

ACADEMIC PERSONAL TUTORING FRAMEWORK

1. Principles

- 1.1 All students should have a named Academic Personal Tutor for academic support who is a member of university faculty, with the aim of enabling positive relational connection with the University and learning communities.
- 1.2 All undergraduate students should have continuity of Academic Personal Tutor (where possible) throughout their main degree.
- 1.3 All students should have regular, structured and purposeful engagement with an Academic Personal Tutor, participation with which should be recorded and included in attendance monitoring.
- 1.4 Academic Personal Tutors have oversight of a student's course of study and support students to make academic progress, including helping them to navigate University environments taking into account students' cultural and academic contexts.
- 1.5 Academic Personal Tutors support students to reflect on and synthesize information from assessment feedback and grades, and to develop strategies in response to these.
- 1.6 Academic Personal Tutors should provide a supportive, non-judgemental first-point-of-contact for student pastoral matters, where necessary, and guide students to appropriate specialist support within the University (liaising with Faculty leads as relevant).
- 1.7 Academic Personal Tutors should undertake regularly updated training relevant to the tutoring role.

2. Aims:

- 2.1 Ensure parity and consistency in academic personal tutoring that all students can expect institution-wide (in line with NUS Charter on Personal Tutors).
- 2.2 Establish consistent routes and levels of expert academic support to enable success, especially for students facing additional academic barriers.
- 2.3 Provide clarity for staff and students on the role of academic personal tutoring and sustainable structures around this (particularly in relation to boundaries between the academic and pastoral), including how the role is recognised and rewarded.

- 2.4 Provide opportunities for all students to form positive relational connections with the University, encouraging a sense of academic belonging, and a structure in which the individual needs of our students are respected and supported through a personalised, holistic and inclusive approach.

3. Academic Personal Tutors:

- 3.1 'Academic Advisors' are renamed 'Academic Personal Tutors' (APTs), emphasising the academic remit of the role and the focus on developing individual, relational connection.
- 3.2 All Faculties introduce APTs as the 'baseline', ensuring consistency for students (i.e. all students are assigned an APT). The APT will act as students' key point of contact for guidance and signposting as relevant. All Education and Scholarship or Education and Research academic faculty could be APTs (and so eligible for relevant training, etc.), but the allocation/proportion of staff is at Faculty discretion.
- 3.3 Undergraduate and (where possible in the first year of implementation) postgraduate students should be allocated an APT in their subject area. Students should be allocated to APTs with course cohesion, where possible, to support cohort identity (e.g. English and Film Studies students in the same year allocated to the same APT).
- 3.4 The number of tutees allocated to each APT is at the discretion of the Faculty, but in any- case should not exceed 50.
- 3.5 APTs should be allocated at least one hour per student per semester (i.e. two hours per year) in workload models. This represents an increase in workload allocation for some subjects.
- 3.6 APTs will deliver regular, structured contact with tutees, following a broadly consistent and level-specific 'tutoring curriculum' of academic development that combines centrally- created and subject-specific resources. This will include focusing on employability (i.e. identifying skills developed within the subject), engaging with assessment feedback, making decisions on curriculum choice, etc. These areas will explicitly support work to improve Graduate Outcomes, NSS, and APP objectives (e.g. improved continuation, reducing awarding gaps). It should be clear that a key role for the APTs is providing 'oversight' for their tutees' course of study (in line with Principle 4).
- 3.7 APTs will deliver a mix of scheduled group sessions with tutees (in-person or on-line) and one-to-one review meetings at specific points in the year (e.g. around assessment feedback release). Group meetings of tutees should be timetabled, registered and considered 'teaching' for attendance monitoring purposes. A system and process to support this will be required for implementation.

- 3.8 Whilst fuller guidance will be developed alongside the tutoring 'curriculum', and flexibility will be required within this framework, indicatively this could involve for example:
- An APT with 42 first-year undergraduate tutees is allocated 84 hours in annual workload.
 - They hold a scheduled one-to-one 20 minute meeting with each tutee once per semester (28 hours total), with the Spring meeting following assessment feedback release.
 - They hold two 1-hour meetings per semester with 21 tutees at a time (8 hours total).
 - As their tutees are first-year students, they hold an additional one-to-one meeting in the Autumn (14 hours).
 - They hold a drop-in hour each week during the teaching term to enable ad hoc/responsive meetings (22 hours total).
 - Training could be expected to take approximately 3-4 hours per year.
 - The remaining 8 hours is likely to be required for meeting preparation and pro-active outreach to students – this time will need to be used efficiently through simple processes and centralised resources.

