

Report for Learning and Teaching Committee

Personal Tutoring at Loughborough – a scoping project for LTC

10 April 2014

executive summary This report is intended to support consideration at LTC regarding the future of Personal Tutoring at Loughborough.

action required LTC is asked to give immediate approval to the relatively minor changes suggested to *Academic Quality Procedures Handbook (AQPH)* and, in light of the information and further recommendations offered by this project report, to determine how this conversation and actions regarding Personal Tutoring at Loughborough might best be taken forward.

introduction

This report is the major output from the Personal Tutoring project proposal tabled at LTC on 31 October 2013 and revised in the light of feedback received (see **appendix 1 – redrafted project plan** (pp.9-10)). In effect reconstituted as a scoping project, its primary aim is to consider the current system for UG and PG(T) students at Loughborough, firstly within the context of the academic literature and secondly in comparison to a set of purposively sampled HEIs. In doing so, this report presents some of the pros and cons associated with our current approaches to Personal Tutoring, that is before making some recommendations regarding the future operation of this student support mechanism. This project was commissioned by LTC partly because a number of indicators including the National Student Survey were suggesting that, while effective for a significant number of our students, the Personal Tutoring system is failing others and needs attention (see **appendix 2 – National Student Survey** (pp.11-2)).

It is worth noting here that this conversation regarding Personal Tutoring is not a new one.¹ This paper argues that Loughborough's existing Personal Tutoring system has for some time needed to be updated and revitalised. That being said, although there might be benefits to a radical overhaul of the present system, there are also some real disadvantages that cannot be discounted either; thus, in the first instance, there is some urgency in considering how the current Personal Tutoring system might readily be improved in the short-term, that is before embarking upon any fundamental changes. Consequently, this scoping paper considers:

1. Tabled at Programme Quality Team on 8 March 2010, *PQ10-P19 Enhancing Student Engagement* argued for the creation of an online University umbrella resource to support Personal Tutors and that School/Department-based information sessions for all staff be conducted; both of these were only partially accomplished in the sense that resources were created but have not been mainstreamed in a particularly conscious or consistent manner. In turn, it is worth noting that the follow-up report tabled at Academic Standards and Procedures Sub-Committee on 21 May 2012 saw *ASPSC12-P04 Enhancing Student Engagement: an update* advocate consideration of the degree to which *AQPH* Appendix 16 was fit for purpose and suggested that a Working Group to examine it should be set up before reporting back to LTC; this paper can only be considered as partially fulfilling that recommendation.

1. the current context of Personal Tutoring at Loughborough
2. what the literature says and how these systems operate at other HEIs
3. updating *AQPH* Appendix 16
4. main recommendations

As indicated already, evidence and resources to substantiate the conclusions reached by this paper are available in a series of appendices that follow this relatively short report. In addition, it needs to be emphasised that the Personal Tutoring system cannot be seen in isolation from other student engagement activities such as support for new (and returning) students at induction (and reintroduction), the continuing integration of students and their representatives into decision-making and as active partners in our academic community, and the on-going development of, and central provision for, peer support across campus. In sum, it is just one of a number of support mechanisms sustaining the student experience.

Identifying what is meant by the term Personal Tutoring (including how it can differentiate from academic tutoring) is one of the ambitions of this project because it can mean different things to different people in different locations. It is also worth considering what roles and responsibilities are normally associated with this undertaking, as it is only through a common language that we can hope to progress this approach evenly and have a consistent student experience at the forefront of our thinking and decision-making. Before embarking upon such an analysis, some background information regarding Personal Tutoring at this institution is offered.

1. the current context of Personal Tutoring at Loughborough

According to *AQPH* Appendix 16, which provides a set of agreed University minimum standards regarding Personal Tutoring and Academic Guidance, this system exists “to ensure that appropriate advice and support is provided [to students, and that] ... student problems and concerns are quickly identified and causes of student withdrawal are minimised”. That being said, it hardly features – certainly not explicitly – in most student-facing resources such as the *University Prospectus*, the *Student Handbook*, or the *Loughborough Student Charter* (see **appendix 3 – making Personal Tutoring more prominent centrally** (pp.13-4)).

At the beginning of their studies, normally around induction, students may work out that their Personal Tutor is a member of academic staff within their own location who is allocated to them. Students may well retain the fact that their Personal Tutor’s role is primarily academic, in that they can help students to review their academic progress, they can provide opportunities for students to reflect upon how their studies can help them in pursuing their goals, and they also help individual – as well as groups of – students to foster a sense of belonging to an academic community. In addition, Personal Tutors also have a pastoral role, and thus they are available to students if they have any concerns or problems that might affect their studies, they also advise on academic matters like module choices, future careers, etc., and they act as signposts to institutional resources and mechanisms available to support them. In essence, this boils down to a Personal Tutor supporting their Personal Tutees at and beyond their induction, acting as a first point of call for academic and/or personal problems impacting upon academic performance, and as a resource to monitor and sustain academic and personal/professional development. Our students typically expect this role to be undertaken by an appropriate member of staff.

Depending upon their location, our students consider their Personal Tutor to be different things, but there is a sense that a 'postcode lottery' exists, that most – but not all – Personal Tutors are equipped and inclined to offer appropriate support and guidance, as well as having enough curriculum awareness, institutional knowledge and understanding to be helpful when contacted or approached. In sum, some of students interact with their Personal Tutor on a weekly basis early on in their University experience, while others are called to a meeting only once a semester, if at all. If a working relationship is established early on with a Personal Tutor, the student is more likely to interact with that person on a regular basis thereafter; however, if no such relationship exists, a student may look elsewhere. Some students consider their Personal Tutor to be part of the safety-net or support mechanism available to them, while others are more inclined to use their peers, their warden, their coach, or another person, that is if they turn to someone at all, when they require support. A mechanism that is ideally placed to act as an early warning system for student disengagement, which can empower and enliven our academic community and lead to an enduring relationship, suffers because of a lack of coherence and consistency. Students do not necessarily always see themselves as a priority of academic staff, not even in term-time, and their experience is invariably uneven as a result.

As for academic staff, one could ask whether there is adequate reward or recognition for undertaking this role, where does Personal Tutoring feature in terms of their career progression, what support and training do they receive, etc., but there are many more questions that need to be considered including whether all or most academic staff should undertake this role (and thus what other roles they might be prepared to assume instead). Most of our Personal Tutors do a very good job, they are inclined to do so, but evidence from sources such as the NSS suggests that many of our students do not have such good fortune. One feels compelled to ask where does Personal Tutoring feature in terms of Research, Teaching and Enterprise – just how important an undertaking is it? Indeed, why are we actually engaged in it at all?

Personal Tutoring can be a very powerful tool in terms of recruitment, support, retention, and performance. The fact is however that our students have varying levels of interaction with their Personal Tutor even within the same School/Department, indeed the quality of this interaction depends both on student and staff engagement, as well as their location on campus. This leads to a number of obvious questions being posed in terms of lack of consistency, such as:

- why do more Schools/Departments not give prominence on their websites to this support system (see [CBE: The learning experience](#), [Materials: Code of Practice: Personal Tutoring](#), and [Chemical Engineering: Absent students](#) for example), is it not felt to be useful?
- why do certain colleagues highlight their role as a Personal Tutor on their staff pages (e.g. see [Wolfson: School Staff – Ben Halkon](#) and [PHIR: Teaching Staff – Martin Farrell](#) for example), yet this practice is not more widespread across campus?
- why are only some students in certain locations keen to highlight the support received from Personal Tutors (e.g. see [SBE: Student profiles – Simon Wakeford](#) and [SBE: Student profile – Daniel Harris](#) for example), should this not be the norm?
- why are supporting resources in one location not proving to be adaptable in others (e.g. see [Geography: Personal Development Planning](#), [SBE: The Role of Personal Tutor](#), and [SSEHS: Personal Tutoring Policy and Practice: Information and Guidance for Students](#) for example), might it not make some sense for other Schools/Departments to consider their adoption if they don't do so already?

