



Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Personal Tutoring

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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 transition 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. 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 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 and ensuring that each taught student is assigned a Personal Tutor.

This document is primarily intended for:

Heads of Academic Departments
 Senior Tutors
 Personal Tutors
 Students
 Director of Student Services

**Queries: First point of contact:
 Assistant Registrars in the
 Faculty/School.**

*Technical/specialist contact:
 Student Services*

3 Procedure

- 3.1 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, with specified exceptions). However, assistance, advice and support may additionally be provided through other sources such as Faculty/School Student Engagement Managers/Student Experience Officers, placement and work-based tutors and project/ dissertation supervisors.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Departments' Directors of Studies or Senior Tutors should notify students if their Personal Tutor will be absent for an extended period (eg due to health reasons or sabbatical) and provide an appropriate replacement Personal Tutor for the duration of the absence.
- 3.4 For students studying on distance learning programmes, and/or 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 that outlined in this document providing that the standards of support are ensured, and that these are communicated to students.
- 3.5 Personal Tutors are required to arrange to meet with their tutees at least three times during the student's first semester on a programme, 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 a tutee's return from placement. 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 (eg on placement). Students are responsible for attending meetings with Personal Tutors, and for communicating with their Tutor if for any reason they are unable to attend. Personal Tutors should communicate to students that if they fail to attend meetings, they may not know them well enough to provide more than a factual reference for them if requested.
- 3.6 While meetings may be held in small group format, Personal Tutors will be required to explicitly offer all tutees the opportunity to meet individually at least once a semester.
- 3.7 When possible, Directors of Studies should not also act as Personal Tutors. However, in departments where this is unavoidable, care should be taken to ensure they have a manageable tutee load (as determined by the Head of Department with support from the Senior Tutor) that ensures the same opportunities for group and individual meetings as afforded to other undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. Additionally, a second named arbitrator and tutor should be available for these students should the need arise.
- 3.8 Departments/School/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.
- 3.9 Departments/School/partner organisations will pay particular attention to the Personal Tutoring arrangements for students under the age of 18. Departments/School/partner organisations should refer to the University's policy on [admission and support for students under the age of 18](#)

and seek advice from the Director of Student Services to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place.

- 3.10 Personal Tutors (or another nominated member of staff) will continue to provide support to students during their placement. Rather than physical meetings, this support may be provided through alternative means of communication.
- 3.11 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](#)) and the requirements of the Department/School/partner organisation's Personal Tutorial System. Where a tutor feels that professional support is required, advice should be sought through the Staff Advice line (ext. 4321) and/or the student should be referred to alternative sources of specialist support via the Student Services Centre in 4 West.
- 3.12 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 can be sought from Student Services staff.
- 3.13 The Senior Tutor will ensure that the Personal Tutorial System is well communicated to students and staff, and that expectations are 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 will be a succinct summary of the principles laid out in this QA33 document, and should include:
 - the expectations of staff (for example, levels of engagement with students and recording of meetings)
 - the expectations of students (for example, the expectation of attendance at meetings)
 - the process for requesting a change of Personal Tutor.
- 3.14 Senior Tutors should ensure that group meetings are scheduled to address relevant and timely academic and personal development projects. This should include circulation to Personal Tutors of a list of relevant discussion topics in advance of meetings to ensure consistency of information and support across the programme/Department.
- 3.15 The Senior Tutors' Forum will provide support and advice to Senior Tutors and 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. Senior Tutors should attend the Senior Tutor Forum and in the event they cannot, should send someone in their place, ensuring every Department has a representative at the meeting and is kept informed of developments in student support.
- 3.16 Departments/School/partner organisations will ensure that staff receive appropriate information and training to support their role as Personal Tutors. This should be included in the University's induction of new academic staff.
- 3.17 Departments/School/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/School/partner organisations will seek to balance the loading on individual members of staff and the staff to student ratio within the Department/School/partner organisation.

- 3.18 Heads of Department/School are 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), and with the support of the Senior Tutor are responsible for monitoring compliance with QA33 in the Department/School.

4 Recording, Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 Personal Tutors are required to keep a record of meetings with tutees. This will normally be done using SAMIS Student Notes; however, Heads of Departments and Senior Tutors can choose an alternative method provided the notes are accessible to the appropriate individuals. Personal Tutors will also record non-attendance at meetings, 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.
- 4.2 Monitoring of Personal Tutoring will be carried out at least semesterly, to (i) ensure the necessary support is put in place for students, and (ii) monitor compliance with the expectations set out in this statement. Heads of Department and Senior Tutors will identify and implement the most appropriate monitoring systems for practice within their Department for these two purposes. Senior Tutors, on behalf of the Head of Department, will oversee the monitoring process.
- 4.3 The Senior Tutor will review the Personal Tutorial System within the Department/School in order to enhance its effectiveness as a student support mechanism. This should include seeking staff and student feedback through appropriate channels such as Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and Departmental meetings. The Personal Tutorial System will be considered annually by the SSLC.
- 4.4 An elected Senior Tutor is responsible for chairing the Senior Tutors' Forum, and for facilitating the effective communication of information between Senior Tutors and central support services.
- 4.5 The Senior Tutor Forum will review Personal Tutoring, including Departmental monitoring systems, and propose actions for improvement based on the outcomes. The sharing of good practice from Departments who receive positive student feedback (through surveys, via SSLCs etc.) will be encouraged and disseminated through the Forum minutes and webpages.
- 4.6 University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee will stipulate suitable mechanisms for institutional oversight and monitoring of the Personal Tutorial system, as appropriate.

Sources of Advice and Further Guidance

- [Student Services advice for staff](#)
- University's Policy on Admission and Support for Students [under the age of 18](#)
- University's Policy on [Data Protection](#)

Statement Details	
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	<i>Learning and Teaching Committee</i> Minute 61 (3/2/09)
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Related Documentation:	QA6 Placement Learning QA38 Induction of Students QA55 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
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