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**Office/department responsible:** Registry Department

**Approved by:** Dr. Mahmoud Allam – President of The Knowledge Hub Universities

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## Introduction

This policy document states the minimum entitlement to personal tutorial support of on-campus undergraduate students. It is expected that this will be reflected in the personal tutoring for independent distance learning students, largely through online communication.

It is considered that personal tutoring can play a significant role in enhancing student experience and success. It provides focused individual support which will have significant impact on student retention, progression and achievement. It is recognised that students have individual needs and that the nuances of the personal tutorial may vary with individual interactions. However, this document sets out the entitlement of students in respect of personal tutoring at the Coventry University Branch at The Knowledge Hub (CU Branch at TKH).

A structured and focused approach to personal tutoring should contribute effectively to:

- student achievement and fulfilling of individual potential;
- the academic, personal, professional and career development of students and graduates;
- engagement with programmes;
- sense of programme/cohort identity and a deepening academic relationship between students and Programme/School/University;
- awareness of and engagement with the development opportunities through CU Branch at TKH Student Support and wider extra-curricular activities.

## Purpose of Personal Tutorials

1. All students on taught programmes, at undergraduate level will be allocated a personal tutor by the Head of School. This must be a member of academic staff within their School. The tutor may be a full-time permanent member of staff. The expectation is that tutors may be allocated for the whole of a student's programme of study or for one year at a time, e.g. where tutors are linked to year-groups.

The role of a personal tutor is to provide advice and support to the student in respect of academic matters. The tutor is not expected to provide advice and support in respect of purely personal matters (e.g. finance, relationships, mental health) but should help to address the implications of such issues for their academic work (e.g. where the student may need an extension to a deadline or to submit an extenuating circumstances application to an assessment board) and should be able to direct students to the most appropriate form of specialist help available at CU Branch at TKH.

The personal tutor is not a careers adviser and should direct students to the Careers Service as appropriate; however, the tutor is expected to encourage the students to think in terms of their long-term prospects/progression into further study and/or the work place at the earliest opportunity.

2. It is further recognised that personal tutoring is not given in isolation but is an integral part of programme delivery from induction to post-graduation. The role will include reference to student data and liaison with members of staff who have direct or indirect contact with the students (e.g. module leaders/tutors, programme leaders, the Registry, etc)

### **Expectations of the Personal Tutor**

1. Personal tutors are expected to support students in respect of generic personal or academic matters as they relate to retention, progression between stages, levels of engagement, achievement and aspirations. This is likely include:
  - discussion of data relating to the above with a view to improvement and fulfilling of potential;
  - identifying personal strengths and interests with a view to selecting modules in the next year and in relation to future progression and aspiration (e.g. graduate-level employment, further study);
  - understanding and addressing areas for development;
  - Identifying opportunities available for further enhancement and development.

This is not intended to replace guidance on these matters within modules, but rather to help students grasp the principles of these challenges. Students who raise specific problems (such as understanding a particular theory or applying a technique, or explanation of feedback) will be referred to the module leader or module tutor by the personal tutor.

2. Each student has the following entitlement to personal tutorial support:
  - for new students an introductory meeting at the start of the academic year as a part of the ongoing induction process to check understanding of and to reinforce key features of university study already explored such as future aspirations in terms of employment and/or further study;
  - for returning students a meeting at the start of the academic year to make students aware of key features of the year ahead and any 'step- change' in the challenges they are likely to face. This should include discussion where necessary of the student's assessment performance to date and choice of modules for the New Year. Aspirations and progression will be a feature of the discussions with all students, especially final year students;
  - a 'progress check' meeting, normally early in the first semester, to ensure that new students are settled. This meeting is likely to include reference to data available on the student including attendance monitoring and any early assessment data. a meeting at an appropriate point in the second semester to check again on progress, again referring to any data on assessment or attendance available, and to offer over-arching advice on the basis of any feedback which the student may have received on their coursework to date;
  - a meeting towards the end of the end of the academic year to discuss further performance data, future progression (next stage of study or future employment) and issues of concern relating to end-of-year assessments, and, where applicable, to help tutees identify optional modules for the following year.

It may be appropriate for some of this support to be offered in small groups which should not exceed 10 students: this can also help students to develop peer-group support and cohort identity. However, other support may be given individually. Guideline times are 1 hour for group meetings and 30 minutes for one-to-one meetings.

3. Personal tutors should also respond to queries from their tutees on an *ad hoc* basis in person or by phone or email. It may be that tutees perceive that there is a crisis and some responsiveness is needed. However, there has to be some management of expectations on the part of the tutors. In this respect, good practice includes:
  - An advertised 'office hour' at least once a fortnight which students can attend. This may be on a regular day and time or may be notified to tutees on a weekly basis by email or through Moodle;
  - a clear process for making an appointment;
  - responding to emails or phone calls within a reasonable timescale (normally within 72 hours);
  - Periodic emails to tutees to ask how they are getting on and encourage them to contact the tutor with any problems as they arise.
4. These guidelines should be reproduced in all programme handbooks together with any additional information which the School wishes to provide.

### Expectations of the Students

1. Students are asked to make constructive use of the personal tutorial system and to be realistic in the demands they make on their tutors. To ensure that they take advantage of the tutorial provision they should:
  - attend the personal tutorial meetings organised for them at fixed points during the semester and engage with the guidance given. In many instances, students may be asked to prepare for tutorial sessions gathering data on assessment or formulating specific questions;
  - be proactive in seeking help when necessary before a problem becomes a crisis;To ensure that their demands on their tutors are realistic they should:
  - note the guidelines above, and not expect personal tutors to take on a support role which is provided for elsewhere in CU Branch at TKH by specialist services;
  - respect the parameters for contacting their tutors outlined above: tutors cannot be 'on call' 24/7

Students are also asked to give feedback on the tutorial system through the relevant Student-Staff Liaison Committee so that the process can be improved for future years.

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**Review Date:** September 2020

**\*\*\*Disclaimer:** The Knowledge Hub Universities reviews the policies on regular basis if needed for work flow and business purposes.

<b>Version Log</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature of the President of TKH</b>
Version 1 (V.1)		