Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Personal Tutoring

1. Purpose and Scope
1.1 This QA statement sets out the principles of the University’s Personal Tutorial System.

1.2 The Personal Tutorial System has two core purposes:

- to support taught students’ academic and personal development through a personalised point of contact with the University;
- to facilitate the induction of students into the academic community and their academic studies, helping them to develop an understanding of learning and living in the University environment.

1.3 The re-induction of students returning from a period of placement, study abroad or suspension of study as provided by the Department/School/partner organisation should also be appropriately linked into the Personal Tutorial System.

1.4 The statement applies to all taught programmes of study leading to an award of the University of Bath. The procedures also apply to distance learning programmes. For licensed and validated programmes, delivered at a partner organisation, a Personal Tutoring Policy, agreed with the University, must be in place. These QA33 procedures may be varied under the terms of a Partnership Agreement where a programme of study is delivered as a franchised collaborative initiative with a partner organisation.

2. Principles
2.1 Students should have an established personal contact within the Department, School or partner organisation.

2.2 The purpose of the Personal Tutorial System is most effectively achieved when linked with an extended period of induction into the academic community, the learning culture of their chosen academic discipline and the general student learning experience.

3. Roles and Responsibilities
3.1 Heads of Departments/School/partner organisations are responsible for ensuring the establishment and implementation of the Personal Tutorial System in accordance with this Code of Practice statement, ensuring that each taught student is assigned a Personal Tutor. New Personal Tutors should receive appropriate training and guidance on the expectations of the...
role as outlined in their departmental personal tutoring model, and all staff should be appropriately supported in their role as Personal Tutor. This involves Heads of Department/School/partner organisations ensuring that the time commitment of staff as Personal Tutors is reflected in their workload model, that Personal Tutors are aware of their responsibilities (see paragraph 4.15), and of the sources of specialist support to which they may refer students (see paragraph 4.13). Heads of Department/School are also responsible for assigning the role of Senior Tutor to a member of academic staff (as listed in the Education and Research Job Family as approved by Senate in October 2008). Heads of Departments/Schools/partner organisations may wish to assign the role to a Director of Studies or Director of Teaching, or to another member of academic staff.

3.2 **Senior Tutors** are responsible for ensuring effective communication between central support services and the Department/School regarding the support available to students, for ensuring that the Personal Tutorial System is well communicated to students and staff, and for monitoring the Personal Tutorial System and sharing good practice where appropriate. The primary route for the dissemination of information and sharing of practice will be through the Senior Tutor Forum and as such, attendance at the meetings is highly encouraged. The role of Senior Tutor is not intended to be student-facing, and concentrates on the coordination of the Personal Tutorial System so as to ensure its effectiveness. It is the responsibility of the Senior Tutor to provide an annual summary of the effectiveness of the departmental Personal Tutorial System to feed into the Personal Tutoring report for University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and to outline future changes for enhancement.

3.3 **Personal Tutors** are responsible for offering guidance and support to their tutees on how to function effectively in the University environment, and for referring students to the appropriate sources of academic or welfare advice when necessary. Personal Tutors should uphold and reflect the core purposes of the Personal Tutorial System as set out in paragraph 1.2 and should be informed of the range of central support services such that they can signpost their tutees as appropriate to their needs.

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<td>It is good practice for tutors to assume responsibility for arranging tutorial meetings or providing available time slots for drop in meetings.</td>
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3.4 **Students** are responsible for attending meetings with Personal Tutors, and for communicating with their Tutor if for any reason they are unable to attend.

3.5 **The Head of Student Services** is responsible for chairing the Senior Tutors’ Forum, and for facilitating the effective communication of information between Senior Tutors and central support services.

3.6 **The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office** is responsible for directing staff and students towards the range of academic skills support and welfare support that is offered to students by the central support services and the Students’ Union. Whilst information will be provided from a variety of sources, the Senior Tutors Forum supported by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office will provide an overview for Personal Tutors, to help in the delivery of pastoral support and academic induction.
4. Procedure

4.1 All taught students will be assigned a Personal Tutor who is a member of academic staff (as listed in the Education and Research Job Family as approved by Senate in October 2008) (see 3.1). However, assistance, advice and support may additionally be provided through other sources such as Student Experience Officers, placement and work based tutors and project/dissertation supervisors.

Good Practice Example

It is good practice where possible, particularly for PGT students, to assign a Personal Tutor within the student’s field of study.

4.2 Departments should notify students if their Personal Tutor will be absent for an extended period (e.g. due to health reasons or sabbatical) and provide an appropriate replacement Personal Tutor for the duration of the absence.

