UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**TAUGHT STUDENT EDUCATION BOARD**

**Personal Tutoring Policy**

*This paper provides a summary of proposals arising from the work of the Personal Tutoring Task and Finish Group, convened over the 2017/18 session in response to priorities identified by the Inclusion and Engagement Strategy Group. At its meeting in June 2018 TSEB agreed the updated principles relating to Personal Tutoring and endorsed the recommendations for further development.*

**Background**

Personal Tutoring is about providing pro-active academic support to students in the form of an academic partnership with mutual expectations. Personal Tutoring is also at the heart of Leeds for Life: *‘It’s about inspiring students to get the most out of their academic and co-curricular experiences and build on their time studying at the University of Leeds. We want our students to be able to recognise the value of everything they have done at university and be at ease articulating this clearly and confidently.’*

The biggest challenges to delivering this vision at Leeds are:

1. inconsistency in delivery;
2. a perceived lack of understanding as to the value of the role of personal tutors (both on the part of the tutee and the tutor);
3. the feedback from students, through surveys and anecdotally, that it is a depersonalised experience.

A recent report on personal tutoring, *What Works 2* (2017), stresses the need for proactive, personalised interventions that are mainstream, ongoing, monitored and followed up with an holistic approach. As such the report argues that personal tutoring must be:

• a supportive personal relationship;

• developmental;

• intentionally designed;

• proactive and structured;

• consistent and equally available to all students;

• evaluated and continually enhanced.

The Personal Tutoring Task and Finish Group was set up to re-examine the Leeds approach to personal tutoring in light of this research, and with additional consideration of feedback harnessed from student surveys and local activity that has sought to capture examples of good practice, whilst also acknowledging changes within competitor provision and TEF (the academic support metric has a clear link to personal tutoring). Members of the Group also attended the LUU Education Assembly and spoke to colleagues associated with Personal Tutoring within Leeds and across the sector.

The Group understood and accepted that differences in academic department structures, resources and capacity will influence mechanisms for providing academic and personal support, and that advocating a uniform approach may be inappropriate or counter-productive. However, it is necessary to provide pastoral and academic support services to all taught students, underscored by an agreed set of principles and expectations, in a consistent and equitable way. The emphasis of this approach is on the parity and impact of the personal and academic tutoring provided rather than defining prescriptive role descriptions and structures.

The following revised framework for Personal Tutoring at Leeds is agreed from June 2018:

**Principles**

The University’s values, and our commitment to the Leeds Partnership and the ethos of Leeds for Life, underpin all aspects of Personal Tutoring. The principles by which Personal Tutoring operates are:

1. to foster a supportive and effective academic partnership;
2. to support the academic, personal and professional development of students;
3. to ensure that the Personal Tutoring system is consistent, equitable and available to all taught students, and based on regular, scheduled meetings;
4. to be academically led with the Personal Tutor playing a distinctive core role in supporting a student’s general academic and personal development.

These principles are supported by the following expectations:

* All taught students are entitled to ***proactive*** **academic support** from a named member of academic staff.
* Students have an active role to play in the process.
* Personal Tutors work in conjunction with the full range of professional services and signpost these services to students.

Resource Issues

* Personal Tutoring must be resourced and recognised in workload models
* All Personal tutors must receive appropriate introductory and refresher training. This will be co-ordinated by Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL) and could be delivered centrally or locally and/or online, supported through an institutional network of Personal Tutor leads
* Personal Tutoring must be recognised and rewarded in promotion and reviews as part of normal academic practice
* Personal Tutoring processes at school/division/unit level must be reviewed on a regular basis as part of existing QA processes (e.g. ASRs, SAERs) and capture the student voice (e.g. included as a standing item on SSF agendas or on the School Action Plan)

**Initiatives and Recommendations**

A subset of the current working group has continued work to draft details relating to the recommendations below for consultation with key stakeholders:

* The University produces a guide to personal tutoring (see Appendix A)
* Using an agreed template, Schools/Divisions/Units produce a brief student facing document outlining the norms and expectations of their personal tutoring systems , which will include such information as (1) the role of the tutee, (2) key contacts, (3) how change procedures are managed, (4) what to do in the case of issues arising.
* Specific guidance/structures for Joint Honours, multidisciplinary, PGT, incoming study abroad, and work placement students is considered.
* In each School/Division/Unit, a co-ordinating academic Personal Tutor lead is identified to work in partnership with a lead from the Student Education Service
* The current Leeds for Life meetings/timetable agenda is revisited to take account of the refreshed policy
* A Personal Tutor Lead network (PTLN) is established
* A Director of Personal Tutoring role at Faculty level is considered, and senior academic and service leads are identified at institutional level

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June 2018

**Appendix A: Indicative Headlines for University Guide on Personal Tutoring**

**Who are personal tutors?**

Your personal tutor is an academic member of staff in your department – this could be a teaching fellow, lecturer or professor. Your personal tutor will teach, undertake research in their field and will sometimes also have responsibility within departments or faculties for other aspects of learning and teaching, such as admissions, assessment or equality and diversity.

**What can I expect from my personal tutor?**

* Help with the transition to Leeds/your studies or to expectations of different levels of study
* Discussion and review of your academic progress
* Signposting to support contacts and services
* Encouragement with developing and enhancing your skills
* Regular contact

**Why do I have a personal tutor?**

A personal tutor is an important point of contact within your academic department: they will understand the university, and particularly the school that you are studying in.

Your personal tutor will play an important role in supporting your academic and personal development during your time at Leeds.

**How will I meet my personal tutor?**

* You will be allocated a personal tutor by your school/division/unit
* Your Personal Tutor will contact you to arrange a meeting
* Leeds for Life is the system to record questions/issues before and after the meeting to help build a living CVYour Personal Tutor will contact you at regular points in the academic year to discuss progress

**FAQs**

1. What is Leeds*for*Life and how does it connect with personal tutoring?
2. Can I change my personal tutor?
3. What if my personal tutor doesn’t contact me?
4. Can my personal tutor provide me with a work or academic reference?
5. Will I have the same personal tutor throughout my time at Leeds?
6. I have a personal or academic issue that I don’t want to talk to my personal tutor about – who/where else can I access support from?
7. If my personal tutor isn’t fulfilling the principles of the Personal Tutoring policy, what can I do?

**Useful Contacts**

Student Counselling & Wellbeing

Student Careers

LUU

Student Services Centre

International Office

Study Abroad Office