

THE PERSONAL TUTOR SYSTEM

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1. Introduction

The University sees the student as the central focus of its concerns. Students require help and support in a variety of ways, each requiring a special expertise. One aspect is the support which students need in coping with their studies; another is their need for personal, social and career development. While acknowledging that the role of the Counsellors and of other professional Student Affairs staff is well defined and active in the University, the University's view is that the role of academic staff in relation to student well-being is, nonetheless, quite considerable.

By virtue of their regular contact with students, academic staff will be aware of many issues which have caused a student to be unhappy or uncertain and for which they may need help and support. Consequently, from the very beginning of the University, Academic Council adopted the view that personal tutoring is an essential component of academic staff's commitment, and that the system should encompass all students and all academic staff of the University. The formal title given to this role is 'personal tutor'. Students who are assigned to a personal tutor are referred to as 'tutees'. Overall responsibility for the personal tutor system rests with the Director of Student Affairs, with appropriate support from, and liaison with the Registry, programme boards and faculty administrative staff.

2. Allocation of Personal Tutors

- 2.1 Before the beginning of September each year, each Programme Board will forward to the Registry the names of the personal tutors to be allocated to incoming new students, together with any particular requirements the Programme Board may wish to specify (e.g. specific tutors for mature, transfer or international students). The Programme Board, at the same time, will also inform the Registry of any foreseeable changes in the allocation of personal tutors to returning students.
- 2.2 The Registry will, not less than ten days before registration, send the lists of tutors and tutees to the Programme Boards and the Director of Student Affairs, and at the same time will also send the relevant lists to all personal tutors of new full-time undergraduate students. Any subsequent amendments to these lists will also be circulated in the same way.
- 2.3 The names of all personal tutors will be posted on the student portal pages and also on the computerised class list system
- 2.4 The tutee/personal tutor ratio will vary but normally will be in the range 4:1 to 30:1. Not more than 15 full-time first-year undergraduates will be assigned to any personal tutor.
- 2.5 All academic staff, irrespective of grade, will participate in the scheme.

- 2.6 Students may change personal tutors at any time but only with the agreement of the Chairperson of the Programme Board, who will inform the Registry in each case.

3. Duties of Personal Tutors

- 3.1 Generally, personal tutors will keep in close touch with their tutees and will make themselves available for consultation on academic and related matters. This is particularly important during the first year of the students' course of studies, when many problems of transition and choice tend to emerge.
- 3.2 All matters arising from the personal tutoring role should be treated with the strictest confidence. No formal reports on tutees should be made or expected.
- 3.3 The area of concern of the personal tutor is primarily academic but can also lead to questions relating to the personal, social or career development of the student. Personal tutors should refer students to the appropriate University personnel (e.g. Counsellors) as deemed necessary. This is particularly important in cases where the student is considering terminating his or her studies or changing programmes.
- 3.4 During the orientation programme each personal tutor will meet his or her group of tutees for an introductory group meeting.
- 3.5 Personal tutors will arrange to meet their tutees individually at least at the following stages in their programme of studies:
- 3.5.1 during the first semester of the first year;
 - 3.5.2 during the second semester of the first year;
 - 3.5.3 at least once during each subsequent year of study.
- 3.6 It is within the discretion of each Programme Board to decide whether to maintain the Personal Tutor system for the entire duration of a programme of study, or to replace it at the end of the first year of study with a Year Tutor system, whereby one member of academic staff will act as Year Tutor for the entire year group
- 3.7 Each programme board will, at its first meeting each year following the commencement of the second semester, review the working of the personal tutor system. At one of its meetings during each second semester the Standing Committee of Academic Council will discuss the working of the personal tutor system, such discussion being based on the minutes of the relevant programme board meetings.