The above is only indicative but aims to demonstrate how the time allocation for APTs should prioritise contact with tutees, building relational engagement.

- 3.9 APTs will undertake regular pro-active monitoring of tutees throughout the year (e.g. 3 time per semester using the '1-9' check-in system, receiving information on low attendance following the Attendance, Absence and Engagement policy) with follow-up action where there are concerns. A consistent structure for this is also an important part of our ability to fulfil duties relating to constructive knowledge of disability.
- 3.10 APTs should receive, and undertake, relevant training to support this role. This will draw upon existing good practices across the University, including a central resources site. This should align with the UKAT framework and AdvanceHE frameworks, such as the 'Competency Framework for Responding to Student in Distress'.
- 3.11 Consideration is needed as to how student information is provided to APTs (e.g. records from meetings, access to assessment results/feedback), both in terms of process and systems. The APT is the default referee for their students.
- 3.12 The performance of the APT system is overseen by the relevant function within Faculties, under the Associate Dean for Education and Students, with line management via Heads of Department.

4. Specialised Academic Support (escalation-route)

- 4.1 APTs are likely to have tutees who, for a wide range of reasons, require additional academic support beyond the capacity (i.e. workload allocation and/or skillset) of

APTs as 'baseline' academic support. This means that APTs may have reduced capacity to enhance the experience of their wider tutees or students requiring additional academic support do not receive it effectively. As well as a student experience issue, this can quickly become a staff experience issue also.

- 4.2 These tutees can be 'escalated' to a more 'specialised' academic role. Escalation would be through referral from the APT (or lead role in the Faculty). They are academic roles as they are providing academic advice and are likely to work closely with central services. This role would then be able to meet with students individually, help them to develop and prioritise study plans, and use specialised knowledge/expertise in working with student groups that are at greater academic risk (e.g. of withdrawal, low attainment, low rates of progression, etc.). For example:
 - students with disabilities may require academic support in how their disability interacts with and impacts their studies, rather than pastoral/therapeutic support which would be delivered by relevant specialist professional service teams (e.g. Disability Services).
 - international students who may be experiencing challenging in transitioning to a new education system: these roles would directly support international student experience and help address awarding gaps.
- 4.3 Students referred to these specialist roles would be expected to access support for a limited time, to stabilise their academic progress and move back to being supported primarily by the APT. These roles would support student retention, continuation, completion and attainment (with evaluation of the model linked to these).
- 4.4 These 'specialised' roles would be very likely to have a specific area of expertise (e.g. international student experience, inclusivity relating to particular student characteristics, etc.), which are likely to align with Scholarship aims for Education and Scholarship faculty. This would enable them to also provide support and guidance to APTs more widely on these areas within their Faculty, sharing expertise and best practice, e.g. delivering workshops, training, etc.
- 4.5 These roles will be Faculty-based, with a community of practice between them to support sharing of practices. This would enable closer subject-specificity and familiarity of staff in these more specialist roles with APTs more broadly. Faculties are, as above, likely to have different existing roles that could deliver this function. This model should be subject to review at the end of 12 months.
- 4.6 We would propose naming these roles 'Academic Success Tutors' (following consideration of alternatives such as 'Senior Tutor', 'Lecturer in Academic and Student Experience', or 'Academic Specialist Tutor').
- 4.7 Faculty undertaking these roles may or may not also be allocated tutees within their subject area (i.e. acting as APTs).

5. Incentivisation and Success Measures

- 5.1 Key to this model is developing how staff can evidence success as an APT and/or Academic Success Tutor. Success in this should then be recognised, and explicitly included, in Achievement and Development Reviews (ADRs) and promotion criteria. Scholarship in 'student success' is an area of focus for a wide range of colleagues, especially on the Education and Scholarship route, and these roles are likely to support their Scholarship objectives.

Review/Contact/References	
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Division:	Division for the Student Experience
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