When our individual and institutional approach is considered in the light of what the supporting literature says and what other HEIs are doing, it becomes clear that, even in building on existing resources and mechanisms, the sharing of effective practice, and coming up with a common understanding of this provision, Loughborough has some considerable work to do.

2. what the literature says and how these systems operate at other HEIs

There is no lack of analysis or pedagogical underpinning regarding the Personal Tutoring systems currently operating in this country. Indeed, it appears to have inspired the National Union of Students (NUS) to become more proactive in this area by campaigning for improvements in the way that Personal Tutoring is delivered, culminating in the [NUS Charter on Personal Tutors](#) that was published three years ago. In sum, this document advocates:

NUS Charter on Personal Tutors

- all students should be entitled to a named Personal Tutor
- all students should meet their Personal Tutor at least once a term
- staff should be given full training on being an effective Personal Tutor
- institution-wide procedures for Personal Tutoring should be established
- staff and students should set mutual expectations
- the Personal Tutoring system should be adaptable to students' needs
- Personal Tutoring should support both academic and personal development
- understanding assessment feedback should be integrated into Personal Tutoring
- Personal Tutoring should be recognised in staff reward and recognition schemes
- Personal Tutoring should make full use of appropriate new technologies

As suggested in a *Times Higher Education* report at the time, this NUS document was not necessarily setting a very high bar, but it does provide an interesting checklist against which an institution's approach to, and a student's experiences of, Personal Tutoring might be gauged.²

The truth is that, in conjunction with what the literature advocates – including a more honest appraisal of the contemporary HE context, adopting expert recommendations aimed at the present and future rather than the past, and in adapting academic role specifications to our existing circumstances (see **appendix 4 – what the literature says** (pp.15-7)) – this NUS list and our current practices need to be considered before any significant changes are made to the system operating here.

It is also useful to examine how other HEIs across the country are currently approaching Personal Tutoring, and in turn to consider adopting some of their mechanisms and tools in support of the student support system operating here at Loughborough. This analysis reveals that none of our immediate peers have moved towards breaking the link between academic staff and the process of Personal Tutoring. Instead, they have invested in additional structures and readily-available resources aimed at supporting Personal Tutors in their role, including the appointment/designation of Senior Tutors to oversee this process within Schools/Departments, prominent positions for this support mechanism on their websites, and the generation of readily

2. Rebecca Attwood, "‘At least once a term’, says NUS charter on tutorials", *Times Higher Education*, 11 March 2011, available at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/415645.article>.

accessible materials explaining how Personal Tutoring is viewed at institutional and local levels (see **appendix 5 – the systems operating at other HEIs** (pp.18-9)).

The Personal Tutoring system that currently operates at Loughborough is not necessarily out of line with the practices of our fellow Higher Education Institutions, indeed it is also broadly in line with what the pedagogic literature advocates. That being said, there is room for improvement, and there are certainly mechanisms that might support the system operating here.

3. updating AQP Appendix 16

According to *AQP* Appendix 16, the minimum standards expected within the framework of Personal Tutoring and associated academic guidance are actually rather minimal; indeed, some of the more basic requirements follow:

- all undergraduate students should be invited to attend a minimum of two scheduled, face-to-face meetings per year;
- for first year students, the first meeting should be scheduled to take place by week 5 of semester 1 with another meeting scheduled by the third week of semester 2 to discuss progress based on semester 1 marks;
- meetings with second year tutees should be scheduled within 5 weeks of their returning;
- arrangements for students in their third year or subsequent year may be more flexible, reflecting other sources of academic support available, e.g. project supervision; and
- reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that students attend the meetings to which they have been invited.

This hardly amounts to an onerous undertaking but, that being said, it is not particularly out of line with other HEIs either. At the same time, the following set of approaches is proffered during the *New Lecturers' Course* and the dedicated parallel 'Academic and Personal Tutoring' workshops available to all staff (see **appendix 6 – staff training and support** (pp.20-1)):

- the first meeting with new tutees should probably take place on the Friday of Week 0, and certainly no later than the end of Semester 1 Week 1, while returning students should be called to a meeting within three weeks of returning to campus;
- dedicated and publicized office hours should be made available each teaching week during the course of an academic year, preferably at the same time and on the same day by all relevant staff in the same School/Department – if not, they should cut across academic hours (i.e. running from half past the hour), they might want to avoid mealtimes, and they should not be held either first thing in the morning or last thing late afternoon;
- staff should be in a position to offer general advice regarding module options, placement opportunities, study abroad possibilities, academic performance etc., to their Tutees, and they should also be aware of how systems such as leave of absence, change of programme, and withdrawal operate, as well as how the impaired performance claims system works;
- students should supply their Curriculum Vitae to their Personal Tutor at the first reasonable opportunity in Year 1 Semester 1, and they should maintain/update it regularly in order to support their own personal development and to enable the provision of appropriate references by members of staff who get to know them;
- regular individual meetings with tutees – i.e. held at least once per semester – should

- ordinarily enable Personal Tutors to act as sounding-boards (e.g. in terms of supporting a student's understanding regarding feedback received on their work) and signposts (e.g. by pointing a student towards appropriate professional services if/when required);
- a number of programmes across campus offer Personal Tutors the opportunity to meet and work with their Personal Tutees on a weekly basis as part of a relatively low credit bearing Year 1 Semester 1 module – this appears to fulfill a number of important functions and might be welcome more widely in terms of student development and student engagement;
 - colleagues should encourage students to take advantage of opportunities such as the [Loughborough Employability Award](#), and they should also be making full use of University record-keeping systems such as [Co-Tutor](#) and [Attendant](#) (see **appendix 7 – Co-Tutor and other University tools** (p.22)); and
 - the minimum provision should also be extended to postgraduate taught students, whereas postgraduate research students will have more regular meetings with their supervisor who also undertakes a pastoral role.

This is the kind of text that may prove to be useful in the development of future resources (e.g. Personal Tutor leaflet, online guidance, etc.) made available to our staff and to their students.

At the same time, although the text of *AQPH* Appendix 16 has not been updated for over a decade, this report does not suggest making any fundamental changes immediately – i.e. apart from bringing forward the term dates when Personal Tutors should meet with their tutees – but it does urge that some cosmetic updating is considerably overdue (see **Appendix 8 – immediate changes to AQPH Appendix 16** (pp.23-4)). More substantive changes to the existing text are not within the scope of the present project, but they might well result from the necessary future work that needs to be undertaken within this crucial area of student support and guidance.

