# POLICIES & PROCEDURES

# PERSONAL TUTORING & ACADEMIC SUPPORT POLICY

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| **Policy Owner:** | Director of Curriculum |
| **Date Approved:** | 5 February 2025 |
| **Version:** | V5.0 |
| **Equality Screening Date:** | N/A |
| **Date of First Issue:** | May 2019 |
| **Date of Next Review:** | January 2026 |
| **Location:** | Gateway |

# CONTENTS

## 1.    Introduction

1.1    The Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy sets out the College's vision for a student-centred approach to the personal and academic development of our students to help them to fulfil their potential.

1.2    *The College is committed to providing an effective, consistent and supportive Tutorial programme which enhances our students' learning experience and improves retention and success rates for all.*

1.3    The Tutorial programme is an integral component of the College's Retention and Achievement Strategy and its Student Engagement Policy.

1.4    The focus of the Tutorial programme is to encourage students to be active participants in their learning and set realistic targets for achievement.

## 2.    The Tutorial Programme

2.1    The Tutorial programme is embedded within Full-Time (FT) and Part-Time (PT) Vocational (over 10 hours per week) programmes of study. All students on these programmes are allocated a Personal Tutor who is responsible for the implementation of the Tutorial programme.

2.2    The Tutorial programme consists of the following key elements:
   i.)    Induction;
   ii.)    Pastoral Support;
   iii.)    Academic Support;
   iv.)    Personal Development and Careers Education.

2.3    The Tutorial programme aims to:
   - Promote the academic/vocational and personal development of our students;
   - Support our students in the achievement of their learning and qualification(s) aims;
   - Encourage aspirations for progression;

- Encourage self-development;

- Monitor student attendance and progression;

- Foster an authentic supportive relationship between personal tutor and student;

- Enhance communication between individual students and the programme teaching team;

- Develop an understanding of careers education, guidance and research to enable and empower students to make timely, well informed, relevant decisions regarding their career aspirations;

- Develop a supportive peer cohort; and

- Provide an environment in which all students have an equal opportunity to learn and achieve.

## 3.    Programme Overview

3.1    The key milestones and content for the Tutorial programme are in the SWC **'A Good Practice Guide to Tutorials'**. The purpose of this programme is to provide the Personal Tutor with a guide as to the important aspects of the Tutorial system.

3.2    Documents relating to the tutorial process can be found at Personal Tutorial Toolkit | General | Microsoft Teams

3.3    The process for supporting at risk students can be found at Supporting At Risk Students (EWS).pdf

3.4    Induction

3.4.1    The Induction Programme will last for a period of six weeks. The aims of this programme are to get the course groups to:

- know each other and their campus

- form friendship groups,

- experience practical elements of their vocational area

- experience problem solving and teamwork

as well as carry out necessary administration and receive relevant information on the College's services, the standards expected from its students, and the Programme of Study.

3.4.2    Induction should be enjoyable.

3.4.3    Further information and resources are available at [Induction Guide for Tutors](#)

3.5    <u>Pastoral Support</u>

Personal Tutors in partnership with the Programme Team, the Student Engagement and Support Services and the Safeguarding Officer will provide students with Pastoral Support. The Student Engagement and Support Services calendar provides a range of student-focused activities that focus on Health and Well-Being and Resilience. The Personal Tutor is a key point of contact for the student and will act as a gateway to other services to ensure students are referred as appropriate.

3.6    <u>Academic Support</u>

3.6.1    The College's staff aim to support students to progress and achieve.

3.6.2    Personal Tutors use a grade tracking sheet to review and track student progress on a regular basis.

3.6.3    Personal Tutors will undertake two Progress Reviews with students during the academic year. These Reviews correspond with the Parent/Teacher meetings. Personal Tutors document the reviews on the appropriate recording documentation. Each lecturer, including the Essential Skills tutor, contributes to the Reviews by providing an assessment of the student's performance in his/her module.

