

PERSONAL TUTORING POLICY (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)

Learning and Teaching Enhancement

POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy title	Personal Tutoring Policy
Policy owner	Learning and Teaching Enhancement
Policy lead contact	Dean for Student Success
Approving body	Academic Board
Date of approval	July 2025
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Version no.	6
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan Academic Strategy
Review interval	Two yearly

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-related 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.
- 1.3 For apprenticeship programmes, personal tutoring is normally linked to the Tripartite Review process and may be provided by specialist staff, or by members of the teaching team.
- 1.4 For students studying on programmes delivered by the University of Cumbria International College, Personal Tutoring is managed by the College, as set out in the International College Attendance Policy; this is outside the scope of this policy. When students progress from the International College to the part of their degree delivered by the University, they will be allocated a UoC Personal Tutor as provided for in this policy.
- 1.5 In all programmes, the purpose of the personal tutor role is to support students to reflect on their own progress, strengths and achievements, challenges and opportunities in a way that promotes their academic and professional progress.

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.

- 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 the understanding that while contact can be negotiated, the relationship is a professional one and as such, the amount of contact time is to be managed within reasonable limits and meetings (which may be 1-1 or in groups) should be planned in advance as much as possible. . 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 for specific purposes such as reviewing feedback on assessments or following up an action plan agreed through a Student Progress Review.. 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
- maintaining contact with students taking a formal break from study (intercalation), undertaking reassessment without attendance, or through periods of sickness absence.

- 4.6 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).

- 4.7 In the 2025/26 year, we are piloting a bespoke approach to Personal Tutoring informed by sector best practice and coaching approaches, developed for the University of Cumbria context in collaboration with the external organization GRIT. Personal tutors will be offered mentoring and a dedicated toolkit so they can choose to participate in the pilot. Following evaluation of the pilot we anticipate refining the system on the basis of staff and student experience for possible further rollout on a phased basis from the start of the 2026/27 year.
- 4.8 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 where possible and added to SITS by Programme Administration by the end of a student's second week of teaching.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 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. Consistent with professional boundaries, tutees are supported to develop their self-efficacy for addressing personal challenges and adverse events, including accessing support from relevant professionals within and beyond the University.
- 4.11 The Personal Tutor will offer opportunities to reflect on assessment feedback, to support learning through assessment and to promote future success.
- 4.12 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.)

- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 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. For 2025/26, we will pilot a new approach to record keeping; following evaluation of the pilot we will implement a single system for the start of the 2026/27 year.
- 4.17 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. There will be dedicated monitoring of the system during 2025/26 in respect of the two pilot activities (record keeping and new model pilots).

Confidentiality

- 4.18 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. The University's Safeguarding Lead is a key contact for staff or

students who need advice or support about following up a disclosure of this kind.

- 4.19 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.
- 4.20 The University recognizes that it has a duty of care to all students and that duty extends to being proactive when a member of staff has reason to believe or suspect that a student's disclosed or undisclosed health issues or disabilities are placing them at risk of serious harm. In these circumstances, Personal Tutors must seek immediate and confidential advice from the Director of Student Services or the Head of Student Support (or in their absence, the designated Safeguarding Lead). If necessary, details may be shared without naming the student in the first instance to enable the risks to be assessed and a decision made about data privacy. If a tutor is in any doubt as to whether a student may be at risk of serious harm, they must seek immediate advice. In most cases, an initial conversation with the student may be possible but this need not take place before advice is sought.

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 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

The **Dean for Student Success** is responsible for:

- Maintaining and developing this policy document and the Personal Tutor Toolkit
- Arranging regular peer-to-peer sessions and update training for personal tutors and others in comparable roles
- Overseeing the operation and evaluation of new initiatives and pilot activities
- Offering a central point to facilitate development of the Personal Tutor role

6 Related Policies and Procedures

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

7 Document Control Information

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