4. main recommendations

To support this process, this paper argues that, in terms of central resources, there are some rather basic requirements needing to be met, and thus it advocates the following:

- ❖ **update the relevant section of *Academic Quality Procedures Handbook* (i.e. *AQPH Appendix 16 – Personal Tutoring and Academic Guidance: Minimum Standards*), even if it continues to require a thorough re-examination to ascertain whether it is fit for purpose and reflects the contemporary realities of Personal Tutoring;**
- ❖ **provide students with adequate information – i.e. including institutional support, staff commitments, and student undertakings – regarding Personal Tutoring prior to and upon their arrival (e.g. by drawing more attention to the place of Personal Tutoring within the *Loughborough Student Charter*, by making this support mechanism more visible in the *University Prospectus* and within the *Student Handbook*, etc.);**
- ❖ **ascertain whether basic *AQPH* Appendix 16 commitments are actually being met (e.g. the first minimum standard currently reads: “Each department should publish its own policy on personal tutoring in its Departmental handbook.”); and**
- ❖ **consider investing in the development of a mandatory online course for Personal Tutors in order to provide more experienced colleagues with an update regarding developments and resources, as well as to integrate this course into the forthcoming PGCAP as a formative assessment (N.B. this course might take the form of a Learn Online Course such as those outlined at [Staff Development – Online Courses](#)) – it is**

worth noting that the uptake of existing training provision by Schools and individuals continues to be on the relatively low side, which is why needs and awareness may have to be met in other ways.

Beyond these stopgaps, the institution appears to have three main choices when considering the issues/problems that Personal Tutoring is intended to address and, in turn, in considering how student support might work if we moved away from the current model:

an outline of future options

- (1) improve the system currently in place through some relatively minor incremental changes, while also ensuring that *AQPH* Appendix 16 is applied consistently across campus through liaison with, and oversight from, the members of Learning and Teaching Committee (i.e. in particular through AD(T)s).
- (2) introduce a structured system that might see a designated Senior Tutor in each School (appointed on a 0.5 FTE basis for three years) working with, as well as overseeing, fellow Personal Tutors, co-ordinating and helping to deliver upon Year 1 skills modules which may or may not already have a Personal Tutor/Personal Tutee structure and dimension to them but which certainly do constitute small group teaching, chairing SSLCs, ensuring compliance with all aspects of *AQPH* Appendix 16, etc. (N.B. most, if not all, Research and Teaching staff would continue in their role as Personal Tutor with up to 50 students each, a contribution that is explicitly accounted for in workload).
- (3) depart from the current Personal Tutoring system whereby most academics are actively involved in this support system and, instead, appoint a School Personal Tutor in each location on a 1.0 FTE basis who would in turn be responsible for numbers ranging from 500 to 2,000 students.

This report recommends that, at the very minimum, (1) is introduced immediately. Given the context of Personal Tutoring at Loughborough, the evidence of the NSS, what the literature suggests, the systems operating at other institutions, etc., consideration should also be given to moving towards (2), perhaps by conducting a follow-up project to this one which actively seeks more extensive consultation with staff and students. Although there are some obvious merits to the swingeing changes that (3) envisages, this it is not the preferred option of this report. The fact is that any successor project would probably need to view 2015-16 as the first year for the introduction of any substantive changes; in the meantime, (1) could certainly be undertaken in time for next academic year, perhaps even certain elements of (2).

As this paper suggests under (2), and as we see from other HEIs, there would be some real merit in considering the appointment of a Senior Tutor to oversee Personal Tutoring within each School, that is before embarking in the first instance upon internal audits against the 'Minimum Standards' outlined in *AQPH* Appendix 16, drawing up role specifications for both Senior Tutors and Personal Tutors, and thereafter identifying and sharing effective practice within Schools and beyond that with their fellow Senior Tutors across campus as part of the further development of an effective, visible and valued Academic and Personal Tutoring Community of Practice (alternatively this might be a Senior Tutors Forum).

If LTC is minded to move towards considering the introduction of a designated Senior Tutor in each School working with and overseeing their fellow Personal Tutors, then the following might be worth undertaking ahead of 2014-15:

- ❖ **each School could designate a Senior Tutor who would undertake this role as a substantive part of their work (e.g. in order to coordinate the system of Personal Tutoring within their School/Departments, to enable the sharing of effective practice through the Academic and Personal Tutoring Community of Practice, etc.);**
- ❖ **internal audits against the 'Minimum Standards' outlined in *AQPH* Appendix 16 could be undertaken and supplied to LTC in order to inform the next steps;**
- ❖ **as part of this whole process, a training needs assessment could be undertaken, such that Senior Tutors might ensure whether all Personal Tutors are trained to use and/or currently employ Co-Tutor, it could be ascertained if/when staff have received recent training in their role as Personal Tutor, and they might be offered a checklist to establish whether they are familiar with their *AQPH* Appendix 16 obligations; and**
- ❖ **students could be made more familiar with Co-Tutor, indeed they might be encouraged to interact with this tool by submitting/re-submitting their CV before the end of this academic year, certainly prior to a reference being given, and SSLCs could be asked after Easter to consider Personal Tutoring and how it might be improved, with this information being fed back through the Senior Tutor designate.**

There is little doubt that significant numbers of Personal Tutors and their Personal Tutees have appropriate levels of interaction, with staff feeling that they are adequately supported to undertake this role and with students benefitting from this one-to-one contact in terms such as engagement with their studies, feedback upon work and their academic performance, but there are also those whose experience is not necessarily a positive one.

The current levels of inconsistency need to be addressed through investment and collective action, as well as a wider conversation regarding the future shape of Personal Tutoring at this institution. Considerable support for this work has been received from colleagues across campus, but the constraints of the project plan mean that this paper needs to be viewed as a scoping report and, at this point in time, it is primarily being submitted in support of deeper institutional consideration rather than offering anything more definitive.

Dr Maurice FitzGerald (Quality Enhancement Officer, Teaching Centre)³
version 31 March 2014

3. People consulted during the course of this scoping project included student representatives in SSEHS, as well as the AD(T)s in AED, LDS and SCI, colleagues in locations such as SBE, SPG, SSEHS, and WMME, and members of Professional Services such as CDS. Sammy Davis (Teaching Centre Graduate Intern) has provided considerable support, including but not limited to research regarding the systems operating in other HEIs and facilitation of an informal meeting involving SSEHS students.

appendix 1 – redrafted project plan

Title	Personal Tutoring
Type of work	Learning and Teaching Committee project
Originator	Prof Morag Bell
Link to other initiatives	Enhancing Student Engagement
Overall responsibility	Dr Carol Robinson (Director of Teaching Centre)
TC lead	Dr Maurice FitzGerald
Other staff involved	Dr Nick Allsopp, Caroline Smith, and Samantha Davis
Other key contacts	Rob Pearson
Schools/Depts involved (incl. Professional Services)	SSEHS and WMME, with support and insights provided by LSU, SPG (Geography), SBE (Business School), CDS (Counselling), and CEDE
Start date	1 November 2013
End date	30 April 2014 (first stage)
Rationale	
<p>In the light of feedback received from the LTC meeting held on 31 October 2013, the original Personal Tutoring project proposal (as contained in LTC13-P56 Outcomes from the Learning and Teaching Strategic Workshop – 17th Sept 2013) has been revised. The reconstituted plan outlined here, essentially a scoping project, explains the approach which will be taken this academic year.</p>	
Aim	
<p>To consider the current system for UG and PG(T) students at Loughborough, firstly within the context of the academic literature and secondly in comparison to a set of purposively sampled HEIs, presenting the pros and cons associated with both our and alternative approaches to Personal Tutoring.</p>	
Method	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaken to support the original findings and recommendations associated with the <i>Enhancing Student Engagement</i> project (for the associated reports, see PQT10-P19 Enhancing Student Engagement from 8 March 2010 and ASPSC12-P04 Enhancing Student Engagement – an update from 21 May 2012), review the established literature on this issue • examine the practices employed at other selected HEIs, particularly though not necessarily only those from the Russell Group and the 1994 Group of universities • with the support of selected colleagues and students from across campus – in particular from SSEHS and Wolfson, but also from LSU, SPG, SBE, CDS and CEDE – speak with staff and student representatives regarding current practice, expectations and needs (i.e. via SSLCs, within School LTCs, in conjunction with AD(T)s, etc.), while also examining current guidance and practices • present a report to LTC with an update on project findings, with an emphasis on how Personal Tutoring is defined, what the literature says, how it is undertaken at other HEIs, where the NSS fits, and what Loughborough's options are in this area • further work (i.e. beyond this first phase) can be sketched out ahead of 2014-15 if 	

