



Edge Hill  
University

# Staff Guide to Personal Tutoring

**2018/19**

# Personal Tutoring at Edge Hill University

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The Undergraduate Framework document (The Personal Tutor System at Edge Hill University – currently under full review at the time of printing) identifies the Personal Tutoring system as *‘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’*.

The University is an adult learning community where it is expected that students’ will show a considerable degree of independence - to take responsibility for their studies and conduct of their own affairs. Students, in their turn, want to be treated as adults and to be seen as self-sufficient. Many, however, are quite young and away from home for the first time. They are also coping with new styles of learning and teaching without the level of supervision and guidance that they have been used to at school.

There are two distinct and equally important aspects to the role:

**1. Pastoral guidance and referral for students to ensure appropriate and rapid resolution of problems and smooth transitions.**

The pastoral side of the Personal Tutor role can often be simply a friendly conversation at the start of the meeting. By asking students how they are doing, finding out a bit about them and having that informal chat it is likely that the tutor can build trust and good relationships with their tutees. In this way, if any major issues do arise your students will feel comfortable talking to you about them before problems escalate. This requires the Personal Tutor to understand the support that is available through Student and Learning Services and become skilled in knowing how and when to deal with student problems. Personal Tutors also act as advocates for students to help them navigate the complexities of the university systems.

**2. Academic guidance to enable students to make the most of their time at EHU and fully develop their ‘personal capital’.**

In many ways this is the most critical part of our role to challenge students to make the most of their abilities- so that their university experience is truly transformative.

This guide outlines the University’s minimum requirements for group and individual tutorial meetings in each year of a three-year undergraduate degree course and advises on the subjects to be discussed in each of the meetings.

It may be that you already exceed this provision, or that you will need to have more contact with students depending on their individual circumstances. There are also additional specialised requirements that Faculties and Departments/Areas will add. A companion *Student Guide* should be customised by Faculties and Departments/Areas to reflect these additional specialised aspects.

Personal Tutors face a diverse set of challenges from students, and may feel unprepared for some aspects of the role. Training needs should be discussed at Performance Review and will be collated in faculties. Training sessions responding to these needs will be devised by the Dean of CLT and Director of Student Services.

Since the role of the Personal Tutor is both complex and vital in assisting our students to gain the most from university experience, it will be discussed during induction for new staff and be part of the development offered to staff in their first year of teaching.

## The Role of a Personal Tutor

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The role of the Personal Tutor is of primary importance for the long-term success of our students and represents a 'stable point of reference' and an 'anchor' for the student during their university experience which enhances students' sense of belonging and cohort identity and assists them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Personal Tutors are influential in enhancing the student experience, supporting the process of induction and positively impacting on retention, achievement and student satisfaction.

However, personal tutoring should not just be about giving students the opportunity to talk if they have a problem, but to encourage them to develop their academic and professional skills. Often students do not have the oversight of their progression to understand what skills they need to develop in order to improve their academic performance, or a good understanding of where their degree can take them in the future. Using Personal Tutor sessions as a development tool is a far more rewarding experience for students and makes the process more meaningful for them. Tutors should seek to provide their tutees with a developmental framework and targeted support. This should serve to aid the student's progression as they move through their programme, to include employability, to support them to take advantage of opportunities to develop work experience and strong work-related graduate attributes.

### Key foci of the tutor role are:

- The student's successful **transition** into Higher Education, their **induction** into a new and strange community of practice and throughout their programme of study to graduation and employment.
- Provide **advice** for module and course choice,
- To help students navigate through the **feedback** they receive and work with them to produce **personal development plans** (PDP) to improve their attainment.
- Reviewing **academic progress**, attendance, engagement and achievement across programme, action planning.
- Discussing **employability** to enable students to identify and articulate their personal capital, their skills, abilities and attitudes that affect their future development. This should also

explore opportunities within and outside EHU and action planning related to the PDP and portfolio development.

Students have indicated that their preferred medium of communication is through face to face meetings and email communications. Phone calls and university texts may be used as required. Students stated that they did not consider social media an appropriate tool for this activity.

