



Code of practice for personal tutoring

Academic year 2024/25

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Purpose and scope

1. This *Code of practice* sets out the principles of the University's personal tutoring system.
2. The core purpose of personal tutoring is to support taught¹ students' academic, personal and professional development, and their welfare, through an on-going personalised point of contact with the University.
3. Additionally, personal tutoring has an important role in the continuing induction of students into the academic community, in developing an understanding of learning and in living in the University environment.
4. This *Code of practice* applies to all students on taught programmes of study leading to an award of the University of Surrey, including distance learning programmes. It does not apply to students on University validated programmes at the Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs), who will be subject to their own institutional policies.

Principles

5. Each student should have an allocated Personal Tutor within the School to which their programme belongs.² The Personal Tutor will normally remain the same for the duration of the student's registration, although the Senior Personal Tutor will arrange cover for research leave, sickness absence and other forms of absence.
6. Personal tutoring is a pro-active engagement between the tutor and the tutee. Personal Tutors are expected to provide regular opportunities for discussions with their tutees. Students are expected to take up these opportunities and engage meaningfully with them.

Roles and responsibilities

7. **The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic** has executive oversight of the implementation of the personal tutoring system working in collaboration with the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans of each Faculty. This includes oversight of the training provided by the institution to Personal Tutors, working with Human Resources to ensure training is co-ordinated appropriately and uptake is monitored. Roles and responsibilities of academic and professional services staff and students are described in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities – Personal Tutoring

Role	Responsibilities
Head of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the establishment and implementation of the personal tutoring system in the School/ to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o each taught student is assigned a Personal Tutor o a record of each meeting of Personal Tutors with their tutee(s) has been made o all Personal Tutors complete mandatory training and regular refreshers o staff are appropriately supported in their role as a Personal Tutor

¹ For research students, this is the responsibility of the Principal Supervisor (see [Code of practice for research degrees](#)).

² In the case of joint programmes, the School in which the student's file is normally held.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the time commitment of staff as Personal Tutors is reflected in their workload model o Personal Tutors are aware of their responsibilities and of the sources of support to which they may refer students • To assign the role of Senior Personal Tutor to an appropriate member of academic staff
Associate Heads of School, Education (AHEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver student induction, for new and returning students, in their School • To deliver the induction of new members of staff, including introducing them to the Personal Tutoring scheme
Senior Personal Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the personal tutoring system is well communicated to students and staff in their School • To raise awareness of the support made available to students by support services • To assist the Head of School to make sure that Personal Tutors receive appropriate training and guidance specific to their Faculty and School • To monitor the personal tutoring system and share good practice where appropriate • To work with the relevant areas of professional services to provide the best support for Personal Tutors and students, especially with the Student Success Team.
Personal Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a good knowledge of the structure of the tutee's programme of study, and to be proactive in offering appointments with tutees • To record each meeting with their tutees, including a brief summary of the discussion and any agreed actions, referrals and/or signposts in MySurrey Engagement • To complete Personal Tutor training and regular refreshers • To offer guidance and support to their tutees on how to function effectively in the University environment, particularly in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic progress; • personal/professional development and employability; • pastoral/welfare issues. • To refer their tutees to the appropriate sources of academic or welfare advice when necessary • To provide written references to their tutees, where applicable³

³ Tutees should always ask (preferably, in writing) their Personal Tutor's permission before naming them as a referee.

Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take the initiative in seeking timely advice from their Personal Tutor when faced with academic, personal or other issues that are impacting on their academic progress • To attend arranged meetings with Personal Tutors • To be adequately prepared for meetings with their Personal Tutor • To contact their Personal Tutor if for any reason they are unable to attend these meetings
University professional services	<p><i>Human Resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead on and coordinate training for Personal Tutors <p><i>Chief Student Officer Directorate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide up-to-date guidance to facilitate basic delivery of welfare support • To be clear on referral pathways for welfare and/or student life cases