LTC deems an extension to this project to be appropriate	
Outputs 1. propose a definition regarding what is meant by Personal Tutoring (including how it can differentiate from academic tutoring), and consider the main roles and responsibilities associated with it – by end of February 2014 2. present report to LTC (including literature review and case studies) – by the end of March 2014/in time for the LTC meeting on 10 April 2014 3. complete the first phase of Personal Tutoring project – by end of April 2014	
Date written/amended	6 November 2013
Author	Dr Maurice FitzGerald

DRAFT

appendix 2 – National Student Survey

Although there is no direct reference in the NSS to Personal Tutoring, it might be argued that the questions regarding academic support encompass this mechanism. Certainly, the qualitative statements made in response to the question “Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects of your course you would like to highlight?” do allow students to signal whether their experience has been a positive or negative one; again, it should be noted that finalists are not expressly asked to comment upon Personal Tutoring. While no individual comment should really be seen in isolation or out of context, a sample of individual student remarks from the most recent NSS 2013 include the following:

positive comments

AACME – one Aero Auto student referred in general terms to “Good personal and academic support”.

AED – two comments regarding English and Drama, one referring to “Friendly, helpful and enthusiastic staff. Staff help with personal problems not just academic ones ... Very dedicated head of department who truly cares”, while another cites “extremely helpful advice when making academic and future career decisions. Supportive personal tutors”.

CBE – one comment stated: “I was fortunate enough to have a very helpful personal tutor and project supervisor in my final year, which helped me progress and achieve to the best of my ability.”

EESE – one student refers to staff being “approachable and willing to help even outside timetabled sessions” before going to say that the “university simply cares about its students; there is always somebody to talk to when you run into problems, even personal problems”.

SBE – three separate students on Business School programmes commented on the “Academic and personal support available”, “a great personal tutor who was always on hand to give advice”, and a support network that includes ‘personal tutors’, with two Economics students referring successively to an “amazing personal tutor” and a “Personal Tutor [who] was very helpful”, while an Information Science student wrote: “My personal tutor has been fantastic and I wouldn't have been able to get through the year without them.”

SCI – three comments in total, with a Physics student stating that the “personal tutors are good”, while two Computer Science students in turn write: “Community feeling of course group through organised meetings by personal tutor. Personal tutors have been helpful and always available when needed”; and “Most of the tutors are really good, but some need addressing. My personal tutor has been great”.

SPG – ten comments in total; one Geography student refers to the “Ability to contact staff with any queries. Tutor meetings in the first year were really helpful with regards to any queries I had at the time and because my tutor now knows more about me, I feel they are in a better position to offer personalised advice and guidance”. In turn, five PHIR students write: “ease of contacting a member of staff or personal tutor when in need of advice”; “Personal tutor was brilliant. Helped with references for further education and really helped personally”; “My personal tutor has been fantastic - I could not have completed my degree without his constant help & support”; “Extremely helpful personal tutor, always available for advice throughout the three years”; and “extremely helpful personal ... tutor”. Meanwhile, four Social Sciences finalists cite “Personal dissertation supervisor was always helpful”, “personal tutoring was good”, “Personal tutors”, and “Do get a lot of help ... when it comes to the course and personal things as well”.

SSEHS – three comments: “The help I have received from certain members of staff have been way above what I ever expected from university. My personal tutor (???) has been absolutely amazing and has gone far beyond what I'm sure is expected. She has helped me with everything from personal problems to issues on the course. I feel that she is what really made my experience of doing Psychology at Loughborough. I always know that if I need help she would drop everything for me and I can't really express how amazing she is - she deserves a medal! Other members of staff who have been amazingly helpful and always available and willing to help are ???. I honestly feel grateful to have had them help me through my course. It has definitely been the members of staff who have made my course enjoyable and fulfilling. And overall, I would definitely recommend it to anyone”; “Exceptional support in decision making with regards to planning my future and applying for further academic study. Good personal relationships with lecturers and excellent one-on-one support and advice. Good opportunities for work experience and the chance to further my

experience and knowledge in specific areas in which I have taken a particular interest”; and “Staff are supportive for disable student, willing to help with both academic and personal issues”.

negative comments

AACME – one of the Aero Auto student comments reads: “Department staff are unhelpful. Department has a bad attitude towards helping those who have health or personal problems effecting study”; meanwhile, a Chemical Engineering student says: “Some personal tutors did not offer up much help or assistance”.

AED – one School of the Arts student says there are “Not enough personal tutors as people need pushing”, an English and Drama finalist states: “I have also not felt a great amount of support from my personal tutor”.

CBE – one student talked of a “Serious lack of communication by personal tutors throughout the course”.

LDS – two negative comments, with one student saying their “dissertation tutor and personal tutors are awful at getting in touch with me, they offer no help or advice”, while another writes: “I have had little to no support throughout the course, my personal tutor wasn't even aware I was their tutee”.

SBE – one negative comment from an Information Science that is difficult to decipher.

SCI – one Computer Science student writes: “Personal tutor not happy with extracurricular involvement”.

SPG – seven comments in total. Two Geography students give substantial feedback, with the first declaring: “I feel that the lecturers are more concerned about their research than the students. I had personal issues that I approached my tutor about in my second year, and when sending numerous e-mails for advice over the summer, I received nothing in return, similarly when I emailed the main department office, only to find out they were now on planned leave once the term had started. 3 tutors in 3 years - lack of familiarity and building of a relationship. More one-on-one time is needed. Appears to be lack of communication between staff”; the second writes: “Some lecturers also make it seem like they don't particularly enjoy interaction with students, especially for things like personal tutor meeting, which are compulsory within the department. I think there should be an option in first year if you feel like you don't interact with this tutor, as they are supposed to be there for support and if you don't feel like you can go to them then there is no point in this. There also needs to be more guidance on careers and help in first and second years rather than in third year when it's actually a bit too late for them to start giving you this information and then seem a bit judgemental when you haven't started or plan on applying for graduate jobs. They also need to give more advice on where you can apply geography and what careers you can go into, a lot of this you do have to do yourself but some rough guidelines would be helpful”. Two PHIR finalists also give detailed feedback – the first writes: “My dissertation tutor has decided to go on holiday for the whole month (without email contact) prior to my dissertation hand in. Luckily, my personal tutor will provide me "basic" help, but this was only realised after I sought this help. This for me is completely unacceptable given the money we are paying”; the second, a Joint Honours student, says: “I have felt no sense of belonging to the English Department despite half of my degree being in this subject. Our personal tutor has changed on a year-by-year basis and therefore I have no one in the department I feel that knows me academically and personally, which is a real shame”. Finally, three Social Science comments read: “Personal supervisor did not contact student responsibly”; “Not enough advice from personal tutors ... on certain occasions”; and “Personal tutors do not seem to place a great deal of importance in engaging with the role. Often it seems that this particular role is of low priority & so results in little efficient & effective guidance being offered. In some cases to the point the information or guidance that is provided does not appear to be tailored to the individual students' needs and can be slightly confusing & therefore off-putting”.