The University standard response time for emails is 2 working days. Whilst responding this quickly can be a challenging at sometimes of the academic year, so long as an initial response is offered to the student to acknowledge their email, a more in-depth response can be addressed as soon as is possible for the tutor.

## Principles

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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 each stage of their academic study
4. Recognition of the importance of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion.

## Expectations of the University

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- To provide appropriate staff development to all Personal Tutors.
- To set clear expectations of Personal Tutors.
- To arrange cover within Faculties to accommodate unanticipated absence (such as sickness) and ensure tutees have access to other staff members as appropriate.
- Faculties (via line managers) will ensure that the workload of all Personal Tutors is monitored and reasonable with consideration given to the other responsibilities expected of Tutors.
- To invest in suitable IT systems to support the role, for example to enable accurate tracking of each individual student's achievement, attendance and engagement.

# Expectations of the Personal Tutor

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## ***Specific Expectations of a Personal Tutor***

- Provide academic advice, guidance and support and assist students with their academic development and achievement.
- Provide guidance to support students' employability development and encourage them to take advantage of all opportunities open to them through their university career.
- Support student induction and transition into university and between academic levels.
- Where Personal Tutoring is directly linked to the PDP system, facilitate personal development and achievement as part of a structured process.
- 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.
- 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 of the Personal Tutor***

- Meet with students as per the attached programme and follow University protocols.
- Provide contact details (e-mail address, extension number, availability).
- Outline schedule of formal meetings with students, using a framework of topics as appropriate).
- Maintain a record of formal meetings.
- Provide academic support.
- Signpost pastoral support and act as a gateway for referral to other support areas.
- Positively engage with personal tutor development/ training.

## ***Support and Guidance for Personal Tutors***

In addition to following advice and guidance in this booklet, one of the best ways to prepare for the role of Personal Tutor is to talk to your colleagues. They have a wealth of information and advice to help you smoothly integrate into the role so that both you and your students will enjoy and get the most out of the experience.

## ***Helping students in difficulty***

While a large part of your role as a Personal Tutor will be concerned with the overall wellbeing and development of your tutees, there will be times when some of them will experience difficulty. The

better the relationship you build with your tutees, the earlier and more comfortable they will feel approaching you if they do run into problems. However, it is important for tutors to know the boundaries and as such be aware of and know the referral points to access help and support from other referral services for themselves and in order to effectively support their tutees.

### ***Common Problems***

While much of a Personal Tutor's job is reactive and cannot be prescribed in terms of preconceived tasks, there are certain problems that are fairly common. We have identified some of these problems and offer some advice on how they might be tackled:

#### *Students who are demanding of your time*

If a student demands a lot of your time this could signal an underlying problem that needs to be explored. Try to get to the heart of that issue so that you can work through a solution or direct them to someone better able to help them. You do need to be firm with your students and make clear what they can reasonably expect from you. Set clear expectations from the start and utilise the student support available (please see the overview of support sheet) as appropriate.

#### *Students who are upset or crying*

The best way you can help students who are upset is to provide them with a private space, be friendly and listen to them. It is often a good idea to arrange a follow up meeting soon after to check that they are ok and so they know someone cares. As appropriate during this meeting you could explore further what it is that has upset them and move onto discuss, as appropriate, utilising the student support services, ongoing support.

### ***Specialist Support for Personal Tutors***

Edge Hill University has a network of institutional colleagues in place to support Personal Tutors and look after their wellbeing in addition to that of their students. It is important to note that, having dealt effectively with a significant personal issue with a student, the Personal Tutor may indeed need support for themselves. This may be particularly relevant when managing situations linked to significant mental health issues. It is important to note that, whilst each Faculty may well have a relevant colleague who is available to discuss the issue with, the following services are also there to help.