Procedure

Personal Tutor allocation

8. Before the start of the student's programme of study, students will be assigned a Personal Tutor who is a member of academic staff (as defined in the University [Introduction to the Quality Framework](#)).
9. Schools will provide an appropriate mechanism for students to request and receive a change of Personal Tutor, and all reasonable requests will be accommodated if practicable.
10. Schools will pay particular attention to the personal tutoring arrangements for students under the age of 18 and advice should be sought from Academic Registry staff to ensure the appropriate measures are in place.
11. Whilst Personal Tutors are not required to visit students on placement, 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 (email, telephone, videocall, etc.).
12. Students undertaking a period of temporary withdrawal will retain a Personal Tutor during the period they are absent from the University.
13. Students on distance learning programmes will also be provided with a Personal Tutor in order that the standards of personalised academic and pastoral support and underpinning of induction are ensured.
14. Surrey Online Learning (SOL) students will be assisted in their studies by a Student Advisor. Student Success Advisors are responsible for providing Surrey students with a primary point of contact for day-to-day support and guidance from enrolment to graduation. Surrey Online Learning (SOL) students will be provided with similar services as Surrey on-campus students. These services include thorough student onboarding and orientation programmes, academic tutoring support to help students

to connect with resources, health and wellbeing services, career planning, retention coaching and study planning to make sure online students can balance their work/life with online studies.

Meetings of Personal Tutors with their tutees

15. Personal Tutors should meet with all of their tutees within the first three weeks of the first Semester (normally Semester 1), in a single group or over several meetings if preferred. The Personal Tutor will introduce themselves (if not known to the Tutee) and explain the MySurrey Engagement platform. The MySurrey Engagement platform's interactions feature will be used to create a register of students invited to attend one of the group meetings sent out via Outlook. Once the student has attended, the interaction for the student will be closed.
16. The expectation for students in their first year of study is that an additional meeting during their first Semester will be required. During subsequent Semesters, meetings should take place within the first 4 weeks. The frequency of meetings and the Personal Tutor system operated in the School should be communicated clearly to students, at the beginning of each session.⁴ Students can request additional meetings with their Personal Tutor if needed.
17. Heads of Schools (with support from Senior Personal Tutors and Associate Heads of School, Education) should ensure that all students have been offered meetings with their Personal Tutor at the appropriate times(s) and that relevant records of these meetings have been made via *MySurrey Engagement*.
18. All meetings should be structured with a clear and agreed agenda⁵, as determined by the School. Meetings may be held in small group format, but Personal Tutors will also ensure that all tutees are offered the opportunity to meet individually, if requested.
19. The University maintains a Learning Analytics platform providing data on the engagement of students with their studies. Personal Tutors will engage actively with the information provided through the platform as part of their commitment to the students' learning at Surrey. Students with lower engagement scores will be prioritised focussing on academic and pastoral risks. The Student Success Team will support Personal Tutors on a case-by-case basis. Through discussions with relevant Personal Tutors and Senior Personal Tutors they will develop appropriate action plans, including who will engage with the student and when. Where interactions are required, these will be captured through the MySurrey Engagement platform to ensure the activities and timing of same are available for subsequent review.
20. Personal Tutors will keep concise records of each meeting, including a brief summary of the discussion and any agreed actions or referrals using MySurrey Engagement. Meetings notes will be visible to all staff that have the permission to see the student's data i.e. Programme Leader, Senior Personal Tutor, Associate Head of School, Education, Associate Dean, Education, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean. Therefore, colleagues should be mindful that others have access when including any potentially sensitive notes on MySurrey Engagement.

⁴ It is good practice for individual meetings to be scheduled at appropriate times of the year for Personal Tutors and tutees to reflect in particular on academic progress. For example, a meeting held shortly after Semester 1 assessment results are available would provide the opportunity to discuss any resulting issues and to identify additional areas of support that may be required.

⁵ Clarifying the purpose of the meeting in advance may make it easier for both students and staff to engage.

