GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL TUTORS IN THE
FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

November 2018

Each Department publishes its own guidance to Personal Tutors, however, this brief guide is intended to give a broad overview of the personal tutor system and to share some good practice from across FoNS and other Faculties.

Summary of the Responsibilities of a Personal Tutor

Personal tutors provide both general academic and pastoral support to their tutees. To accommodate this, tutors should be in regular contact with tutees throughout their time at College; usually through face-to-face meetings supported by email, phone conversations, Skype or similar media as appropriate. The College’s Personal Tutor Guide sets out some expectations: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/personal-tutors-guide/understanding-your-role/whats-new/personal-tutoring-expectations/

Academic support, including the following:

Study skills
Examination preparation- This can include study skills (as above), as well as the personal impact of a potentially stressful period of study.
Mitigating circumstances- This can include helping a student to identify any extenuating circumstances requiring mitigation and assisting them in applying for consideration of these.
Academic progress- Assisting students to develop responsibility for their academic progress.

Professional development support, including:

References- A student can reasonably expect to name their Personal Tutor as a referee on applications.
Personal development plans and career planning- Where available, the Department’s Careers Tutor can provide guidance.
CV support- Students may ask for guidance with writing a CV.

Pastoral support:
This is the most important role of the personal tutor. A student should feel able to discuss any problems they may have with their personal tutor; this is more likely to happen if a relationship is established early in the student’s time in the Department. Personal tutors are often the first to pick up on early indicators of students’ difficulties: absence from tutorials/low grades can be the first indication of ‘at risk’ students. Personal tutors should be ready to support students in the following areas, and to signpost them to the support services described:

Personal problems- including low mood, loneliness, relationship issues, anxiety, bereavement, finances. Personal tutors should provide compassionate assistance, giving advice as appropriate or refer the student to the Senior Tutor.

Emotional problems- If personal problems develop into something more severe (depression, anxiety, self-harm), refer the student to the counselling service and to the Senior Tutor.

Bullying and harassment- This must be reported to the Senior Tutor as early as possible, ideally with the student’s consent.

Disabilities- Students are asked to declare any personal circumstances which may affect their studies, and this information will be referred to the appropriate Department Disability Liaison Officer and the Disability Advisory Service as appropriate.

Money- For simple issues, refer the student to the Student Hub.

Accommodation- Refer to the Student Hub.

Social issues- Integration, language issues. Encourage students to participate in Department events.

SOME HELPFUL ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Personal Tutor Guide Website: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/personal-tutors-guide/
The Imperial College Success Guide: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/success-guide
EDU Personal Tutoring Workshop: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/introduction-to/personal-tutoring/
MEETINGS WITH TUTEES

The College and Faculty recommended minimum frequency of meetings between tutor and tutee is two per term. Discussions at these meetings will vary depending on the time of year and on the specific activities that are being undertaken within the student’s department, or course.

The following outlines some suggested key items for discussion at the 6 meetings to be scheduled in a student’s first year:

**Autumn Term (Oct-Dec)**

**Meeting 1**
Introductions
Outline of Personal Tutor Role - expectations and boundaries
Signposting support services
Register with GP
Absence from College reporting
Coping with the Transition from School to University – familiarisation with Imperial College Success Guide (see below)

**Meeting 2**
General Health and Welfare
Settling in
Managing course-load
Exam Preparation:
Revision techniques
Special Exam Arrangements
Mitigating Circumstances

**Spring Term (Jan-Mar)**

**Meeting 3**
Reflections on the course so far
Approaches to learning
Exam review

**Meeting 4**
Exam Preparation:
Revision techniques
Special Exam Arrangements
Mitigating Circumstances
Time management

**Summer Term (Apr-Jun)**

**Meeting 5**
Exam review
Mitigating Circumstances

**Meeting 6**
Preparing for Y2
Plans for the Summer
Re-sit Exam Preparation

SIGNPOSTS TO COLLEGE AND EXTERNAL SERVICES

**COLLEGE SERVICES:**
Student Counselling Service
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/counselling/

Imperial College Health Centre
https://www.imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk/

International Student Support
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/

Centre for Academic English:
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/academic-english

Student Space
A webpage with links to various College support services, such as counselling, disability support, Hall Wardens
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-space/

Student Hub
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-hub

Accommodation Office
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/accommodation

ICU Advice Centre
For independent, confidential and impartial advice.
https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/advice

**EXTERNAL SERVICES:**

NightLine
Open 6pm-8am during term-time
http://nightline.org.uk

The Samaritans London
020 7734 2800
http://www.samaritans.org/branches/central-london-samaritans

The Samaritans UK
08457 909090 https://www.samaritans.org/