## Overview of Support (September 2018)

Service	Summary
<b>Department/Tutor</b>	Academic/pastoral support plus advice on EMC's, appeals and assignment extensions. Some departments also have their own study skills, or pastoral support, systems and may be able to make local arrangements/ adjustments to accommodate a student's needs.
<b>Mentoring/Buddy Scheme</b>	Some departments/courses also have a mentoring/buddy scheme which can provide a good source of support/reassurance.
<b>Academic Registry</b> <a href="mailto:AR-Academic-Records@edgehill.ac.uk">AR-Academic-Records@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Advice on, and processing of course changes: transferring course/uni; repeating a year; module changes; changing mode of study; intercalation; appeals, TPT; and the withdrawal process (including advice on implications of all of these e.g. tuition fees, student loan etc.).
<b>Wellbeing</b> <a href="mailto:studentwellbeing@edgehill.ac.uk">studentwellbeing@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	<b>First contact for mental health concerns.</b> Practical advice, support and signposting for any issue impacting on a student's wellbeing e.g. mental health; settling in; sexual health; diet/exercise; drugs/alcohol. Can link students to peer-support to reduce barriers and help them engage with and access facilities/activities. Also provide staff with training e.g. professional boundaries, fitness to study.
<b>Counselling</b> (via Wellbeing)	<b>Referral always via Wellbeing.</b> Group workshops and a 1:1 therapeutic service to help student's find solutions to issues they are facing e.g. Family/relationship issues, course pressures, confidence, anxiety, stress, resilience etc. Also provide support for staff.
<b>Multi-faith Chaplaincy Service</b> <a href="mailto:chaplaincy@edgehill.ac.uk">chaplaincy@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Provides students of all faiths (and none) with pastoral guidance/support from a spiritual perspective.
<b>Social/sports groups</b> <a href="http://www.edgehillsu.org.uk/groups">www.edgehillsu.org.uk/groups</a>	A good recommendation for students to help them make friends, de-stress and develop a sense of belonging at uni. List of all groups/societies available via Student Union website.
<b>Campus Life &amp; 'That Thursday Thing'</b> <a href="mailto:campuslife@edgehill.ac.uk">campuslife@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Promote activities/events and help students settle in and feel part of the EHU community. Run "That Thursday Thing" - a weekly social group to help students make friends at uni (Thurs 5pm, meet in the Hub by the orange sofas). Also provide support/advice/intervention to students having difficulties with other students.
<b>Accommodation Team</b> <a href="mailto:accommodation@edgehill.ac.uk">accommodation@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Able to help resolve practical and social issues (in halls/housing) and provide advice/guidance about accommodation both on and off campus.
<b>Care leavers, care experienced, estranged &amp; Carers</b> <a href="mailto:studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk">studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Targeted support and case management of Young Adult Carers, Care Leavers, Care Experienced and Estranged students. Also strategic work re: BAME, Mature, part-time, LGBT+, Low Participation Neighbourhoods/Low Socio Economic Status/Low Household Income, and While British

	Males from Low Socioeconomic backgrounds.
<b>Inclusion Team</b> <a href="mailto:inclusionteam@edgehill.ac.uk">inclusionteam@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Advice/support for students with physical/sensory/mental health or other needs.
<b>Library - UniSkills</b> <a href="mailto:Uniskills@edgehill.ac.uk">Uniskills@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	General study skills support (via workshops or 1:1) for the whole student population.
<b>Library - Learning Support</b> <a href="mailto:learningsupport@edgehill.ac.uk">learningsupport@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Specialised and tailored 1:1 study skills support and access (including assistive technologies) for those with physical or mental health difficulties.
<b>Library - SpLD Team</b> <a href="mailto:spld@edgehill.ac.uk">spld@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Support for specific learning needs – dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD
<b>Money Advice Team</b> <a href="mailto:moneyadvice@edgehill.ac.uk">moneyadvice@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Advice/support (and potential access to extra funding) for students who are struggling financially.
<b>Students Union (+Advice Centre)</b> <a href="http://www.edgehillsu.org.uk/advice">www.edgehillsu.org.uk/advice</a>	Advice/support to students on a range of issues e.g. Academic issues, housing, money and welfare. Also provide representation for certain student groups and activities/events (including managing social/sports groups and societies).
<b>Careers Service</b> <a href="http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/careers">www.edgehill.ac.uk/careers</a>	Advice/support with career planning, job hunting, CV writing, volunteering and maximising work experience.
<b>Thinking of Leaving? Service</b> <a href="mailto:studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk">studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	Advice/support for students thinking about, or at risk of, withdrawing (or being withdrawn). Provides opportunity to talk about 'what's going on' & explore options/support available. Can also 'case-manage' the student, coordinating support from numerous areas listed here and reviewing with the student periodically.
<b>GP</b>	If a student thinks they may have a health issue (physical or mental) always advise they see their GP.
<b>Student Services/others</b> <a href="mailto:studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk">studentservices@edgehill.ac.uk</a>	If in doubt, or for information on sources of other advice/support not listed here, contact Student Services.

