



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

SECRETARIAT

ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Student Support and Tutoring Policy
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	<p>The policy applies to all academic and support staff.</p> <p>The policy sets out a framework for a network of support for all undergraduate and postgraduate students.</p>
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Academic Board originally approved the policy on 10 December 2008 and revised it on 28 March 2012, 16 January 2013 and 24 June 2014
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	Deputy Vice Chancellor – Teaching Quality and the Student Experience
STAFF AND STUDENTS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	<p>The policy was originally considered and developed by members of the Student Life Working Group, Academic College and Student Experience Committee. The policy is currently overseen by the Student Experience Committee.</p> <p>There are student representatives on the Graduate Committee, Student Experience Committee and Academic Board which considered the revised policy.</p>
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 10 December 2008. Latest revisions approved by Academic Board on 14 October 2009, 28 March 2012, 16 January 2013 and 24 June 2014
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	10 December 2008 with subsequent revisions circulated to key members of staff.
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The policy has been circulated to relevant staff shortly after each Academic Board approval and is currently available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	To be reviewed annually.
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to the Student Experience Committee.
DATE:	16 January 2013
	Revised and approved 24 June 2014

Student Support and Tutoring – Personal Tutors



Principles

The defining principle of the University's Student Support and Tutoring Policy is that all students on taught programmes, including postgraduates, will be assigned a named member of academic staff who is responsible for general academic, pastoral and career support throughout the entirety of their programme. This person will be referred to as the student's Personal Tutor. The Personal Tutor may be directly involved in teaching the student, however, the role of the Personal Tutor should be seen as independent from their teaching responsibilities.

In addition, the University advocates the following principles:

- student support is a collective responsibility and every member of academic staff is expected to be a personal tutor;
- no student seeking help from any member of staff should be unreasonably refused or rebuffed;
- all support should be directed towards securing the students' best interests;
- personal tutoring is considered to be a two-way, collaborative relationship whereby students are expected to invest time and effort into making it a success in the same way as staff are.

Student engagement with Personal Tutors is as important as schools making the support available. The University will introduce the personal tutor role to students through its pre-arrival communications. Schools should complement this before the start of term and during the first few weeks, such as through Getting Started. Personal tutoring will also be explicit in the student charter and other official documentation.

Consistency of Implementation

In order to ensure that all students have equal access to the support they need, and in particular that first year students¹ are made to feel comfortable with their study, it is important that all Colleges and Schools adopt the same basic framework for Personal Tutors and endorse the same underlying principles. However, this policy should not be seen as rigid in respect of any variation to suit local need e.g. the type of provision established for distance learners.

For example, the content of tutoring sessions may well vary according to the demands of the subject of the programme, and their number and timing may well vary according to the organisation of the programme, its size and coherence. Schools may wish to supplement its level of academic support with year tutors or other local variations.

Postgraduate Taught Students

Postgraduate taught students should be made to feel comfortable with their new level of study, including the different skills set required to undertake a postgraduate programme. Personal Tutors of postgraduate students should familiarise themselves with available induction and training programmes, including those offered by the Graduate School. In addition, Personal Tutors should seek to encourage student awareness and participation in the range of Graduate School activities and initiatives designed to facilitate a supportive postgraduate culture, such as the annual Postgraduate Conference and postgraduate student seminars.

Support for research students is articulated in the University's policy on research student supervision.

Personal Tutor Role

The Personal Tutor's primary business within this support system is to develop a knowledge and engaged understanding of a specific number of students, and to be the first line contact for them in terms of academic advice, careers support and related matters. Key tutor liaison channels will be with the programme leaders, module co-ordinators (and possibly year tutors), careers and employability advisors and the student advisors in Student Services.

¹ The term 'first year students' includes all students attending the University for the first time, including Direct Entry Students and postgraduate students.

The role of Personal Tutor is to provide academic guidance, pastoral care, careers guidance and support to students within their tutor group. This includes a responsibility to:

- help their students settle into the University and develop their awareness of higher level study
- support students to identify where their strengths and weaknesses are in terms of academic study skills and take up opportunities to develop these, such as through learning development workshops offered by The Library or the English Language Centre;
- support students to reflect holistically on the various pieces of feedback they have received formally and informally on assessed work, and identify steps they can take to improve their performance in future assessments and move into the next grade band (i.e. from a 2:2 to a 2:1).
- support students to consider their career ambitions and how they can make the most of the support on offer to achieve those ambitions.
- encourage students to engage with extra-curricular opportunities beyond their programme to develop transferable skills, build social networks and contribute to the development of the university;
- hold regular progress meetings to discuss the progress of each student
- offer an accessible point of contact for queries about academic or professional progress
- provide a point of referral to appropriate support services, where required
- on notification of a tutee's non-attendance seek to discuss the issue with the student

Personal Tutors will be assigned to a group of students prior to enrolment, usually soon after A-Level results day for undergraduates starting in September, and will stay with them for the length of the programme. Personal Tutors will be expected to establish contact with their new tutees prior to the start of their programme so that students know a friendly face upon arrival at university. This will be followed up with an introductory group meeting in the first week where the focus should be on supporting students to settle in and feel part of the University community.

Personal Tutors will hold at least one individual meeting and two tutorial group meetings in term one and term two of each academic year, in addition to the first introductory meeting during the first week. Group tutorials will be timetabled as standard across the University.

Personal Tutors will, in agreement with their tutees, keep a record of the dates and nature of meetings.

Support for Personal Tutors

The Personal Tutor role is recognised by the as an important one that requires dedicated time and support. Colleges and Schools are expected to allocate sufficient hours as part of the academic workload planning model and reflect the role in job descriptions when recruiting staff. Indicatively, schools should allocate a minimum of 12 – 16 hours per group of 8-12 students respectively plus 2 additional hours for any group of first year students to use for introductory meetings. For example if a tutor had a three undergraduate groups of 8 students, one group at each level, they would be allocated 38 hours per year.

The coordination and development of Personal Tutors is the responsibility of the Senior Tutor in each School, or each division where a School is large and operates in divisions. Senior Tutors will be appointed by Heads of School and will themselves have this commitment recognised as part of their role.

The University, through the Educational Development and Enhancement Unit (EDEU), will support Senior Tutors in their role and will work via Senior Tutors to develop the personal tutoring system as a whole. EDEU will also provide support in the form of resources, training and events directly to Personal Tutors across the University.

All staff who are new to the Personal Tutor role are expected to engage with a minimum amount of training before taking on the role and to engage with refresher sessions every three years. This is to ensure the currency of Personal Tutors' knowledge on central support services, university policy and support available.

Central student support services, such as the Advice Service, Careers & Employability, Accommodation and Students' Union services, will ensure clear and well promoted channels of communication for Personal Tutors to seek advice or support.

Implementation

Each Head of School has ultimate responsibility for ensuring an excellent student experience of personal tutoring in their school. This is likely to be delivered in practice by Senior Tutors with the support of EDEU and College Directors of Education and Students.

A Senior Tutors Forum will provide a platform for support and for ensuring the delivery of this policy. The Senior Tutors Forum will report regularly to the Student Experience Committee on progress towards developing and maintaining personal tutor support that aligns with this policy.

Review

The Student Experience Committee will have responsibility for the annual on-going review and writing an annual report on the University wide execution of the Student Support and Tutoring Policy. This report will be formally discussed and responded to by College Boards. This will be informed by students' evaluation of personal tutor support through the New Starters Survey, the Level 1 & 2 Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey as well as on-going dialogue with Student Reps.