4.3 For distance learning programmes and students studying at a partner organisation support may be provided by staff other than a Personal Tutor. The support may also be provided through an alternative model to those outlined in 4.3 below, providing that the standards of academic induction (Appendix 1) and personalised pastoral support are ensured, and that these are communicated to students.

4.4 Heads of Departments/Schools/partner organisations will provide Personal Tutorial support through one of the two models set out below, or through a combination of these:

i) Integrated Tutorials offer guidance on academic topics related to the student’s programme of study, but are not unit-specific. They also support skills development and induction (or re-induction) activities, and provide a personal contact and rapport in case of pastoral issues.

ii) Separate Personal Tutorials (which establish a personal contact and rapport in case of pastoral issues) and Academic Tutorial Support (which covers academic induction (or re-induction) through other means, for example in academic tutorials or unit tutorials).

4.5 For all models, it is expected that Personal Tutors will meet with their tutees at least three times during the student’s first semester after entry to the University, and will offer at least one tutorial per semester at other times. This is a minimum requirement, and Personal Tutors may increase the number of meetings as appropriate to reflect contextual aspects such as after a tutee’s return from placement. All Personal Tutors should be advised of the expected frequency of meetings as outlined in their own departmental/school/partner organisation tutoring policy. Although for on campus students face to face meetings are preferable, other means of communication such as email, telephone or video calls can be utilised if the student is absent (e.g. on placement) Students may like to bear in mind that if they fail to attend tutorials, Personal Tutors may not know them well enough to provide more than a factual reference for them if requested.

4.6 While meetings may be held in small group format, Personal Tutors will also ensure that all tutees are aware of the opportunity to meet individually if required.
4.7 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will ensure that their Personal Tutorial System facilitates academic induction through:

- explaining the development of independent study habits suitable for higher education;
- setting out expectations of students and expectations that students may have from their teaching staff;
- promoting the development of good communication between staff and students;
- directing students to places for learning on campus and services that support learning;
- enabling students to monitor and review their academic progress.

4.8 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will address each of the areas of academic induction listed in Appendix 1 as relevant. These will normally be supported through the Personal Tutorial System although delivery may be offered through other mechanisms (for example, specific study skills units).

4.9 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will provide an appropriate mechanism for students to request a change of Personal Tutor if they feel that this is desirable. Such requests are usually communicated through the relevant Director of Studies or equivalent.

4.10 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will pay particular attention to the Personal Tutoring arrangements for students under the age of 18. Departments/Schools/partner organisations should refer to the University’s policy on admission and support for students under the age of 18, available at http://www.bath.ac.uk/university-secretary/secretary/child-protection-safeguarding/ and seek advice from the Head of Student Services to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place.

4.11 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will also pay attention to the specific needs of international students in both the academic induction and pastoral support provided through their Personal Tutorial System. Further guidance can be obtained from the International Office, the ‘Guidance for Personal Tutors’ web pages http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/tutors/, and the Senior Tutors’ Forum.

4.12 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will also pay attention to the specific needs of other demographic groups (to include but not exclusive to mature students, student parents, students with a disability) in both the academic induction and pastoral support provided through their Personal Tutorial System. Further guidance can be obtained from the Student Services, the Students’ Union and the Senior Tutors’ Forum.

4.13 Whilst Personal Tutors are not necessarily required to visit students on placement (see QA6 3.6), they (or another nominated member of staff) will continue to provide support to students
during this time. Rather than physical meetings, this support may be provided through alternative means of communication (see 4.5).

4.14 Personal Tutors will monitor non-attendance at tutorials, noting where a student exhibits a tendency for non-attendance or any other issues of concern in relation to individual tutees, and informing and liaising with the Director of Studies as appropriate.

4.15 Personal Tutors should be familiar with the support that is available to staff and students across the diverse student body from central support services (as shown on the Student Support and Resources Website [http://www.bath.ac.uk/students/support/]), the Guidelines for Personal Tutors [http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/tutors/], and the requirements of the Department/School/partner organisation’s Personal Tutorial System (see 4.14 below). Where a tutor feels unable to give advice, the student should be referred to alternative sources of specialist support via the Student Services Centre in 4 West.

4.16 Any personal problem discussed with the Personal Tutor will normally be confidential unless the student gives permission for the matter to be taken further. However, there are occasions when it would be inappropriate to maintain confidentiality in order to exercise an appropriate duty of care towards the student and/or third parties. Guidance on confidentiality protocols is available in Guidelines for Personal Tutors [http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/tutors/], and can always be sought from Student Services staff.

