

UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

PERSONAL TUTORING POLICY
(TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)

Academic Registry
(Quality & Standards)

POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy title	Personal Tutoring Policy
Policy owner	Academic Registry (Quality and Standards)
Policy lead contact	Jess Robinson
Approving body	Academic Board
Date of approval	May 2023 (SSQAC)
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Version no.	5
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan Academic Strategy
Review interval	Two yearly

NB. This policy is available on the University of Cumbria website and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University's Strategic Plan emphasises the provision of robust student support and guidance systems as an integral part of University provision. Establishing supportive relationships with academic staff from an early point in a student's programme is strongly linked to students' success. Personal Tutoring is a key element in realising these objectives.
- 1.2 Personal Tutoring is a proactive academic role, and a mainstream activity for all students to engage with. The Personal Tutor is normally an academic teaching on the student's programme of study, with a strong understanding of the academic and professional requirements of the programme. The Personal Tutor can also advise on University Regulations, procedures and systems, drawing on advice from professional services where needed.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This document sets out, for students and for staff of the University, what they can expect of the Personal Tutoring system, and what their role in it will be.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all students registered on taught awards of the University of Cumbria. It does not apply to students registered on standalone modules.
- 3.2 Learners studying on an apprenticeship programme will be allocated a Personal Tutor but the nature and level of contact between tutee and tutor may vary, given the additional requirements of apprenticeships including that of regular tripartite reviews. Arrangements will be made clear to apprentices (see 4.7).
- 3.3 Students studying for a University of Cumbria award through one of the University's collaborative partnerships will have an equivalent system of support provided through the partner which is delivering the academic programme.

4. Policy

- 4.1 All students on taught awards will be allocated a named Personal Tutor at the beginning of their programme. A student will normally remain with the same Personal Tutor for at least one year or academic level of their programme and, where possible, for the full duration of the programme.
- 4.2 Personal Tutors are accessible to students on a reasonable basis. All individual students are entitled to a minimum contact time with their Personal Tutor as follows:

Levels 3 & 4	2 hours per year (normally across 4 meetings)
Levels 5, 6 & 7	1 hour per year (normally across 2 meetings)
- 4.3 Personal Tutor contact may take place individually or in groups, and students may request individual contact when needed. Contact can be by a variety of means such as telephone, face-to-face, e-mail, and Teams-type methods. Wherever possible, the tutor and the student will agree the form of contact together.
- 4.4 Personal Tutors will make contact with their Personal Tutees within the first

week of commencement of their studies. There will be a defined opportunity for this in Welcome Weeks.

4.5 The Personal Tutor role will normally encompass:

- academic monitoring and advice, to promote success on the programme
- support to the student for personal development planning and Progress Reviews
- directing students to sources of academic-related and non-academic guidance and personal support
- creating a student reference using a developmental approach
- staying in contact with students taking a formal break from study (intercalation), undertaking reassessment without attendance, or through periods of sickness absence.

The role of the Personal Tutor for apprentices will encompass the areas identified above but may also consider work-based factors which are impacting experience and performance, and other elements of the wider apprenticeship journey e.g. preparation for End Point Assessment. In the case of apprentices, the personal tutor may also conduct the formal tripartite reviews for the personal tutee (add hyperlink to tripartite review policy).

