

Roles and Responsibilities

Personal Tutor

(Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes)

This document outlines the typical duties expected of the post holder. The descriptions of the post cannot be exhaustive and the post-holder may be required to undertake other duties, normally these will be broadly in line with the listed key responsibilities. Roles and responsibilities may also be subject to change.

Summary of role:

- Through regular contact and the establishment of a supportive and professional relationship, personal tutors maintain an overview of their tutees' academic progress and development, as well as an overview of their tutees' wellbeing.
- Personal tutors signpost students toward appropriate sources of support where necessary, and signpost students toward development opportunities where available.
- The university's [Personal Tutors' Guide](#) contains detailed information on all of the aspects below.
- It is expected that all new personal tutors should complete the [Introduction to Personal Tutoring Workshop](#) before being assigned tutees.
- The [Senior Tutor \(UG\)](#) and [Senior Tutor \(PG\)](#) are responsible for supporting and managing the development of a department's personal tutors and may be contacted for further information and/or discussion.

Duties and key responsibilities

1. Managing the relationship with your tutees

1.1 Setting expectations and boundaries

- The personal tutor is often the first point of contact for students, and it is important that tutees are aware of the role of the personal tutor and the limitations to what a personal tutor can do before referring a student to a more specialised source of support.
- Personal tutors should meet with their new tutees within the first week of term to introduce themselves and outline their role. They should arrange at least one individual meeting with each tutee each term. These conversations should focus on supporting your tutee's academic development, keeping abreast of their academic and personal situation, providing advice and signposting as relevant and raising concerns if required.
- Personal tutors should be in regular contact with tutees throughout their time at the university, primarily through meetings, although email, Teams, or other media might also be used, particularly for students on placements. Personal tutors should ensure that tutees are aware of their availability and how to get in touch. Personal tutors are strongly discouraged from sharing personal phone numbers with tutees.

1.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important but complex aspect of the role and detailed guidance is [available in the online Personal Tutors' Guide](#). If a personal tutor is unsure how to respond to a situation, they should discuss the matter with the Senior Tutor.

1.3 Policy

- Personal tutors should be up to date with current university rules, regulations, policies and procedures, including the key policies and procedures relating to academic and examination regulations, discipline, complaints and appeals. A list of key university policies related to students is available. [Visit the policies and guidance](#) webpages.
- The post holder is also expected to be familiar with the following key resources:
 - [Access the Imperial Success Guide](#)
 - [Access Student Support Zone](#)
- It is university policy not to divulge student information to external parties (including parents) without explicit written consent from the student. All such enquiries should be referred to the Senior Tutor.

2. Developing students

There are three core areas that personal tutors are expected to support their tutees with. These are outlined in detail below:

2.1 Academic development

- **Study skills:** Advise students on drawing up study plans, learning strategies, time management, note taking in lectures, how to research a topic and write a report/essay. Personal tutors can also [signpost students to the Imperial Success Guide](#).
- **Exam preparations:** Advise students on preparing for assessments and give tips on how to cope with exam stress. There are a range of resources available online that may support/signpost students dealing with academic stress including information from [Imperial College Union](#) and [Imperial's Student Counselling and Mental Health Advice Service](#).
- **Academic progress:** Monitor and review student academic progress, providing feedback on overall performance, and reporting to Senior Tutors. Personal tutors are advised to keep copies of all their correspondence with tutees and may be required to write reports on their tutees.

- **English Language Support:** Ensure students are aware of the English language support programme offered by the [Centre for Academic English](#), as appropriate.
- **Module choices:** Personal tutors should be prepared to support tutees with advice on option modules (including to support a career direction). Students intending to work in industry might also find it useful to contact the department's Industrial Liaison Officer. There may be immigration implications for international students in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa who make changes to their course which affect the length of level of study. You should make sure any students that's this affects seek advice from the International Student Support team ([Contact International Student Support](#)) before any final decisions are made.

2.2 Professional development

The [Imperial Graduate Attributes](#) are a set of competencies that define how Imperial graduates should approach problems, collect and use information, generate and test ideas, communicate and collaborate. Personal tutors should be familiar with these attributes and can use them as a framework for discussion.

Co-curricular studies: [Imperial Horizons programme](#) offers UG students the opportunity to broaden their studies by taking additional courses in a range of fields.

Vacation work: The [Careers Service website](#) has guidance on finding vacation work. Tutors should be aware of the [UROP scheme](#) and other opportunities available through the [Outreach Office](#) and Imperial College Union.

Curriculum Vitae support: CV preparation support is available from the [Careers Service](#).

References: Students can expect to name their Personal tutor as a referee on job applications and/or applications for further study, both before and after graduation. See the university's [guidance](#) on writing references.

2.3 [Extra-curricular activities and work-life balance](#)

- Tutors may need to help their tutees gain the right work-life balance. Some students need encouragement to make time for extra-curricular opportunities alongside their studies, while other tutees may need help in prioritising their studies. Personal tutors should help their tutees make the most of their time at Imperial, with a focus on health and well-being. Imperial's Success Guide also has information on [time management](#) which may help facilitate conversations.

3. Supporting students

Personal tutors should keep up to date with current university practice in student support by liaising with the Senior Tutor and engaging with the policy and practice updates and training provided.

