

PERSONAL TUTORING

Definition

At Heriot-Watt University, the term 'personal tutoring' describes the scheme whereby a member of academic staff is assigned to an individual student to provide the first point of contact for those who require advice or assistance on both academic and non-academic matters (with advice on referral to professional service sections where relevant for non-academic matters).

Personal Tutoring is one element of the University's student support system.

Expectation

All students must be assigned a named member of academic staff as their personal tutor, whom they can contact in relation to a range of academic or pastoral matters.

Responsibilities of the Personal Tutor

- To advise tutees of their availability. For campus based students, personal tutors should offer times for face to face meetings, for example, during office hours or by appointment.
- To be pro-active in making contact with students, having particular regard for differing degrees of need and those making the biggest transition, for example: new undergraduate entrants; those moving from one environment/country to another; and those perceived to be at risk of disengaging from their studies through absence or poor performance in assessments.
- To be pro-active in making contact with students at critical points, for example: at the point of entry, with induction and setting up lines of communication; during the initial period of studying in a new environment; if poor performance in assessments is a concern; or where personal difficulties are highlighted (with advice on referral to professional service sections).
- To be aware of and advise tutees on further relevant sources of professional advice and information available within the University. Tutees who have a disability, including medical or mental health conditions or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, should be referred to the relevant section where there is expertise, such as Student Wellbeing Services on Edinburgh Campus (which includes the Disability and Counselling Services); a Student Advisor (SBC, Malaysia and Dubai Campuses), the Support Manager at Orkney Campus or the designated School Disability Contact. Contact information can be found on the [Health and Wellbeing](#) webpages.

Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers

This briefing paper has been produced by Student Wellbeing Services and is one of a series related to Learning and Teaching. The briefing papers aim to provide a concise, informative overview of key policies, and include links to relevant procedures and templates.

Training and Guidance for Personal Tutors

- Training is mandatory for all staff in the personal tutor role.
- The *Supporting Our Students* SharePoint site provides a global resource for all personal tutors at Heriot-Watt and includes such information as suggested discussion topics and relevant University policies.
- Personal Tutors can also consult the *Quick Referral Guide* for their campus.

Personal Tutor and Tutee Contact Points

A contact point is an occasion where the personal tutor initiates a conversation or consultation with a tutee, and these take place at regular intervals throughout the academic year. This may be a face-to-face meeting, an online meeting via MS Teams, an email exchange or a phone conversation. Personal tutors can judge the appropriate contact, for example, whether an email check in is sufficient, or whether a more in depth online or face to face discussion is required. The latter would be the case where there are particular concerns about a student. Contact points take place at the following times in the September and January Semesters:

- Start of semester
- Consolidation week
- Teaching Week 10.

Tutees can be invited to other meetings throughout the year and may request meetings at other times if they have concerns; they don't have to wait until the next scheduled meeting.

References and Further Information

Contact: K.MacAskill@hw.wc.uk

Personal Tutor SharePoint Site: Supporting Our Students: [Supporting Our Students - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Quick Referral Guides for Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia are available on [STAFF RESOURCES \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Learning and Teaching Policies and Procedures: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm>