School of Social and Political Science
Undergraduate Personal Tutoring Statement 2017-18

Aims of the Personal Tutor System

The Personal Tutor system will provide you with a named member of academic staff, your Personal Tutor, who will support you throughout your time at the University, giving you academic support and a route to pastoral support. You, as a Tutee, will work with your Personal Tutor to reflect on your academic performance, how this contributes to your aspirations and helps you to engage as a member of a community of learners. You will also be supported throughout your time at university by a Student Support Team. More details on the Personal Tutoring system can be found at: My Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor is a member of academic staff familiar with your general area of study and the expectations of academic work in your discipline. Your Personal Tutor will:

- help you to review your academic progress and performance regularly;
- help you to think about your learning, how it contributes to your future development, prepares you for your time at university and your career;
- help you to become a confident, active member of a community of learners;
- help you to deal with any concerns or problems that might affect your studies and refer you to other staff in the School and support services as appropriate.

You can find out who your Personal Tutor is via MyEd.

Undergraduate Students

During your early years at the University your School will schedule meetings* with your Personal Tutor to enable you to settle in and build a relationship. Contact will gradually become less formal in the latter years of study; however, you are actively encouraged to request meetings with your Personal Tutor as required throughout your time at the University. Some of these of will be individual meetings with your Personal Tutor and others will take place in a group.

Individual meetings provide you with an opportunity to check you are enrolled in appropriate courses, discuss your progress on your degree programme, reflect on your learning and use of feedback, and raise any issues or concerns regarding your studies. They also provide opportunities for you to discuss any support you may require during your studies, consider ways of becoming more involved in your academic community, and identify ways of developing skills relevant to your time at university or beyond.

Group meetings will typically involve students in the same year and degree programme as you, and will be led by your PT (often with input from other staff in the University, for instance your Student Support Officer, the Careers Service or the Institute for Academic Development). They may take place within a Fundamentals course, if this is part of your degree programme. The group meetings allow you to engage with your peers and to share

* Please note that ‘scheduled’ means that your PT has made a reasonable proactive attempt to arrange a meeting with you; it may happen that you do not respond or attend the meeting.
experiences. They will also be used to provide information about opportunities to enhance your learning experience, and develop your academic skills while at university. Content will vary depending on your year group but could include talks from the careers service, discussion of opportunities to study overseas, details of internships and volunteer opportunities.

**Year 1 Undergraduate Students**

During Semester 1, Year 1 students will have an individual meeting with their Personal Tutor in week 0 (‘Welcome Week’). It will be introductory and will ensure you are aware of the responsibilities and opportunities available under the PT system. You will have a second individual meeting in Semester 2, which will typically take place mid-way through the semester and will be used to review academic progress, and for preliminary discussions around course options for the following academic year. You will have at least two further meetings with your Personal Tutor across the year, which may take place in group settings.

**Continuing Undergraduate Students**

As a continuing undergraduate student, you will have an individual meeting with your Personal Tutor in week 0 or week 1. In preparation for this meeting, you should reflect on your main achievements and challenges in your studies thus far. The meeting will be used to discuss those reflections, discuss coursework feedback and marks, and direct you to additional support and opportunities available. As a Year 2 student, you will have at least two further meetings with your Personal Tutor over the course of the year, one of which may take place in a group. If you are in Year 3 or following, you should contact your Personal Tutor to request further meetings as required.

Your Personal Tutor will contact you via your university e-mail account or by placing a note on your Euclid record (in which case you will also be notified automatically via your university e-mail account) to arrange or notify you of meetings. You are responsible for checking and responding to meeting requests, and for attending meetings. You may also request additional meetings with your Personal Tutor by contacting them via e-mail or using the meeting request function in MyEd.

If you are not on campus (e.g. studying abroad for a period, or on placement, or studying an online degree) then your meetings may take place by telephone, live internet call, or a web conferencing application. Email exchanges are not considered to be meetings unless they take place within a pre-agreed timeframe to enable you to have a “conversation” (e.g. if you are overseas and emailing within a 24-36 hour period to take account of time differences).

**Support Contacts**

Within each School there are a number of other roles working in partnership with Personal Tutors to make sure the Personal Tutor system works for you.

**Student Support Team**

Each School has a Student Support Team (SST) working with Personal Tutors to support you. In SPS, each subject area has a designated Student Support Officer. Your Student
Support Officer is determined by the subject area for your degree (the ‘first named’ subject if you are on a joint degree programme).

Details of the Student Support Team can be found here: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/student_support_and_community/student_support_team

Information on other key contacts in the Undergraduate School, including the Director and Deputy Directors of the Undergraduate School, and the Senior Tutor, can be found here: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/the_undergraduate_school/meet_the_team

Tips for contacting the most appropriate person:
- As a general rule, your Personal Tutor is your best point of first contact for academic issues and your Student Support Officer is your best point of first contact for non-academic issues.
- Your Personal Tutor can advise on academic issues relating to your degree. They may also be able to offer generic advice on improving your academic performance. Feedback on specific feedback comments should be sought from your course tutor or course organiser in the first instance.
- You should ensure your Personal Tutor is aware of any issues which you feel may adversely affect your studies. Your Personal Tutor will be able to advise you on university procedures for dealing with difficulties that might affect your academic performance, and advise you as to possible support networks within the University.
- You can contact your Personal Tutor via e-mail or MyEd. All PTs also hold feedback and guidance hours at least once a week during semester time. You can visit during these hours without an appointment. Details of these hours for your PT will be noted on their staff webpage and displayed on their office door.
- When contacting your Personal Tutor, you should receive an initial response within three working days.
- Each subject area also has a Student Support Officer. Your Student Support Officer can act as a first point of contact if you wish to discuss an issue relating to your studies.
- Student Support Officers can deal with routine issues, such as course changes in the first two weeks of a semester, and assisting with completing Special Circumstances applications, without you needing to arrange a meeting with your Personal Tutor.
- If your Personal Tutor is unavailable, you should contact your Student Support Officer. If both your Student Support Officer and Personal Tutor are unavailable please visit Reception on the Ground Floor of Chrystal Macmillan Building, where the Undergraduate Teaching Office will be able to assist with your enquiry.

Senior Tutor
Each School has a Senior Tutor who oversees the effectiveness of personal tutoring within your School. If you feel that you cannot speak to your Personal Tutor (and sometimes people simply do not get along due to no fault of either side) please contact your Senior Tutor. Contact information for the Senior Tutor in SPS can be found here: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/the_undergraduate_school/meet_the_team