SSEHS – six comments which in turn read: “I do not receive much support from my personal tutor”; “My personal tutor made it clear from meeting one that there wasn't a need to speak often and I therefore didn't feel I had any support or anyone I could turn to for advice. I was also not informed when he stopped working for the university. Some of the sports science lecturers, despite being interesting and very knowledgeable were sometimes more concerned about their own research than student support”; “Many lecturers seem to be uninterested in students development and problems. For example, I have seen my personal tutor once (in Freshers' Week). This has been unhelpful and I feel I lack the support that other students with interested tutors receive”; “Very unsatisfied with personal tutor, I was nearly always ignored when I sent an email, often not ever getting a response. This was particularly distressing when I needed advice on my low grades in second year”; “The personal tutors just aren't effective. I've emailed them and

they haven't replied"; and "There's not much personal contact, we need more face-to-face feedback and more small group meetings".

appendix 3 – making Personal Tutoring more prominent centrally

Although all students have access to a Personal Tutor upon the commencement of their studies, little attention – i.e. apart from *AQPH* Appendix 16 – is drawn to this fact in centrally available University resources; in truth, there is very little reason to believe that our students will be familiar with this document. Thus, they may or may not know about Personal Tutoring prior to their arrival.

In considering appropriate and timely locations to attract student attention to this resource, one might think of the *University Prospectus*, the *Student Handbook*, and/or the *Loughborough Student Charter*. Indeed, it is possible to argue that each of these resources offers the opportunity to engage students early in their studies and thus a chance to build upon, improve and deepen Personal Tutor relations with their Personal Tutees. Personal Tutors have a central role to play in the support – both academic and pastoral – that is on offer to our students, but this is not necessarily made clear to students prior to, or even necessarily upon, their arrival.

University Prospectus

If Personal Tutoring is truly important, then it should be prominently highlighted in multiple locations such as the *University Prospectus*. However, one of the few obvious references to Personal Tutors in the current online version appears only to be for [Mature students: Support for your studies](#) – which refers to “A personal tutor (in your department) to offer help and guidance on academic issues” – that is even if at least one current student has identified their Personal Tutor as ‘awesome’ (see [Student profiles: Jack Tabcart](#)). Personal Tutoring is not mentioned under ‘Support during your studies’ or in conjunction with ‘Academic support’. Unfortunately, there appear to be few other references to Personal Tutoring apart from oblique mentions of it in conjunction with certain degree programmes. The recently published [Undergraduate Prospectus 2015](#) continues to make little or no reference to Personal Tutoring, which feels like rather a lost opportunity to shape student expectations prior to their arrival.

Student Handbook

The *Student Handbook* does not appear to identify Personal Tutoring as an essential support mechanism for our students, indeed Personal Tutors are not mentioned under either ‘Study support’ or ‘Student life’, that is even if there are some references in other centrally-held resources to Personal Tutor support. For instance, there is reference to Personal Tutors from:

- the Exams Office when it comes to the [Marking of work](#);
- the International Office for incoming students on [Erasmus and international exchanges](#);
- Student Enquiries in relation to [Withdrawal from study](#);
- the Careers and Employability Centre regarding [Personal Development Planning](#); and
- the Counselling and Disability Service relating to [Impaired Performance Claims](#).

One of the few references to Personal Tutors in the *Student Handbook* is when it comes to [Transfers](#). In order to support our students, the role of the Personal Tutor, including an accessible outline of their responsibilities, should occupy a much more prominent position. The fact is that there is no central or readily identifiable student-focused location where all of this information has been gathered. In truth, although an [Essential Induction Information: FAQs for new students](#) resource is available through the Teaching Centre website, with Personal Tutors identified as one of the means through which student learning is supported, this resource is not

embedded in the [Welcome to Loughborough](#) resources; indeed, having been developed in academic year 2009-10, this information is now in danger of becoming increasingly outdated.

Loughborough Student Charter

Although it refers to Personal Tutoring rather indirectly, it is possible to argue that this approach to student support needs to be seen as one of the main expectations/rights and responsibilities that students and staff should have of one another. Indeed, in employing a [Loughborough Student Charter](#) Learn module to house analogous resources and to explore what each of these statements might mean, it is clear that various undertakings have real potential to inform Personal Tutoring, including the following:

- [meet all the requirements of the programme for which they are registered](#)
- [attend induction, participate in timetabled classes, and attend meetings with tutors and supervisors](#)

The fact is that, within this Learn module, it is suggested that the first of these statements envisages “a joint responsibility of the individual student and the University in terms of delivery for the former and oversight by the latter”. It even goes on to explain that:

... this process sees, for example, [Academic and Personal Tutors](#) inviting their Tutees at the beginning of Semester 2 to discuss performance in their studies during the course of Semester 1, with particular attention being paid to students who are failing and/or not engaging; students are strongly encouraged to interact with staff – for instance, by making full use of office hours, by attending and participating in class, etc. – and with fellow students in order to ensure that they make the most of their studies.

Indeed, it also states: “additional online resources to support this process include the [Student Handbook](#) ... and School/Department internet and intranet materials (incl. Department/Programme Handbooks)”. Meanwhile, the online explanation for the second *Loughborough Student Charter* statement noted above says that this process is:

... supported by systems such as [Co-Tutor](#), and with oversight provided by Academic and Personal Tutors, Dissertation/Project Supervisors, etc., an individual student’s own engagement with their studies (e.g. attendance, time management, preparatory work, etc.) is ultimately a student undertaking as an integral element of our academic community, students are best seen as partners in advancing their own education and, in turn, it is their active engagement in this process which supports the advances in research, [enterprise,] teaching and learning for which this institution is well known – thus, student attendance and participation are crucial elements in the on-going success of this whole process.

It is through appropriate signposting of Personal Tutoring that much of this might be achieved.

appendix 4 – what the literature says

In terms of the supporting literature, the defining edited collection by Liz Thomas and Paula Hixenbaugh entitled *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* has recently been supplemented by Mike Laycock's SEDA publication on *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education – Where Now and Where Next?* and by Phil Race's *Making personal tutoring work*.⁴ These three texts may be worth looking at a little more closely:

Personal Tutoring in Higher Education – Thomas & Hixenbaugh (eds.)

As this collection suggested almost a decade ago, the contemporary context of mass education and resource constraints mean that traditional mechanisms of academic support have come under serious strain just as individual students need them most. Institutional models and approaches need to be re-examined with increasingly diverse student populations having greater expectations, but consideration also needs to be given to the issues and implications for staff on the front-line. In considering what students actually want, the chapter regarding student perspectives by Paula Hixenbaugh, Carol Pearson and David Williams is particularly insightful:

The evidence clearly indicates that students want the personal tutoring system to provide regular and frequent scheduled meetings in which they are actively provided with feedback concerning their general progress. These students want personal tutors to take an active role throughout their degree and to be accessible, approachable and reliable. They want personal tutors who can relate to them, who are enthusiastic and care about them. It is recommended that universities devise personal tutoring structures that enable students and personal tutors to develop a relationship from the beginning of the students' entry to university. These meetings, group as well as individual, need to be scheduled and lack of attendance should be followed up. (p.56)

As Liz Thomas outlines in her postscript, the fact of the matter is that:

