



Personal  
Tutor  
Policy

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## 1 Introduction and scope

- 1 All students on a higher education Programme at Pearson College are allocated a personal tutor who supports them in their academic progress throughout their studies and is a first point of contact for their pastoral support. Students will be assigned a personal tutor, wherever possible, that suits their specialism and level of study.
- 2 The role of personal tutor is central to the retention, progression and achievement of students. This policy sets out the basic expectations of personal tutors and the support provided by the College to enable them to carry out their role effectively. The Schools shall develop more detailed procedures, which shall be consistent with this policy.

## 2 Allocation of personal tutors

- 1 Student Services is responsible for allocating personal tutors to students and notifying students and personal tutors of the allocations. All students will be allocated their personal tutors immediately after registration on their Programme of Study.
- 2 In order for Student Services to make the allocations, the Deans of Schools or Programme Leaders are responsible for providing Student Services with a list of tutors available to become personal tutors, the number of tutees they can be allocated and any restrictions or recommendations that apply (e.g. whether certain tutors should be allocated students on particular Programmes).
- 3 It is, normally, expected that personal tutors remain with their personal tutees throughout the duration of their Programme of Study. However, it is acknowledged that changes to personal tutor allocation may need to be made, for example where a student transfers to a different Programme of Study or a personal tutor leaves the College. Equally, allocation may be changed to better suit a student's needs. The Head of Student Services is responsible for any re-allocation of personal tutors which may become necessary.
- 4 If a student asks for a different personal tutor, for example, because they have come into conflict with their personal tutor, the request will be considered by the Head of Student Services or their Programme Leader who will investigate the issues and re-allocate the student to another personal tutor if, at their discretion, they think that is an appropriate course of action. The Head of Student Services may also make other recommendations, if appropriate.

## 3 Role description and relationship with other services

- 1 The role description for personal tutors is set out in Appendix I.
- 2 The role of personal tutor is primarily to be an academic adviser and to assist students to meet their academic and career goals while on their chosen Programme. However, it is recognised that students' general well-being has a profound effect on their ability to engage with their studies and achieve their potential. Personal tutors, therefore, work closely with Student Services, the Talent Development team and others to ensure that students have the benefit of the support available to them both within and outside the College.
- 3 Each student has different strengths, weaknesses, goals and starting points. Personal tutors recognise this and adopt a personal, individualised approach to each of their tutees.
- 4 Personal tutors are careful not to give advice outside their area of expertise. In particular, when students have domestic or personal problems or mental health issues, it is important that personal tutors do not stray into adopting the role of counsellor or therapist, but refer

students to appropriate agencies. A list of appropriate services and agencies is maintained by Student Services and published on the OLE.

- 5 Personal tutors proactively monitor the academic progress of their tutees. They check their module results and progression status shortly after the meetings of Boards of Examiners, so that they can contact and advise tutees who have not achieved expected results. In particular, any tutee who:
  - a. has failed to attend or submit an assessment;
  - b. has failed a module or component of a module;
  - c. is at risk of not progressing to the next Stage in a timely fashion;
  - d. has choices to make regarding re-attempts or re-attendance.
- 6 Absence from classes or failure to attend appointments with personal tutors or others is an indicator of risk of non-progression. Personal tutors have an important role to play in the Pearson College attendance policy, by following up tutees who have missed classes or appointments. The purpose of follow up is to identify the reasons for absence, encourage students to attend and take steps to remove any obstacles to attendance, including referrals to other services or agencies, if required.

## 4 Meetings with tutees

- 1 The minimum College requirement for meetings between personal tutors and their tutees is as follows:
  - a. A Welcome Meeting within the first three weeks of the tutee's commencement on their Programme of Study which could be an individual meeting or a group meeting.
  - b. An individual Annual Appraisal Meeting, which shall take place in the second term of each Stage of the Programme of Study, shortly after results are published for the modules taken during the first term of that Stage.
- 2 Schools may set their own minimum requirements for more frequent meetings and are encouraged to set more frequent meetings in exceptional external circumstances which affect the whole student body.
- 3 The Annual Appraisal Meeting is the key annual meeting at which personal tutors meet their tutees in order to provide general feedback on their progress on performance and progress on their studies against their personal goals.
- 4 Personal tutors proactively contact any tutees who do not attend their Annual Appraisal Meeting, or other appointments with the personal tutor and, if necessary, escalate concerns to Student Services and/or the Programme Leader.

## 5 Record-keeping

- 1 Personal tutors keep records of the Annual Appraisal Meeting and other meetings with tutees at which significant matters are discussed, using the templates approved by the relevant School.
- 2 Personal tutors store the records of meetings with tutees securely in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy and procedures agreed between their School and Student Services.

## 6 Training

- 1 Personal tutor training will be organised at least once a year, prior to the start of the academic year. All personal tutors must attend annual training.

- 2 The personal tutor training will be organised by the Deputy Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs) in liaison with the Deans of Schools and Head of Student Services.
- 3 Personal tutor training will include:
  - a. Scope and nature of the personal tutor role
  - b. Approaches to the retention and progression of students
  - c. Role of other agencies and services
  - d. Key Pearson College policies (e.g. attendance, additional learning needs, extenuating circumstances)
  - e. Data protection and confidentiality
  - f. Record-keeping
  - g. Dealing with common scenarios
  - h. Writing references
- 4 Personal tutors will be provided annually with a Personal Tutor guidance pack, which will list and provide links to the key sources of reference regarding Pearson College policies.

## 7 References

- 1 Personal tutors are responsible for writing academic references for their tutees.
- 2 Before writing an academic reference, personal tutors must ensure that they have their tutee's written permission covering the reference in question. They should ensure that they have up to date information about the tutee, which can be obtained from Student Services and/or by asking the tutee for a copy of their C.V. or their application.
- 3 Academic references should be provided promptly, usually within five working days or any deadline set by the recipient.
- 4 Personal tutors should only provide written references and should not provide oral references or discuss their tutees on the telephone. If, exceptionally, an oral reference is necessary, the personal tutor shall follow up the conversation with an email confirming the content of the reference. Personal tutors do not give "off the record" references in any circumstances.
- 5 References must be factually accurate, fair and not misleading in the overall impression they give to the recipient. Any comments must be based on evidence and opinion should be clearly distinguished from fact.
- 6 Personal tutors must bear in mind that writers of references owe a duty of care both to the recipient and the subject of the reference. Care must be taken in relation to difficult cases, such as where the student has been found guilty of a malpractice offence, has a poor attendance record or has been involved in a disciplinary matter. As a general rule, there is no obligation on personal tutors to mention such matters unless they are directly relevant to the duty of care owed to the recipient of the reference. This could arise where the reference is required for a job involving a high degree of trust and integrity.
- 7 Personal tutors should seek the advice of the College Data Protection Officer in difficult cases, or if they are specifically asked questions about malpractice or disciplinary matters.
- 8 Under Data Protection law, tutees are entitled to ask for a copy of any references written about them. Personal tutors must therefore ensure that copies of all references are forwarded to Student Services to be kept on the student's file. Any requests from students to see copies of personal information kept by the College (including references) should be forwarded to the Data Protection Officer.

## 8 Apprentices

- 1 Students on degree apprenticeship programmes will be allocated a personal tutor in accordance with this policy.
- 2 The personal tutor for degree apprentices also acts as their Academic Mentor.

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