Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology Undergraduate Personal Tutorial System

This policy document should be read in conjunction with the University Quality Assurance Code of Practice Statement 33 Personal Tutoring (http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA33.pdf).

1. Overview

In the Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology, the personal tutor is the key point of personal contact between the undergraduate student and the University. Our personal tutors provide pastoral care, guidance on academic progression, signposting to support services and references. Tutorials are normally linked to unit-related assessments which provide an initial structure for meetings. Our approach has been developed over a number of years, is working well, and was commended by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain during their February 2008 quinquennial MPharm accreditation visit.

Freshers are assigned a personal tutor the week before arrival, during which the Department runs an online pre-induction when new students may meet their peers online. Where possible, personal tutors are allocated on the basis of tutees’ A-level subjects to support those students arriving in the Department without either A-level biology or mathematics. Likewise, consideration will be given to the needs of International Baccalaureate students. All full-time academic staff will normally have a cohort of four to six personal tutees in each year group, with part-time colleagues having a pro-rata cohort. This may vary over time, depending on staff-student ratio.

Students under 18 will always be allocated to an experienced member of staff and provided with a special duty of care in accordance with University policy (http://www.bath.ac.uk/university-secretary/secretary/child-protection-safeguarding/admissionsupportforstudentsunder18.pdf).

Personal tutors meet their tutees, as a group, during Induction week, and three times a semester thereafter throughout the degree programme, unless a tutee is on placement, when the student is normally visited once by a member of academic staff. The content of most group tutorials will be based around teaching units and will provide support for unit based assessments. Personal tutors also provide the opportunity to meet tutees individually, for example, to provide end-of-semester assessment feedback.

The personal tutor system is key in providing academic induction, supported by unit specific tutorials, key skills units, online support via Moodle, Freshers’ Induction and the student handbook. A list of academic induction topics is shown in Table 1.

Personal tutors play an important role in the pastoral care of students, and are an initial point of contact should personal problems arise. If appropriate the tutor or the student may also raise matters of concern directly with the Director of Studies or a Unit Convenor. All non-academic matters shared between a student and the personal tutor will normally remain confidential, unless the student is considered at-risk or consents for the matter to be disclosed. In many cases, disclosure to the Director of
Studies is encouraged, especially if these matters have an impact on academic performance. Academic problems will be communicated to the Director of Studies by individual members of Staff or Unit Convenors.

Students normally retain the same individual personal tutor during the entire course of their degree programme, although staff changes mean that this is not always possible. If a tutee/tutor relationship breaks down, either party should consult the Director of Studies who will mediate and/or allocate a new personal tutor as appropriate.

2. Record-keeping
Personal tutors are encouraged to record and lodge in students’ files details of sporting, artistic and social achievements, and any other contribution to the life of the Department or the University, as well academic and relevant professional practice achievements. Copies of references written for students applying for jobs or research studentships are also kept on file.

A brief summary of tutorial meetings between students and their personal tutor will be kept on record. It will be the responsibility of the personal tutor to ensure that tutorial meetings take place and a record is kept.

3. Role of the Senior Tutor
The Senior Tutor role is not intended to be student-facing but is intended to support personal tutors in providing the personal tutorial system for students in Pharmacy & Pharmacology, for example in mentoring new academic staff in their tutor role; and to ensure that the system is delivered equitably for all students and academic staff. The Senior Tutor is responsible for monitoring that scheduled personal tutorials take place and will ensure a Departmental record of all personal tutorials held over the academic year is maintained. The Senior Tutor and Head of Department will provide appropriate feedback and support should a personal tutor fail to perform the duties of the role.

4. Monitoring
The effectiveness of the personal tutorial system for undergraduates in Pharmacy & Pharmacology will be assessed by the Senior Tutor with a report made available to the Departmental Courses Committee and Staff Student Liaison Committee each year. Student feedback will be obtained through the SAMIS online unit feedback process with questions being used to assess the effectiveness of each unit’s tutorial sessions; and via open discussion in SSLC.