21. Schools will ensure that each of the areas of induction listed in Appendix 2 is addressed. These may be underpinned and reinforced through the personal tutoring system or delivered through other means (for example, specific study skills units in modules).
22. Schools will also pay attention to the specific needs of international students in both the academic and welfare support provided through their Personal Tutoring system. Further guidance can be obtained from International Student Support and the booklet *Supporting Students: A Handbook for Staff*.⁶
23. Personal Tutors should provide accurate information for tutees on their availability⁷ and should make contingency arrangements which may be used for urgent problems when they are unavailable.
24. Personal Tutors will record non-attendance within MySurrey Engagement, by recategorizing the interaction as “missed PT meeting” and student non-attendance may result in students being contacted by the Student Success Team where necessary to ensure appropriate support is being offered and taken up.
25. Personal Tutors are responsible for calling a meeting with a tutee where there are formal reports of unsatisfactory attendance and/or engagement with their programme of study, or in the event of any other cause for concern. Emerging patterns of non-attendance / non-engagement will be drawn to the attention of the Senior Personal Tutor, Programme Leader and/or Associate Head of School, Education as appropriate. The Visa Compliance Team may also need to follow up cases where non-attendance at meetings with the Personal Tutor are a sign of non-engagement.
26. Personal Tutors should be familiar with the support that is available to staff and students from support services and clear referral pathways (as shown on the [MySurrey website](#), the booklet *Supporting Students: A Handbook for Staff*, and the requirements of the School’s Personal Tutoring system [see paragraph 29 below]). A Personal Tutor will refer students to various to alternative sources of support as required.
27. 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 (e.g., when a student is at risk of harm to themselves or others) when it would be inappropriate to maintain confidentiality in order to exercise an appropriate duty of care towards the student and to protect their vital interests and those of third parties⁸. Guidance on confidentiality protocols is available in *Supporting Students: A Handbook for Staff* and will be provided as part of training.
28. Where a School is under legal or regulatory requirement to monitor attendance at inductions (e.g., for health and safety or visa control reasons), the School may wish this to be accommodated as part of personal tutorial arrangements.

Personal Tutor training

29. It is mandatory that all Personal Tutors attend training before taking on the role as well as refresher training as and when required. The following areas will be covered:
 - The role of Personal Tutors and expectations in line with this Code of practice;

⁶ The latest version of this *Handbook* is due to be published shortly on the University website.

⁷ The publishing of ‘office hours’ during which a tutor is available, whilst good practice, should not replace the need for arranging one-to-one meetings.

⁸ The University may request Personal Tutor records when dealing with an academic appeal or complaint submitted by the student or when the student is undergoing a disciplinary, fitness to practise or support to study process. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and in line with the student support services privacy notice.

- The support that is available to students from support services;
- The guidance available in *Supporting Students: A Handbook for Staff*;
- The University's policies on student-related matters;
- Awareness of mental health and understanding of when to refer to support services.

(See Appendix 1 - Sources of advice and further guidance below for web links to the above policies)

30. Schools/Departments will ensure that the time commitment of staff in personal tutoring is reflected in their workload allocation model. In doing this, Schools will seek to balance the loading on individual members of staff in order that they can have meaningful contact with each of their personal tutees.

Communication, monitoring and review

31. The Senior Personal Tutor will ensure that the personal tutoring system is well communicated to students and staff, and that expectations are agreed with and supported by the Head of School/Department. A statement setting out the intentions of the School 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. It will be regularly reviewed and updated and should include:
 - What is expected of staff (for example, levels of engagement with students);
 - What is expected of students (for example, attendance at personal tutor meetings);
 - Boundaries for the role and ongoing reminder of referral pathways to support;
 - The mechanism for requesting a change of Personal Tutor.
32. The Senior Personal Tutors' Forum will facilitate communication between Senior Personal Tutors and support services. The Forum will also provide the opportunity for Senior Personal Tutors to share good practice and to facilitate the on-going development of the personal tutoring system and associated resources. The Forum will be chaired by an elected Senior Personal Tutor and will provide reports on its activities to the Student Experience Sub-Committee of the University Education Committee.
33. The Senior Personal Tutor will monitor the personal tutoring system within the School in order to enhance its effectiveness as a student support mechanism. This will include ensuring that the Personal Tutoring system is considered periodically by its Staff-Student Liaison Committee(s) and Boards of Studies.
34. The Faculty Education Committees will ensure that any Faculty or School level issues in relation to the Personal Tutoring system are addressed and will draw any issues requiring consideration at an institutional level to the attention of the Personal Tutors' Forum. Faculty Education Committees will also ensure that good practice identified is shared across the Faculty, or across the institution where appropriate, through the Senior Personal Tutors' Forum minutes and webpages.
35. The performance of academic staff with respect to Personal Tutoring will be reviewed through normal line management channels and the University's annual appraisal process, with excellence given due recognition and reward.
36. Concerns raised with regards to the implementation of the Personal Tutoring system or an individual Personal Tutor should be addressed initially to the Head of School or

