

The Personal Tutor System at Edge Hill University

Edge Hill University is committed to high quality guidance and support for all students. This consists of central support through Student and Learning Services, support from academic staff through teaching and assessment and through the role and functions of the Personal Tutor system.

Personal Tutors are central to aspects of academic and pastoral support and guidance and are a key interface with central services for students. They are the point of regular contact for students within an organised system in departments/areas within each Faculty.

Edge Hill University provides a well-planned, monitored and evaluated Personal Tutor system which impacts upon students' sense of belonging, cohort identity, personal development and academic success. It is expected that students will participate in planned engagements with tutors as part of taking responsibility for their own learning.

Principles

The Personal Tutor system is a fundamental element of a network of support services and is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Respect for every student as an active learner and an individual with their own learning needs
2. A shared responsibility for each student's learning, development and achievement
3. Support for the induction of students into the academic community and their transition through academic study
4. Recognition of the importance of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion.

Quality Management and Enhancement

As well as the generic staff/student guides each department/area will produce documentation on their local implementation of the Personal Tutor system. These arrangements will be subject to annual review and considered in relation to student feedback, tutors' reflection and evaluation processes. All personal tutors will undertake a mandatory training session as part of the Edge Hill University staff induction and will engage in continuing staff development relevant to the personal tutor role. Briefings and professional development support will be available via the Staff Development and Teaching and Learning Development Units.

Faculties will monitor, evaluate and review the personal tutor system annually, incorporating student and staff feedback. Faculties will engage in the enhancement and dissemination of good practice related to the personal tutor role. This information will be systematically reported to the appropriate Edge Hill University committee and used to inform the further development of the Personal Tutor system.

Code of Practice for the Personal Tutoring System at Edge Hill University

The Code of Practice for Personal Tutoring provides clear expectations on behalf of both the student and the personal tutor. A successful Personal Tutoring system is based on a shared responsibility between the student and the personal tutor, supported by the department/area, Faculty and the University.

The role of the Personal Tutor is considered to be of primary importance and represents a 'stable point of reference' and an 'anchor' for the student during their university experience. The role is key to the student's successful transition into Higher Education and throughout their programme of study to graduation and employment. The role is acknowledged to be influential in enhancing the student experience, supporting the process of induction and positively impacting on retention, achievement and student satisfaction. The Personal Tutor role is envisaged to be inclusive providing ongoing support and challenge with academic and pastoral issues, and acts as a single point of referral and communication with the wider university community.

It is required that:

- a) the system of personal tutoring and the role of the personal tutor will be clearly defined, for students, in the student programme handbook
- b) it is a shared responsibility for both the student and their personal tutor to proactively engage with the personal tutor process and to communicate effectively
- c) the personal tutor will provide general guidance on academic and support issues, and will signpost or refer the student to other sources of advice and guidance
- d) the student will be given the name and contact details of their personal tutor during the initial induction period or within two weeks of enrolment for continuing students
- e) if the personal tutor is absent, departments/ areas will provide alternative points of contact and information as appropriate
- f) Personal tutors and student(s) will be timetabled a minimum of 4 meetings in year 1 with a further two meetings each, in years 2 and 3. These will be distributed throughout the academic year. It is the student's responsibility to attend and to participate. Written records will be maintained.
- g) in exceptional circumstances, if either the student or the personal tutor requests a change, the department/ area will have a clear procedure for dealing with this.

During the working week, your personal tutor will respond to informal emails and telephone enquiries normally within two working days. Each department / area/ Faculty will have a system in place to address urgent issues.

Personal Tutor role and responsibilities:

STUDENTS:

- ensure that the name and contact details of the personal tutor have been noted
- keep in regular contact with your personal tutor and attend all scheduled meetings
- notify your personal tutor in the event of illness and non-attendance at University
- notify your personal tutor where there are academic or personal/medical problems which are affecting attendance or impacting on academic progress
- contact your personal tutor immediately if performance in forthcoming examinations or assessments is going to be affected by ill health or other extenuating circumstances

PERSONAL TUTOR

Role

- Provide academic advice, guidance and support and assist students with their academic development and achievement
- support student transition
- act as a first port of call for pastoral, professional and/ or academic concerns or advice
- point students towards other sources of more specific support – academic, professional and pastoral
- where personal tutoring is directly linked to the PDP system, facilitate personal development and achievement as part of a structured process
- be acquainted with the services that are available within the University and the processes and procedures relevant to student progression
- respect the student's right to confidentiality, only disclosing information with the student's consent
- write references when required

Responsibilities

- Meet with students initially within the first two weeks of the programme
- provide contact details (e-mail address, extension number, availability)
- outline schedule of formal meetings with students
- maintain a record of formal meetings
- provide academic support
- signpost pastoral support and act as a gateway for referral to other support areas
- engage with personal tutor development/ training
- monitor student progression particularly around identified transition points