5. Information provided to personal tutors
Academic staff are provided with information about the Department’s personal tutor system through Moodle and central support via a Student Services information page ([https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/guidance-for-personal-tutors/](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/guidance-for-personal-tutors/)).

Departmental guidelines for tutors are provided via Moodle covering the following key points:
• Responsibility to ensure they meet their tutees at least three times per semester
• To be available for an individual meeting where appropriate
• Responsibility to offer pastoral and academic support – i.e. by being aware of and signposting students to both departmental and Student Services resources for welfare and study
• The importance of confidentiality
• Responsibility for providing references
• Responsibility for providing feedback on assessments linked to the personal tutorial system

The content of most tutorials is unit-based, so in addition to departmental guidelines, tutors are reminded of specific tasks through weekly emails from the Senior tutor. New tutors are made aware of their responsibilities through a training session, run by the Senior tutor.

6. Information provided to students
Information about the personal tutorial system is provided to students by the Director of Studies during Induction week then subsequently reinforced in a number of different ways, including the Departmental Undergraduate Student Handbook and a Moodle page for undergraduates highlighting the following information and resources for support:

• How academic induction is supported (Table 1)
• Frequency of meetings with personal tutors and how the meetings link to programme units
• Support for academic study (signposting to key skills development, provision of feedback on drafts assignment submission etc.)
• Pastoral/welfare guidance and support
• Placement/option/career advice and references
• Guidelines for requesting a change of tutor
• Confidentiality and disclosure policies
• Attendance expectations

A departmental undergraduate peer mentoring system is in place to support students during their induction to University life. Student mentors will be supported in their role in enabling new students to get the greatest benefit from the personal tutorial system.

7. Natural Sciences undergraduates
Academic staff in the Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology also provide personal tutoring to BSc and MSci Natural Sciences students, following a pastoral model of provision. An appropriate number of academic staff, typically three, are reserved for Natural Sciences undergraduates. In Week one, the names of Natural Sciences students majoring in pharmacology are confirmed, and tutors meet their students for the first time. Thereafter tutors meet their tutees a minimum of three
times a semester, and in accordance with the “Personal Tutoring Model for Natural Sciences”. Support while on placement will normally be by email.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Academic Induction for Undergraduates in Pharmacy &amp; Pharmacology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the context of studying in general:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent learning, including taking responsibility for own learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting organised and time management</td>
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<td>Writing skills for the discipline (essays, reports, assignments)</td>
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<td>Plagiarism and academic integrity</td>
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<td>Mathematical skills</td>
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<td>Using Moodle</td>
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<td>Information retrieval and literature research</td>
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<td>Laboratory skills</td>
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<td>Health and safety (lab related and other)</td>
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<td>Electing Units/Programme specialisation choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Importance of the 'student voice' at the university</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal development planning (PDP)</td>
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</tbody>
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| **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/Division           | ✔️ | ✔️ | ✔️ |
| 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                                  | ✔️ | ✔️ |    |
B Postgraduate

1. Overview
All postgraduate taught students in the Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology are part time. They are studying on a work-based distance learning programme. The learning they participate happens in practice, with underpinning theory and leading edge practice provided via online study guides with input from campus based teacher practitioners. As such they are not ‘traditional’ postgraduate taught students.

As learning in practice is foregrounded, the students receive personal and pastoral support from a workplace mentor. They also receive support and guidance from the Bath team: The Director of Studies and Programme Administration Team, the Academic Programme Leads and individual Unit Convenors. Additional support for learners is provided via the programme Virtual Learning Environment. This approach has been developed over a number of years, has worked well, and was commended by our 2008 Degree Scheme Review.