## Expectations of Students

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Students have their own specific guide to personal tutoring which gives them information about what they can expect from their tutor but equally what is expected from them as individuals.

### ***Responsibilities of students***

- To ensure that the name and contact details of the Personal Tutor have been noted.
- To keep in regular contact with their Personal Tutor and attend all scheduled meetings.
- To prepare for meetings in advance in line with information in the guide provided.

- To reflect on feedback received from Personal Tutor and other staff to aid personal development.
- To notify their Personal Tutor in the event of illness and non-attendance at University.
- To notify their Personal Tutor where there are academic or personal/medical problems which are affecting attendance or impacting on academic progress.
- To contact their Personal Tutor immediately if performance in forthcoming examinations or assessments is going to be affected by ill health or other extenuating circumstances.

***Prior to each meeting/tutorial a student must ensure that they prepare and bring:-***

- Assignment feedback and assignments when appropriate.
- Professional Practice Observations (where relevant).
- Professional Practice Final Report Form (where relevant).
- Any questions/queries regarding their progress.

## **Benefits**

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### ***A more enjoyable and productive time***

Personal Tutors have huge potential to make this developmental process, both academic and pastoral, an easier and more enjoyable time for students; it doesn't have to be something they struggle through on their own. Students come to university because they want to learn, they want to engage in conversation with like-minded individuals and build relationships with experts who are actively contributing to their field. A Personal Tutor can be a key person with whom to have some of these conversations. Personal Tutors can inspire their tutees and motivate them to try harder at university. A Personal Tutor can build up a student's confidence by giving them time to discuss the things that are important to them.

### ***A source of reassurance***

Having a Personal Tutor, with whom they have built up an authentic relationship through regular contact and good communication, provides students with a source of support and guidance. Students are reassured that someone is there for them who genuinely cares about their progress at university and who they trust values them as an individual in what can be a large, impersonal institution. When they feel valued, they are more likely to come to their Personal Tutor for support and therefore it is less likely that any difficulties they do encounter will reach crisis point.

### ***Benefits for Personal Tutors***

- Really getting to know your tutees
- Seeing them flourish during their studies
- Helping them with their development – both personal and academic
- Helping them get the most out of what university has to offer through to successful employment
- Developing an understanding of the challenges facing current students
- An opportunity to impart your passion and experience

### ***Benefits to Departments***

- Developing independent learners
- Feedback on courses/departmental practices
- Students that feel a part of their academic communities
- Students who feel cared for
- Students who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses
- Students with a clearer idea of their future aspirations

# Baseline Tutorial Programme

The way this is delivered may vary between departments and Faculties so this should be treated as indicative. In many cases it will exceed this baseline level. All students should have a named Personal Tutor by the end of the first week, and have received an email from their Personal Tutor within one week of enrolling with contact details; office whereabouts; email and phone number.