3.1 [Health and wellbeing](#)

It is not the role of the personal tutor to be an expert in supporting students with personal issues; however, personal tutors are well placed to notice changes in their tutees and may signpost or raise concerns accordingly. If any case causes the personal tutor concern, they should discuss it with the Senior Tutor. Cases of bullying or harassment should be referred immediately to the Senior Tutor. Any concerns over a student's safety, or that of others, because of inappropriate conduct or changes in behaviour should be referred immediately to the Senior Tutor.

- **Student personal problems:** These can include depression, loneliness, relationship problems, parental divorce, anxiety about parental health, bereavement, insecurities arising from transition to university, and concerns over money and accommodation. In all cases, personal tutors should be compassionate, listening to students if they want to share, and, where appropriate, refer students to the Senior Tutor and/or university support services. More information is available on the [Student Support Service webpages](#).
- **Student Wellbeing Advisers:** Personal tutors are expected to be aware of their department's Student Wellbeing Adviser (SWA). Normally, personal tutors should signpost students to the SWA for wellbeing support where needed. A list of Student Wellbeing Advisers by Faculty can be found on the [student support zone](#). Where a department uses different terminology (e.g. Pastoral Tutor or Welfare Officer), the same expectation applies.
- **"At Risk" Students:** Absenteeism from tutorials, failing to hand in work, or achieving low grades can all be indicators of 'at risk' students. Personal tutors should report matters of concern to the Senior Tutor. Personal tutors should be aware of university's [policy on absence](#).
- **Crisis:** There may be a rare occasion when a student in crisis (and possibly suicidal) turns to their personal tutor for help. During working hours, you should inform the Senior Tutor. You can also direct the student to the relevant university service. Out of hours, personal tutors should inform Security (020 759 48910 or internal 4444) who in turn will involve the Director of Student Support, the University Tutors, and, if relevant, the Hall Wardens. Personal tutors who themselves need to talk over a crisis situation can contact Confidential Care on 0800 085 4764.

3.2 Academic progression

- **Exams:** Personal tutors should give accurate and timely advice and support on assessment related matters, providing academic support in the run up to exams and during the exam period.
- **Mitigating circumstances:** Personal tutors should be aware of university policy regarding mitigating circumstances, and should flag procedures to students as

necessary. Personal tutors may be asked to comment on special circumstances at relevant Mitigation Advisory Panel (MAP) meetings prior to Examination Boards. Personal tutors should also inform Senior Tutors of any known special circumstances before such meetings.

- **Interruption of Studies or withdrawal:** Students are encouraged to discuss any changes in registration with their personal tutor or Senior Tutor. Personal tutors should be prepared to discuss a tutee's options with them and help them make the right choice for themselves and their studies. There will be immigration implications for international students who are in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa who need to interrupt or withdraw. You should make sure, if relevant, the student has sought advice from the International Student Support team ([Contact International Student Support](#)) before any final decisions are made.
- **Inclusivity for disability:** Personal tutors should be abreast of any disabilities or learning needs that their tutees may need support with to ensure that they are not disadvantaged with their studies. They should also be alert to signs of disability, be prepared to discuss the benefits of disclosure if a student has not yet disclosed, and discuss means of support and reasonable adjustments that could be made to help them better access the programme.

3.3 Daily living

- **Social Development:** Personal tutors can help establish a good social relationship between students and academic staff by encouraging their tutees to attend departmental events/functions and helping them to understand the benefits of doing so. This can be an important way of helping students settle into university life.
- **Cultural shock:** International students especially may be feeling isolated and homesick, and may find it difficult to adjust socially and to cope with language barriers. Personal tutors can help introduce them to students who are already settled into life in London and Imperial. The International Student Support team runs a programme of events throughout the academic year to support the international student experience and can also offer help and advice on assisting students experiencing difficulties settling into life in the UK. Visit the [International Student Experience webpages](#) for more information.
- **Money problems:** Students may approach their personal tutor if they are struggling financially. Students should be directed to the [Student Hub](#) in the first instance. The university also provides students with free access to [Blackbullion](#), a digital platform educating students on managing money. Administrative problems such as late payment of grants or loans should be referred to [Student Funding](#). If urgent financial support is required, the Senior Tutor can assist students with applications to the Student Support Fund.

- **Accommodation:** The Student Hub is able to assist students looking for accommodation in the private sector. Legal disputes with landlords should be referred to the Student Hub or the [Student Union Advice Centre](#).
- **Disability:** Students with a disability should be referred to the Departmental Disability Officer (DDO). The university's Disability Advisory Service (DAS) is also available to discuss matters concerning access, Disabled Students' Allowance, accommodation, or any other worries a student with a disability may have.

3.4 Referral and follow up

- Referring students to sources of expert help is a central aspect of your role as a personal tutor. Having explained the options, discussed the benefits of each and given contact information, it is best to encourage your tutee to refer themselves, thereby taking responsibility for it. There may, however, be occasions where a Senior Tutor referral is appropriate, for example where there are questions relating to fitness to practise or concerns about harming oneself or someone else.
- Although timely referral or involving others is important, remember that you are your tutee's only named personal tutor and it is important that they feel they can return to you to follow-up and discuss things further or explore other options.