Personal tutoring has an important role to play to enhance students' learning experience in HE and improve retention, progression and success. Traditional models of tutoring are no longer appropriate or fit for the purpose. Therefore this requires institutions to adopt new models of personal tutoring which are student-centred, integrated in learning, connected to professional services and proactively engaging students, especially as they make the transition into HE. Staff need to be involved in the development of new tutoring systems and provided with guidance, training and support to enable them to fulfil their new roles, in a wider range of contexts and modes of delivery than ever before. (p.161)

Personal Tutoring in Higher Education – Where Now and Where Next? – Laycock

More recently, indeed as the pressures previously identified have intensified even further, questions regarding the role of Personal Tutoring in terms of widening participation, retention, the first year experience, Personal Development Planning, resources, staff development, and open, distance and online learning have all come into focus. This has led to Mike Laycock offering a series of eight recommendations aimed at future-proofing Personal Tutoring:

1. a strategic and comprehensive approach
2. a proactive personal tutoring system
3. a programme of group tutorials

4. Mike Laycock, *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education – Where Now and Where Next? A literature review and recommendations* SEDA Special 25 (London: SEDA, 2009); Phil Race, *Making personal tutoring work* (Leeds: Leeds Met Press, 2010), available through the [Leeds Metropolitan University Repository](#); and Liz Thomas & Paula Hixenbaugh (eds.), *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* (Stoke: Trentham Books, 2006).

4. from Personal Tutor to Personal Development Tutor
5. Student Support Officers
6. Staff Development and reward programme
7. tracking and supporting students who are failing or are otherwise appearing 'disengaged'
8. student support: peer assisted learning **(pp.35-8)**

Laycock argues that his recommendations are:

... consistent with both the theory and some of the current practice in the UK and elsewhere. The principal aim is to ensure that the basic components of personal tutoring are provided consistently for students and to ensure that staff are appropriately supported and resourced to deliver this. It is recognised that all UK universities will wish to build upon existing good practice and tailor their services to suit local academic needs and priorities. **(p.35)**

Making personal tutoring work – Race

As an educationalist of some standing, Phil Race has built upon the work of other colleagues to come up with a role specification for Personal Tutors:

General responsibilities as a personal tutor

- Acquaint yourself with the services that are available within your institution and to understand how the various processes and procedures that students may need to use function;
- Respect tutees' rights of confidentiality, to make this clear to them and to get permission from them if you need to speak to others about their difficulties;
- Recognise that some students may not get on with you and to accept and facilitate, if necessary, their seeing someone else; and
- Respect any tutees' right not to seek or accept support or help, even though this might appear to be to their own disadvantage.

Specific responsibilities as a personal tutor

- Provide a personal contact for the student within what might otherwise feel like a large, impersonal institution;
- Liaise between the student and course tutors where appropriate;
- Offer advice or assistance when it is within your competence;
- Recognise when the assistance required is beyond your competence;
- Refer students, when necessary, to appropriate sources of specialist help and support;
- Help students review and reflect on their own progress and identify ways of improving it;
- Maintain an overview of students' progress and help them with any learning problems;
- Pick up from students informal feedback on the course;
- Help students in making choices regarding courses, modules or options; and
- Participate in training events about the role of the personal tutor, the counselling service and the problems that students encounter. **(p.10)**

This resource has other features that are readily transferable to any other HEI, even if its professionalism marks it out as a very serious attempt to make Personal Tutoring work at a specific location.

Obviously enough, other resources are available. Indeed, the research cited above builds upon the advice and approaches that have been advocated for years in resources such as *Personal Tutoring in Action* by Colin Lago and Geraldine Shipton, as well as conference outputs like the HEA resource entitled *Critical reflections and positive interventions* by Steven Barfield and Paula Hixenbaugh, and the journal paper by Dawn Stephen, Paul O'Connell and Mike Hall entitled "'Going the extra mile', 'fire-fighting', or laissez-faire? Re-evaluating personal tutoring

relationships within mass higher education”.⁵ In addition, both in terms of additional resources and sectoral guidance, it may be worth pointing to the following materials when considering just what the purpose of Personal Tutoring is, how staff and their students can be supported, and ideas regarding how this mechanism can be organised for the benefit of all concerned:

- Equality Challenge Unit, "Equality and diversity for academics: pastoral care"
- Higher Education Academy – Engineering Subject Centre, "Personal Tutoring" (paper by Elaine Smith) and Higher Education Academy, "Integrating personal tutoring with personal development planning" (paper by Nancy Stevenson)
- International Staff, "Personal tutorials" (part of *The Learning and Teaching ebook*)
- University and College Union, "Early Careers: a UCU Guide for New Staff in Further and Higher Education"

The literature and guidance available suggests that, just as Personal Tutoring has become even more important in terms of supporting a positive student experience, the system itself requires resourcing and structure, with clear, coherent and consistent strategic and operational buy-in.

5. Steven Barfield & Paula Hixenbaugh (eds.), *Critical reflections and positive interventions: an electronic casebook on good practice in personal tutoring* (York: HEA, 2006), available through the [HEA Resources Centre](#); Colin Lago & Geraldine Shipton, *Personal Tutoring in action: A handbook for staff involved in working with and supporting students* 2nd edition revised by Colin Lago & Safina La Peta Meah (Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1999); and Dawn Stephen, Paul O’Connell & Mike Hall, “‘Going the extra mile’, ‘fire-fighting’, or laissez-faire? Re-evaluating personal tutoring relationships within mass higher education”, in *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol.13 No.4 2008, pp.449-60.

appendix 5 – the systems operating at other HEIs

Of the systems considered at other UK universities, three (i.e. Bath, Exeter, and Leeds) have been examined in depth, while the other institutions featured here (i.e. Aberdeen, Brighton and Edinburgh) have been looked at in terms of readily available online information.

institution	main features and further details
University of Aberdeen	The University of Aberdeen guidance for students includes clear advice on what a Personal Tutor can and cannot do, it explains where a student's responsibilities lie, it outlines how students should prepare for meetings with their Personal Tutor, and it provides a set of answers to Frequently Asked Questions. In addition to wider information housed on a New Students: Getting Started web resource, there is also a leaflet entitled The Personal Tutor System – Guidance for Tutees .
University of Bath	The University of Bath provides comprehensive guidance to staff that includes a set of Guidelines for Personal Tutors containing information on Pastoral Support, Academic Induction, and their Senior Tutors Forum, as well as advice to students regarding the Personal tutorial system ; this is underpinned by the institution's Quality Assurance Code of Practice: Personal Tutoring . It is asserted that the Personal Tutoring role is broad support for academic and personal development, with students being met at least three times in their first semester, and at least one other meeting per semester thereafter. Senior Tutors are responsible for ensuring effective communication between central services and the department regarding the support available to students, but this person is not intended to be student facing and instead concentrates on the coordination of the Personal Tutoring system to ensure its effectiveness. Students are responsible for attending the meetings, with attention drawn to the fact that a reference may not be good if they do not attend. The Head of Student Services chairs the forum of Senior Tutors. Two main models are in operation: (1) integrated tutorials offering guidance on academic topics related to the student's programme of study which are not module specific but which support skills development and build upon induction; and (2) separate meetings running from academic induction/re-induction to establish and sustain personal contact.
University of Brighton	In addition to their Personal, Academic Tutoring Policy guidelines, the University of Brighton also offers some limited information to students regarding Personal Tutoring as part of the Study Support package.
University of Edinburgh	The University of Edinburgh offers its students general guidance on its Personal Tutor system, with its Institute for Academic Development offering additional advice on Meeting your personal tutor which includes a preparatory form that students can complete prior to meeting with their Personal Tutor (see Preparing for your Personal Tutor meeting). Each academic location has their own interpretation regarding what Personal Tutoring may mean more locally (see School Personal Tutoring Statements for details), but the Personal Tutor System - Benefits for Students are made clear to all concerned, and these are supported by central provision such as a Guidance and Support to Students: Framework document which makes is clear what responsibilities are held by Personal Tutors, Personal Tutees and Senior Tutors. Further supporting documentation includes information on Roles and Responsibilities Within the Personal Tutor System and Academic and Pastoral Support Standards and