the relevant Senior Personal Tutor. Where issues cannot be resolved, a complaint can be made using the University's [Procedure for Complaints](#).

Appendix 1 - Sources of advice and further guidance

Supporting Students: A Handbook for Staff

[Student and staff partnership manifesto](#)

[MySurrey website for current students](#)

[Report + Support](#)

A comprehensive range of relevant University policies aimed at helping, supporting and safeguarding students' interests can be found on the University website here:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/about/policies-and-procedures>. As an example, it includes the following policies (the list is not exhaustive):

- [*Data Protection Policy*](#)
- [*Disability Policy*](#)
- [*Dignity at Work and Study Policy*](#)
- [*Equality Policy*](#)
- [*Policy on Religion, Belief, Values and Practices*](#)
- [*Student Fee & Debt Management Policy*](#)

[Student Protection Plan](#)

[The University Quality framework:](#)

- [*University academic and student regulations*](#)
- [*Regulations for support to study*](#)
- **Relevant University [*Codes of practice*](#), including the [*Code of practice for assessment and feedback*](#)**

Appendix 2 - Student induction

Schools/Departments should ensure that each of the areas of student induction listed below is addressed. This will normally be through a combination of Welcome Week (for new students), Returning Student Induction (for continuing students), and the personal tutoring system, although delivery may be offered through other mechanisms (e.g. specific study skills units within modules, resources offered by Academic Skills and Development, etc).

Studying in general:

- Independent learning, including taking responsibility for own learning
- MySurrey Engagement Platform for Student engagement and support
- Time management and getting organised
- Writing skills for the discipline (essays, reports, assignments)
- Academic integrity and plagiarism
- Mathematical skills (where appropriate)
- Using online learning resources
- Information and digital literacy
- Laboratory skills (where appropriate)
- Health and safety (lab related and other)
- Choosing modules/programme specialisation choices
- Importance of the 'student voice' at the University
- Personal development planning (PDP)
- Library and Learning Support resources
- Disability and Neurodiversity

Regulatory matters:

- [Regulations for taught programmes](#)
- [Regulations for extenuating circumstances](#) (incl. reasonable adjustments)
- [Regulations for academic integrity](#)
- [Student disciplinary regulations](#)
- [Regulations for academic appeals](#)
- [Regulations for support to study](#) (and, where appropriate, [Regulations for fitness to practise](#))
- [Procedure for complaints](#)

Assessment and feedback:

- Preparing for assessment
- Understanding assessment modes
- Understanding grading (University's grade descriptors) and classification
- The feedback policy of the University

- Understanding feedback processes (including recognising feedback that is available)
- Alternative routes of receiving feedback (peers, Personal Tutors, support services)
- Identifying students who may need reasonable adjustments and referral to Disability and Neurodiversity

Working and studying with others:

- Teamwork principles and roles
- Resolving conflict and seeking advice
- Group and teamwork
- Diversity and internationalisation
- Communication skills
- Cultural exchange and learning

Professional development:

- Recording achievement
- Ethical awareness
- Self-awareness
- Goal-setting
- Appropriate behaviour for professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

Student support:

- [MySurrey Hive](#)
- Student Success Team
- [Academic Hives](#)
- [Guildowns Health Centre](#)
- [Centre for Wellbeing](#)
- [Employability and Careers Service](#)
- [Peer Support](#)
- [Religious Life and Belief](#)
- [University of Surrey Students' Union](#)
- [Report + Support](#)