referral to professional service sections where relevant). Details should be published in student handbooks.
- To establish a process for recording personal tutor meetings, ensuring this is proportionate and effective.
- To establish a process whereby students and staff may request a change of tutee/tutor.
- To collaborate with Student Wellbeing Services to ensure that effective liaison is established in support of students.
- To monitor and enhance the operation of School personal tutoring arrangements, reporting through the Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR) process.

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 Services](#)

Personal Tutor and Tutee Contact Points

A contact point is an occasion where the personal tutor initiates a conversation or consultation with a tutee and these take place at regular intervals throughout the academic year. This may be a face to face meeting, an online meeting via MS Teams, an email exchange or a phone conversation. Personal tutors can judge the appropriate contact, for example, whether an email check in is sufficient, or whether a more in depth online or face to face discussion is required. The latter would be the case where there are particular concerns about a student. Please see [Supporting Personal Tutoring in 2024-25](#) for information on the minimum number and frequency of contact points for the 2024-25 academic year.

Responsibilities of the Tutee
- To engage with their personal tutor through attending scheduled meetings.
- To keep their personal tutor informed of any change in circumstances which may affect their academic progress.

Responsibilities of the Student Learning Experience Committee
- To monitor personal tutoring across the University on behalf of the Learning and Teaching Board.

Responsibilities of the Quality and Standards Committee
- To maintain oversight of the process by which personal tutoring is monitored i.e. Academic Review.