	Guiding Principles.
University of Exeter	<p>The University of Exeter has a Code of Practice – Personal Tutor System that is supported by a comprehensive Personal Tutor Manual as well as a Quick Guide to Personal Tutoring each of which includes a <i>Personal Tutoring Record</i> system. The main Personal Tutoring web resource also includes guidance and advice on the role of the personal tutor, the personal tutor and PDP, supporting (a) students with disabilities, (b) students in difficulties and (c) international students, as well as personal tutor policies and procedures such as dealing with absence and/or problems with academic progress, while also providing access to a Senior Tutor Forum. Other institutional resources include a Career Zone: Quick employability guide for Personal Tutors, while individual locations have Personal Tutors (e.g. College of Social Science and International Studies) advice for students). Personal Tutors are responsible for PDP structures and student support, they meet Year One students at least twice a semester, with UG and PG(T) students subsequently meeting their Personal Tutor at least three times a year. Personal Tutors have two ‘tutorial hours’ per week allowing tutees to see them without appointment, with the purpose of these meetings being student progress, skills development, feedback, and guidance on module choice. Clear information is provided on how to change a Personal Tutor without the need for students to give a reason for this request, and Personal Tutoring is also a standing item on SSLC agendas. Combined/joint honours students have a Personal Tutor in their home department, as well as a named contact in the other department to provide specialist guidance.</p>
University of Leeds	<p>It is made clear to all students that Personal Tutoring is at the heart of the Leeds for Life programme, with online resources supporting students to have “useful focussed meetings” with their Personal Tutors, to develop a ‘Living CV’ (thereby integrating PDP into the personal tutoring framework), and to build useful skills and access developmental opportunities. Additional mechanisms include the Skills@Library workshops, as well as tailored resources on departmental websites, all of which build on centrally available information regarding Personal Tutoring (including clearly stated aims and principles), a Personal Tutoring Policy, and a central online Personal Tutoring location where these various materials are gathered. Students meet individually with their Personal Tutor at least once a semester (but twice in the first semester), with their first meeting – normally as part of the induction programme – taking place within two weeks of arrival. There are procedures for changing a Personal Tutor, there is a University-wide peer mentoring scheme that allows new students to be matched up with a Year Two volunteer, and Leeds also have an ‘I love my personal tutor award’.</p>

It is worth noting that the Personal Tutoring systems operating at a number of other institutions (including Newcastle, Nottingham, Plymouth, Reading, Sheffield, Swansea, UCL, Warwick, and Wolverhampton) have also been considered while undertaking this scoping project. Taken together, they have helped to inform the main recommendations regarding future steps for Personal Tutoring at Loughborough.

appendix 6 – staff training and support

Entitled ‘Academic and Personal Tutoring’, accessible via [my.HR](#), and also constituting part of the *New Lecturers’ Course*, the freestanding Staff Development workshop provided by the Teaching Centre in conjunction with colleagues from Student Services is outlined as follows:

Learning activity

Academic and Personal Tutoring

Overview

--- TARGET AUDIENCE ---

A required session for those undertaking the New Lecturers Course, and delivered as part of the New Lecturers Course – Unit 1: Teaching and Supporting Students. This workshop will also be of interest to established academic staff seeking to learn more about the latest academic and personal tutoring developments on campus.

--- OVERVIEW ---

As an academic and/or personal tutor, you may be the first port of call for a student in distress or difficulty. This workshop aims to give you the skills and confidence to provide more effective help for these students. The workshop will include: a chance to consider the role of the academic and/or personal tutor and an exploration of the kinds of academic/personal issues students might bring; information on support services and resources available within the University for students and for your role as a tutor; and a discussion on how and when to make referrals to these support services and practice an examination of various academic and/or personal tutoring scenarios.

--- OTHER INFORMATION ---

Attendees should familiarise themselves with the University’s Personal Tutoring and Academic Guidance Minimum Standards statement i.e. Academic Quality Procedures Handbook Appendix 16, which can be found at the following web address: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/appendix/16/>. Attendees should also familiarise themselves with their own Departmental/School Policy on Personal Tutoring prior to attending the workshop as these will inform the session. A short pre-workshop questionnaire will be made available to participants prior to the workshop, and should be completed ahead of their attendance.

Objectives

- assess how and when to make referrals to University Support Services;
- demonstrate awareness of the range of University Support Services;
- discuss the role and responsibilities of the academic and/or personal tutor; and
- identify the skills needed to be an effective academic and/or personal tutor.

Although it normally only ever involves a handful of non-probationary academic staff, this workshop – which typically runs three/four times a year – is intended to equip colleagues with the skills and confidence to provide more effective help for students in distress or difficulty, even if it also advocates certain approaches and practices aimed at obviating such scenarios before they arise.

In addition, it is worth noting that a bespoke version of this Personal Tutoring workshop is also available to Schools/Departments across campus, that is even if this offer has only been taken up once in the past five years. Given the relative lack of staff engagement with existing provision up to this point, a possible next step would be to create an online mandatory course for all Personal Tutors which would further equip and support them, for instance by expanding their institutional knowledge and by empowering them to become ever more active in their role. This course would be part of any Continuing Professional Development Framework, and could also feature in the Performance and Development Review.

With further regard to the support currently available to staff, the Teaching Centre's [Information for ... Academic staff: Academic and Personal Tutors](#) is an outward-facing, if relatively basic, resource that is supported by updates posted on the Teaching and Learning Blog such as "[Making personal tutoring work](#)". This being said, it is the comprehensive [Academic and Personal Tutoring Community of Practice](#) materials that have been developed, gathered and placed on Learn across the past five years as part of the umbrella *Enhancing Student Engagement* project – which include [A Skills Resource](#) created by CDS colleagues and a set of [Additional Materials](#) developed within the Teaching Centre – where the sharing of resources and staff interaction (e.g. Senior Tutor Forum) might be most readily facilitated.

appendix 7 – Co-Tutor and other University tools

Through the work of colleagues in CEDE, this University has seen the development of an online tool aimed at supporting the Personal Tutoring system. Indeed, [Co-Tutor](#) says that it can be used “to communicate with and manage your *personal tutees*, *project students*, *Industrial placement activities*, *PGR supervision* and *module cohorts*”.

In sum, Co-Tutor is an incredibly powerful tool allowing colleagues to add comments regarding their students, to upload files (e.g. CVs), to schedule meetings, to send emails, to view personal information, to see detail attendance records, etc., but there is a lack of consistency in its utilization and some real variability in the quality of the data it might contain on any comparable cohort of students. The benefits of this system for staff engaged in Personal Tutoring responsibilities are clear:

Co-tutor improves significantly the standard practice of keeping meeting notes and makes the frequency and quality of support, provided by staff for students, completely transparent to senior colleagues and department managers. It provides audit trails and accountability for the quality of care provided to students. It highlights continuity of care for subsequent tutors in a student's learning journey. It makes clear the responsibility of individual members of staff for quality and open guidance and provision and it highlights consistent and inconsistent levels of care and management.