- 4.6 Details of a student's Personal Tutor are available to view on ICON. Personal Tutors are allocated by Programme Teams. The aim is for students to be allocated to Personal Tutors in advance of welcome activities and added to SITS by Programme Administration by the end of a student's second week of teaching.
- 4.7 All programmes have procedures for operating the Personal Tutor role and these are published in the programme handbook (and through Blackboard). This includes information about how to contact the Personal Tutor and what arrangements are put in place if a Personal Tutor is away from work for an extended period of time.
- 4.8 Personal Tutors observe professional role boundaries. Their task is to support students' academic progress and provide advice on academic matters only; they are responsible for referring students to other appropriate services within the University when non-academic support or advice is needed. Personal Tutors may need to be aware of the personal circumstances of the tutee where those circumstances are preventing academic success and progress.
- 4.9 The Personal Tutor will offer opportunities to reflect on assessment feedback, to support learning through assessment and to promote future success.
- 4.10 The responsibility for creating a student reference normally lies with the Personal Tutor assigned to the student. Student references are considered as part of the developmental process, and constructed jointly with the student throughout the student's programme and confirmed at an appropriate point during the final year. (References are stored centrally by the Programme Administration team and after graduating students can request a copy of their reference from Programme Administration.)
- 4.11 Students are expected to stay in contact with their Personal Tutor and to attend planned meetings, whether individual or group sessions; students who do not do so will be contacted by the Personal Tutor and asked to explain their absence or non-response.

- 4.12 If a student feels that their Personal Tutor is not meeting the minimum expectations in this policy, they should raise the concerns with the Programme Leader. If the Personal Tutor concerned is the Programme Leader, the concerns should be raised with the responsible Principal Lecturer.
- 4.13 Students are entitled to request a change of Personal Tutor in exceptional circumstances; requests should be made to the Programme Leader, who has the final decision about any possible change.
- 4.14 Students are expected to keep records of Personal Tutor meetings as part of their academic development. The tutor will also keep records of the meeting: these records must be available to the student on request and must be held in a secure place in line with data protection requirements.
- 4.15 The operation of the Personal Tutoring Policy is monitored via programme annual monitoring reports and Personal Tutors will provide the programme leader with information about their work with tutees, in the aggregate, to inform these reports.

Confidentiality

- 4.16 There are legal and ethical limits to the confidentiality that Personal Tutors can offer. If a student discloses information that indicates there may have been a breach of the professional code of practice of the occupation that the student is training for, or the tutor believes the student is at risk of causing harm to themselves or to others, the tutor is obliged to pass on that information to the appropriate people inside or (very rarely) outside the University. In these circumstances the Personal Tutor will explain to the student that they have a responsibility to pass on the information and will attempt to seek agreement from the student for this. Any sharing of personal information will be restricted to what is pertinent to the immediate situation under legal and professional body obligations.
- 4.17 Where a student discloses a disability or health issue to their Personal Tutor but requests that its existence and/or nature is not disclosed to third parties, this must be subject to the conditions set out above. This means that in some cases the disclosure cannot be kept confidential. The Personal Tutor should record any such disclosure and request in writing as part of the notes of the meeting. It should be remembered that the University seeks to support students with disability to participate fully in their programmes of study and students will always be encouraged to make a disclosure to the Disability Team so that the student's needs can be assessed and, where relevant, adjustments put in place.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Personal Tutor is responsible for:

- Contacting Personal Tutees within the first week of commencement of their studies.
- Arranging Personal Tutor meetings (individual or group)
- Making arrangements for record keeping of Personal Tutor meetings using secure means (e.g. PebblePad) and in line with data protection requirements.

The Student is responsible for:

- staying in contact with their Personal Tutor and attending planned meetings

- keeping records of Personal Tutor meetings as part of their academic development.
- requesting a change of Personal Tutor (in exceptional circumstances) via the Programme Leader

The Programme Leader is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for Personal Tutoring are set out in Programme Handbooks and Programme Blackboard sites
- Ensuring arrangements are made within Welcome Week for Personal Tutor activity
- Reflecting on the operation of Personal Tutoring within the programme annual monitoring report

Programme Administration is responsible for:

- Holding student references within student files and releasing them as required in line with agreed protocols
- Maintaining and updating Personal Tutor allocations on SITS

6. Related Policies and Procedures

Learning Teaching and Assessment Plan
 Progress Review Procedures
 Tripartite Review Policy (Apprenticeships)

7. Document Control Information

Document Name	Personal Tutor Policy
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<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	