4.17 The Senior Tutor will ensure that the Personal Tutorial System is well communicated to students and staff, and that expectations are agreed with and supported by the Head of Department/School/partner organisation. A statement setting out the intentions of the Departmental/School/partner organisation’s System, and how it is operated, will be made available to all staff and students to whom it applies. This guidance will normally be used in student handbooks and during induction. Good practice is demonstrated by tutors who clarify the role of the personal tutor and the expectations of the meetings between the tutor and the students at the first tutorial or at the first meeting with a tutee. It will be regularly reviewed and updated and should include:

- the expectations of staff (for example, levels of engagement with students);
- the expectations of students (for example, the expectation of attendance at tutorials);
- the process for requesting a change of Personal Tutor and, where appropriate:
- how the areas of academic induction (Appendix 1) are addressed by the Department/School/partner organisation’s System (for example, using a matrix).

4.18 Where a Department/School/partner organisation is under legal or regulatory requirement to monitor attendance to induction (e.g. for Health and Safety or visa control reasons), the Department/ School/partner organisation may wish this to be accommodated as part of Personal Tutorial arrangements.

4.19 The Senior Tutors’ Forum will provide support and advice to Senior Tutors and will facilitate communication between Senior Tutors and central support services. The Forum will also provide the opportunity for Senior Tutors to share good practice and to facilitate the ongoing development of the Personal Tutorial System and associated resources.

4.20 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will ensure that staff receive appropriate information and training to support their role as Personal Tutors. This should be included in the Department/School/partner organisation’s induction of new academic staff. The following areas should be covered:
• the support that is available to students from central support services (as shown on the Student Support and Resources Website (http://www.bath.ac.uk/students/support/));
• the Guidance for Personal Tutors (http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/tutors/) including their responsibilities for career education, information, advice and guidance (see also QA55);
• the University’s policy on data protection (http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/data-protection/)
• the areas to be addressed in academic induction (Appendix 1);
• the requirements of the Department/School/partner organisation’s Personal Tutorial System (see 4.14 above).

4.21 Departments/Schools/partner organisations will ensure that the time commitment of staff as Senior or Personal Tutors is reflected in their workload model. In doing this, Departments/Schools/partner organisations will seek to balance the loading on individual members of staff and the staff: student ratio within the Department/School/partner organisation.

5. Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Senior Tutor will monitor the Personal Tutorial System within the Department/School in order to enhance its effectiveness as a student support mechanism. This will include ensuring that the Personal Tutorial System is considered annually by the Staff/Student Liaison Committee. The Senior Tutor will ensure that feedback from this monitoring in conjunction with feedback obtained from the annual Programme Evaluation is passed on to the Directors of Studies for consideration in the Department/School Annual Monitoring reports and fed back to the Senior Tutor Forum through the annual Personal Tutoring report.

5.2 The Senior Tutor Forum will collate results on Personal Tutoring from the Programme Evaluation and propose actions for improvement based on the outcomes. The sharing of good practice from departments who receive high evaluation scores will be encouraged and disseminated through the Forum minutes and webpages.

5.2 Through the University’s Annual Monitoring process (QA51 Annual Monitoring of Units and Programmes), the Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees will ensure that any Faculty/School/partner organisation-level issues in relation to the Personal Tutorial System are addressed, and will draw any issues requiring consideration at an institutional level to the attention of the University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. Faculty-level Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees will also ensure that good practice identified is shared across the Faculty/School/Learning Partnerships Office, or across the institution where appropriate through University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee or the Senior Tutors’ Forum.

Sources of Advice and Further Guidance
Guidance for Personal Tutors website, http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/tutors/

Student Support and Resources Website, http://www.bath.ac.uk/students/support/


University’s Policy on Data Protection: http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/data-protection/
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Appendix 1  Academic Induction

Departments/Schools/partner organisations should address each of the areas of academic induction listed in Appendix 1. These will normally be addressed through the Tutorial System although delivery may be offered through other mechanisms (for example, specific study skills units).

In the context of studying in general:

- independent learning, including taking responsibility for own learning
- getting organised and time management
- writing skills for the discipline (essays, reports, assignments)
- plagiarism and academic integrity
- mathematical skills (where appropriate)
- using e-learning resources
- information retrieval and literature research
- laboratory skills (where appropriate)
- health and safety (lab related and other)
- choosing Units/Programme specialisation choices
- importance of the 'student voice' at the university
- personal development planning (PDP)

In the context of assessment and feedback:

- preparing for assessment
- understanding assessment modes
- understanding grading and classification (particularly the differences between classification levels)
- the feedback policy of the Department/School/partner organisation
- understanding feedback processes (including recognising feedback that is available)
- alternative routes of receiving feedback (peers, personal tutors, support services)

In the context of working and studying with others:

- team work principles and roles
- resolving conflict and seeking advice
- group work
- diversity and internationalisation
- cultural exchange and learning.

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1 Examples of the joint Students' Union/LTEO presentation to students can be found at Student feedback | University of Bath (foot of page)