New postgraduates are assigned a workplace mentor (or Designated Medical Practitioner for the Pharmacist Prescribing Programme) during the two month period prior to them joining the programme (in the autumn or the spring of each year). The students are supported during this period through access to a bespoke online induction, which introduces them to the functionality of moodle and the overarching programme aims and learning outcomes. It also provides them with information about the nature of their practice-based learning so that they can make early plans for organising this. Each workplace mentor provides support and guidance in the practice context, as the programme is underpinned by practical, experiential learning. Mentors are appointed as visiting members of staff of the University and receive initial training and updating to enable them to fulfil this role. They are also supported directly by members of the programme team.

Mentors meet their mentees in practice immediately following the campus-based induction, and then meet regularly during each unit that the student studies (this equates typically to three meetings per 9 week-period).

The on-campus induction provides a thorough introduction to the programme. During induction there is a separate session on working with their workplace mentor.

Mentors play an important role in the pastoral care of students, and are an initial point of contact should personal problems arise. If appropriate the mentor or the student may also raise matters of concern directly with the Director of Postgraduate Programmes, one of the programme leads or a Unit Convenor. All non-academic matters shared between a student and the Mentor or a member of the programme team will normally remain confidential, unless the student is considered at-risk or consents for the matter to be disclosed. In many cases, disclosure to the Director of Postgraduate Programmes is encouraged, especially if these matters have an impact on academic performance. Academic problems will be communicated to the Director of Studies.

Students normally retain the same mentor during the entire course of their study. If a mentor/mentee relationship breaks down, either party should consult the Director of
Postgraduate Programmes who will mediate and/or allocate a new mentor as appropriate.

2. Record-keeping
Members of the Programme team are encouraged to record and lodge in students’ files details of academic and practice achievements. Copies of references written for students applying for jobs are also kept on file.

Mentors and mentees meet and sign a learning agreement at the start of the programme which determines a set of ground rules for their developing professional relationship. Copies of these forms are available on moodle for both mentors and students. Annual Personal Development Plans are also agreed between mentor and student. For each unit a student completes a learning needs analysis template and this is discussed with the mentor and then submitted to the University for review by the Unit Convenor. A similar, but more detailed process, is completed by students on the Pharmacist Prescribing Programme.

3. Role of the Senior Tutor
The Senior Tutor role is not intended to be student-facing but is intended to support mentors and the programme team in providing personal support for students in Pharmacy & Pharmacology; for example in supporting new mentors in this role; and to ensure that the system is delivered equitably for all students and staff. The Senior Tutor is responsible for monitoring that mentor/mentee support activities take place, and will ensure a record of all meetings held over the academic year is maintained. The Senior Tutor and Programme Lead will provide appropriate feedback and support should a mentor fail to perform the duties of the role.

4. Monitoring
The effectiveness of the personal support system for taught postgraduates in Pharmacy & Pharmacology will be assessed by the Senior Tutor with a report made available to the Departmental Courses Committee and Staff Student Liaison Committee each year. Student feedback will be engaged through bespoke feedback sessions at the regular face to face workshops on the programme, and via open discussion at the Programme Board of Management meetings (which have student representation).

5. Information provided to workplace mentors
The following support is available for workplace mentors:

- A text-based resource detailing the Programme mentoring system and containing all key templates and deadlines
- A new mentor training session held prior to the start of each new intake which is compulsory for new mentors
- An annual mentor update event held at the University of Bath and to which all new mentors are strongly encouraged to attend
6. Information provided to students
Information about the workplace mentoring system is provided to students by the Director of Postgraduate Programmes at the Programme Induction event, then subsequently reinforced in a number of different ways, including the Departmental Postgraduate Student Handbook, the main programme Moodle page for postgraduates, and a separate textual guide: ‘Working with your mentor’. This guide and the student handbook highlight the following information and resources for support:

- How induction is supported
- Frequency of meetings with mentors and how the meetings link to programme units
- Support for academic study (provision of feedback on drafts assignment submission etc.)
- Pastoral/ welfare guidance and support
- Confidentiality and disclosure policies
- Attendance expectations

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