<b>Year 1:</b>	
<b>Semester 1: First Week</b>	<b>Group meeting – 1 hour,</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmation of contact details; office whereabouts; email and phone number; availability; profile</li> <li>Role of Personal Tutor</li> <li>Ground rules; Expectations; schedule of formal meetings</li> <li>Attendance and engagement</li> <li>University life; social life; study/work/play balance; homesickness</li> <li>Wider support networks –learning and student services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal profile (piloted within FoHSC)</li> <li>Student guide to Personal Tutor system</li> <li>Specific additional departmental/programmes processes – eg PDP; Practice assessment documentation; student wikis</li> <li>Student timetable and attendance data if available</li> <li>Students charter</li> <li>Student Services support</li> <li>Students’ Union support</li> </ul>
<b>Semester 1: by end of week 5</b>	<b>Individual meeting - 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling in; access to services</li> <li>Self expectations by student; degree classification; employability</li> <li>Bb/e-learning; learning services</li> <li>Extension/EMC process</li> <li>Assessment – Levelness</li> <li>Evaluation – module/SSCF/ISS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant resources e.g. Student Services or Students’ Union</li> <li>PDP; portfolio; self-assessment tools; volunteering; careers links</li> <li>Learning Services</li> <li>PDP documentation; departmental processes and policies</li> <li>Handbooks and marking criteria</li> <li>Student wiki/documentations/Blackboard links</li> </ul>
<b>Semester 1: by end of week 10</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment – formative and summative; good academic practice and avoidance of malpractice; Extension/EMC</li> <li>Learning support</li> <li>Attendance and engagement</li> <li>Evaluation – institutional experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handbooks; marking criteria; marking and moderation process; Academic malpractice policy</li> <li>Departmental policies regarding EMC/extensions</li> <li>Learning services</li> </ul>
<b>Semester 2: by end of week 9</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic performance; experience of assessment; attendance and engagement; issues</li> <li>Transition to year 2; Action planning</li> <li>Employability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handbooks; marking criteria; previous assessment feedback – projected academic profile; tracking; referrals; wider support</li> <li>Dates of Transition events; Module Choice - link to academic registry; Student’s action plan – summer plan; reading lists/work</li> <li>PDP; Unique selling point; volunteering; work experience; extracurricular activities</li> </ul>

<b>Year 2</b>	
<b>Semester 1: by end of week 5</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome back; Action plan - performance objectives; expectations; attendance and engagement</li> <li>• Degree Classification; Assessment process – levelness</li> <li>• Employability – personal capital</li> <li>• Evaluation – module/SSCF/ISS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of year 1 performance; tracking data – results; feedback</li> <li>• Marking criteria; classification profiles; links</li> <li>• PDP; CV; departmental employment strategies; extracurricular activities</li> <li>• SU website</li> </ul>
<b>Semester 2: by end of week 9</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic progress; attendance and engagement.</li> <li>• Employability – personal capital</li> <li>• Transition to year 3 – action planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semester 1 assessment feedback; student profile tracking</li> <li>• Update on progress – action planning; careers; PDP</li> <li>• Dates of Transition events; Module choice – link to Academic registry; Student’s action plan – summer plan; reading lists/work</li> </ul>

<b>Year 3</b>	
<b>Semester 1</b>	<b>Group meeting by week 3 – 1 hour</b>
<b>Semester 1: by end of week 5</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome back; Action plan - performance objectives; expectations; attendance and engagement</li> <li>• Degree Classification; Assessment process – levelness</li> <li>• Employability – personal capital</li> <li>• Evaluation – module/SSCF/NSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of year 1 performance; tracking data – results; feedback</li> <li>• Marking criteria; classification profiles; links</li> <li>• PDP; CV; departmental employment strategies; extracurricular activities; job applications – references</li> <li>• Departmental directions</li> </ul>
<b>Semester 2: by end of week 9</b>	<b>Individual meeting – 20 mins</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Resources and Prompts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic progress; attendance and engagement.</li> <li>• Employability – personal capital</li> <li>• Transition – post graduate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semester 1 assessment feedback; student profile tracking</li> <li>• Update on progress – action planning; careers; PDP;</li> <li>• alumni</li> </ul>