

GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL TUTORS IN THE FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

Updated September 2022

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 general academic and pastoral support to their tutees. To accommodate this, tutors should be in regular contact with tutees throughout their time at College. 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 for employment or further study applications.

Personal development plans and career planning- Where available, the Department's Careers Tutor can provide guidance.

CV support

Pastoral support:

This is perhaps 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. Personal tutors should provide compassionate support, giving advice as appropriate or refer the student to the Senior Tutor or the SWA Team (see over page).

Mental Health 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, or see 'Concerned about a student' below.

Bullying and harassment- The Report and Support tool allows students to report if they have witnessed an incident, or experienced bullying or harassment directly. Disclosures can be made anonymously or students can provide their details to be put in contact with a Student Harassment Support Coordinator.

<https://report-and-support.imperial.ac.uk/>

Disabilities- Students are asked to declare any 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- 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/>

College Accommodation- Refer to the Student Hub.

CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT?

If you are particularly concerned about a student's mental health, the College's Student Mental Health Intervention Officers can provide support and guidance.

You can contact the Intervention Officers at concernedaboutastudent@imperial.ac.uk

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/counselling/student-mental-health-intervention-officers/>

HELP IN AN EMERGENCY

If you have concerns that a student is in *immediate danger of hurting themselves or others*, dial 999.

If you are on campus, the emergency services need to be contacted through Security, who will guide them to the right location:

+44 (0)20 7589 1000 (x4444) for Campus Security
+44 (0)20 759 42444 (x4244) for Silwood Park Campus Security

For more information: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/common-concerns/worried-about-someone-else/concerned-about-a-students-wellbeing-or-safety/>

MEETINGS WITH TUTEES

The College and Faculty recommend that the 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, of 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 a GP
- Absence from College reporting
- Coping with the Transition from School to University

Meeting 2

- General Health and Welfare
- Settling in
- Managing course-load
- Study Skills
- Exam/TRA preparation and revision techniques
- Special Exam Arrangements
- Mitigating Circumstances
- Making 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

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/>

FACULTY-LEVEL SUPPORT

FACULTY STUDENT WELLBEING ADVICE TEAM

The SWA team can help provide students with general guidance on managing their wellbeing and can talk with students about wellbeing-related concerns that they would like to discuss in relation to their studies.

The team are here to support all students within the Faculty and the support they offer is tailored to a student's individual circumstances.

The Student Wellbeing Advisers can offer confidential one-to-one guidance meetings which provide students with time to reflect on their wellbeing. They are also an opportunity to:

- Receive relevant information to assist with queries
- Access support with setting wellbeing-related goals
- Be introduced to wellbeing self-help resources
- Discuss where to go for further support

You can find out more and refer students to the team here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/natural-sciences/education-and-teaching/wellbeing-support/resources-for-students/advice-team/>

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/>

COLLEGE-LEVEL 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>

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

Report and Support- The College's tool which allows both students and staff to disclose unwelcoming behaviours such as bullying, harassment and sexual violence: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/resources/report-and-support/>

Sexual violence support: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/student-services/sexual-violence-support/>