It supports staff in the adherence to the UK's Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. It supports the UK Government guidelines for the monitoring of international student attendance. Co-Tutor enables cross-departmental working and sharing of effective practice. It allows for comparison of tutorial provision and attendance between departments, course cohorts, year groups, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

This being said, just as colleagues who have been behind the development of this “staff and student relationship management system” are engaged in attracting buy-in from other HEIs, we are in danger of not using it adequately or appropriately.⁶ Thus, for example, regular meetings should be documented via [Co-Tutor](#) with the tutee supplying an appropriate reflection before the meeting and the Personal Tutor supplying a response with some feedback afterwards); all staff involved in teaching should be seeking to input attendance data via [Attendant](#) so that more detail regarding student engagement is available to Personal Tutors; and all of this information should be of use in support of student development, for example in providing references, in support of placements, and indeed in supporting student attainment of the [Loughborough Employability Award](#).⁷

6. More information is available in a [Co-Tutor: the staff and student relationship management system](#) brochure and online through the [Co-Tutor](#) commercialisation site.

7. [Co-Tutor](#) is a record-keeping tool allowing staff to communicate with and manage Personal Tutees, as well as project students, industrial placement activities, PG(R) supervision, etc. – information is available online. [Attendant](#) works in conjunction with [Co-Tutor](#) and is a system for recording and viewing student attendance – information is available online. The [Loughborough Employability Award](#) provides students with a framework through which they can record extra-curricular activities (e.g. volunteering, work experience, etc.) and reflect upon the employability skills they have developed by undertaking these activities – information is available online.

appendix 8 – immediate changes to AQP Appendix 16

The marked up text in red suggests the amendments needing to be made urgently:

Appendix 16 - Personal Tutoring and Academic Guidance: Minimum Standards

It is Loughborough University policy that all students should have timetabled access to personal tutors. This is to ensure that appropriate advice and support is provided, student problems and concerns are quickly identified and causes of student withdrawal are minimised.

All ~~departments-Schools~~ are expected to have effective and consistent support mechanisms in place, for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

~~Departments-Schools~~ should nevertheless seek to ensure that students do not regard the personal tutor system as in any way absolving them from recognising their own needs and taking responsibility for their own learning.

The University recognises that ~~departments-Schools~~ will wish to make arrangements for personal tutoring to suit the curriculum and their own methods of learning and teaching. However all ~~departments-Schools~~ should observe the following minimum requirements.

(These requirements are drafted with undergraduate students primarily in mind. More flexible arrangements may be appropriate for PGT students, but they too should accord with the spirit of the guidance.)

1. Each ~~department-School~~ should publish its own policy on personal tutoring in its ~~School/Departmental/Programme~~ handbook

In addition ~~departments-Schools~~ may wish to publish this information elsewhere and by other means, for example, the system may be described at the induction meeting, followed by meetings with individual tutors; induction materials; ~~School/De~~partmental web page; a ~~departmental-School~~ "Guide to Personal Tutoring"; Programme Handbooks; an introductory letter from personal tutors to all their new tutees; a Student "Log Book"; Staff Handbook.

2. All undergraduate students should be invited to attend a minimum of two scheduled, face-to-face meetings per year

- For first year students, the first meeting should be scheduled to take place by week ~~5-1~~ of semester 1 with another meeting scheduled by the third week of semester 2 to discuss progress based on semester 1 marks.
- Meetings with second year tutees should be scheduled within ~~5-3~~ weeks of their returning.
- Arrangements for students in their third year or subsequent year may be more flexible, reflecting other sources of academic support available, e.g. project supervision.
- Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that students attend the meetings to which they have been invited.

3. Personal Tutors should keep retrievable records, written or electronic of all formal meetings with their students

- These records should be accessible should the tutor be unavailable due to illness, study leave etc. and should take current Data Protection legislation into account.
- Records of other meetings may be kept where it is agreed by the tutor and the student that matters discussed warrant such action.
- Examples of current practice include: written records placed on student files which are accessed via the administrative officer; attendance card or paper form placed on student file; electronic tutorial record system (Co-Tutor) (<http://co-tutor.lboro.ac.uk>); copies of emails placed on student files; and meetings recorded in the student's log book.

4. Personal Tutors should be aware of procedures to be followed if students fail to attend scheduled meetings (for example, what efforts should be made to contact the student, who else should be alerted if the student is not responding, what checks should be made on the student's work).

5. The **School/**Departmental Policy should include, as a minimum, the following information:

- A statement that each new student is assigned a personal tutor on arrival, and where information about who a student's personal tutor is can be found; for example reference might be made to **School/De**partmental notice boards or web pages.
- A description of how students meet their personal tutor for the first time, and the nature of arrangements for subsequent meetings; the description might include reference to a booking system for meetings, regular 'surgery' hours, or the use of email for setting up meetings or resolving issues online.
- A description of how personal tutoring arrangements differ as students progress from year one of the programme (if appropriate); for example, while arrangements for first year students may be formally timetabled by the tutor, second and third year students may be encouraged to take more responsibility for maintaining regular contact.
- A statement about the availability of personal tutors; individual tutors should publish times when they are available and times for meetings; for example by use of **School/De**partmental notice boards or web pages, student pigeon holes, email to tutees or notices on their office doors.
- Information about other sources of guidance and advice within **Schools/De**partments and the University at large. Students should be made aware of other **School/De**partmental arrangements, such as the availability of Year Tutor, Programme Tutor and other staff, including the **Dean of School/**Head of Department, to whom they may speak as an alternative to the personal tutor of they so wish. Students should be told where they can find out about University-wide support services such as **the Counselling Service**, **the Centre for Faith and Spirituality-Chaplaincy**, **the Careers and Employability Centre**, **the Counselling and Disability Disabilities and Additional Needs Service (DANS)**, the English Language **Support Service-Study Unit**, etc.
- A statement about the confidentiality of meetings with personal tutors, with the proviso that matters that have to be dealt with officially may need, with the student's approval, to be referred on and/or placed 'on the record'.
- A statement about how, in exceptional circumstances, **a**s student may ask his/her Programme **Co-ordinator/Director/**Tutor for the Personal Tutor to be changed. This may include the opportunity to pursue the matter with the **Dean of School/**Head of Department if an initial request to the Programme Tutor does not succeed.

6. Where a student is contemplating leave of absence, a change of programme or withdrawal, the personal tutor should explain any implications for assessments and accumulation of credit towards the degree or other qualifications, and discuss the possibilities for transfer to other programmes or to part-time study if appropriate.

- The personal tutor should also discuss whether it would be appropriate to provide the student with some reading whilst on leave of absence, to provide support and advice on preparation for their return to study and monitor their progress during the first few months following their return.
- If a **School/De**partment judges it inappropriate for a personal tutor to provide such information and advice, then the personal tutor must know to whom such a student should be referred - e.g. the programme director.

7. **Schools/**Departments should have a clear procedure for reassigning students when the existing personal tutor takes leave of absence (e.g. sabbatical leave, long term sickness), or leaves the University.

8. **School/**Departmental systems of personal tutoring should be monitored and evaluated by the **School/De**partmental learning and teaching committee with the results feeding into the Programme Review Procedure.

9. **Schools/**Departments should provide adequate support for their personal tutors to ensure that they know where and how to seek additional advice on student problems.

These should include subject experts, other experienced colleagues, and the University's wider support services, depending on individual circumstances.

~~30 September 2002-10 April 2014~~