

## GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL TUTORS IN THE FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

September 2020

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- through in-person meetings for those present on campus and where social distancing restrictions allow; via MS Teams; by email and over the phone. 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; the personal impact of a potentially stressful period of study; preparation for timed remote assessments: workspace, IT equipment, internet access, etc.

**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.

**Access to technology-** Signposting to the Student Support Fund as appropriate: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/student-support-fund/>

### 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 with their personal tutor any problems they may have; 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: (contact details for services given over the page.)

**Personal problems-** including low mood, loneliness, isolation, 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 Department Disability Liaison Officer and the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) as appropriate. It should be noted that students do not have to disclose a disability, however, the College is unable to put any additional arrangements in place without student disclosure.

**Money-** For simple issues, refer the student to the Student Hub, or to the Student Support Fund: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/student-support-fund/>

**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 that the *minimum* frequency of meetings between tutor and tutee is *two per term*, which is particularly important in these difficult, COVID-19 affected times. 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  
 Registering with GP  
 Absence from College reporting  
 Coping with the Transition from School to University – familiarisation with Imperial College  
 Success Guide

#### Meeting 2

General Health and Welfare  
 Settling in  
 Managing course-load  
 Study Skills  
 Exam/TRA Preparation:  
     Revision techniques  
     Special Exam Arrangements  
     Mitigating Circumstances  
 Making the best use of tutorials/seminars/online material  
 Labwork (where appropriate)  
 Participation in group work

### Spring Term (Jan-Mar)

#### Meeting 3

Reflections on the course so far  
 Approaches to learning  
 Exam review

#### Meeting 4

Time management  
 Exam/TRA Preparation

### 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 and Mental Health Service  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/counselling/>

Imperial College Health Centre  
<https://www.imperialcollegehealthcentre.co.uk/>  
 020 759 49375 020 759 49376

International Student Support  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/international-students/>  
 020 759 48040

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

Student Support Zone  
 Links to various College support services  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/>

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>

Faculty Senior Tutor  
 The Faculty Senior Tutor is available to advise Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors in carrying out their roles.  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/personal-tutors-guide/understanding-your-role/your-senior-tutor-and-faculty-senior-tutor/>

### 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>