3.6.4    The purpose of the Reviews are to:

- Provide the student with feedback on progress in each module and against goals identified;
- Develop, in partnership with the student (and parent/guardian as appropriate), an agreed action plan, if required; and
- Identify any additional support required and to refer the student, if appropriate, to the Student Engagement Officer – Learning Support.
- Provide students with information on career/progression opportunities.

3.7    <u>Personal Development and Careers Education</u>

3.7.1    This section of the Tutorial Programme aims to motivate students to make informed

choices about their future careers and provide them with the opportunities and experiences to develop essential employability skills.

3.7.2   The Careers Education programme will be led and supported by Student Engagement and Support Services.

3.7.3   However, the Personal Tutor will:

- Offer impartial guidance and information on future plans and refer students for careers advice where more specialist knowledge is needed.
- Assist students in the application process,
- write references and send forms, for further/higher education where required, for example UCAS.

3.8   <u>Students at Risk of Early Withdrawal</u>

3.8.1   Personal Tutors will use the " At Risk Alert Retention Checklist" and "At Risk Monitoring Form" (Appendix 1) to specifically highlight 'at risk' students on entry or at other points in the programme. The aim of the Checklist is to support Personal Tutors in identifying those students who require support to remain on their programme of study. It operates on the basis of a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) Alert.

3.8.2   Whilst outside the remit of this policy, it is important to note that the monitoring of 'at risk' students will commence at pre-entry. At **application stage**, a student who has previously enrolled on a programme at the College and has not achieved, should be coded as Red. The Programme Co-ordinator will take on this responsibility and will request evidence on student performance i.e. reference.

3.8.3   This evidence will enable the Programme Co-ordinator, together with the Deputy Head of Department and Head of Department (as appropriate), to make an informed decision as to the eligibility of the student. If a decision is taken not to enrol, the student will be referred to Student Engagement and Support Services for discussion on alternative pathways.

3.8.4   If a decision is taken to accept the student on the programme, the Programme Co-ordinator will ensure that clear conditions are put in place for potential enrolment i.e. student contract, enrolment after period of 4 weeks on programme.

3.8.5 **During the Induction phase** it is vital that Personal Tutors assess each student within the first THREE weeks using the "At Risk Alert Retention Checklist". This will help to ensure that early intervention is actioned and that students have access to the appropriate support/guidance required in a timely manner.

3.9 Personal Tutorial Toolkit

3.9.1 The Personal Tutorial Toolkit is available on Microsoft Teams. This contains the following documents and templates which the Personal Tutors will use in the course of undertaking the Tutorial programme:

- Presentation on Personal Tutoring and Academic Support programme;
- Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy;
- Good Practice Guide to Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Programme; and
- Student Learning Agreement
- At Risk Alert Checklist
- Grade tracking sheets
- Progress Reports.

# 4.    Roles and Responsibilities

4.1    The aim of the Tutorial programme is to support students in their personal and academic development. The Personal Tutor's role is pivotal in this regard and is supported by all members of the teaching team.

4.2    The Personal Tutor

4.2.1  The College has developed a Code of Practice in order to ensure that Personal Tutors effectively support students. This Code of Practice is included in Appendix 2.

4.2.2  The role of the Personal Tutor is to:

- Act as key point of contact;
- Provide academic guidance;
- Offer personal support and act as a gateway to other services;
- Help students think 'beyond the course'.

4.3    Induction

4.3.1  The Personal Tutor, along with the Programme Co-ordinator and Student Engagement and Support Services, will lead the Induction programme.

4.4    Pastoral Support

4.4.1  In terms of Pastoral Support, the Personal Tutor will:

- Deliver an active Tutorial programme in regular individual or group tutorial sessions;

- Develop a group identity amongst students and encourage a sense of belonging for students on the programme;

- Provide support for students who have difficulties (personal and/ or learning);

- Deal with issues of confidentiality in accordance with legal requirements and College guidelines;

- Refer students to other specialists in line with College procedures;

- Provide support to students in the event of disciplinary or grievance procedures; and

- Engage with Student Engagement and Support Services/College Safeguarding Officer/parents/guardians where concern exists in relation to students at risk of (early) withdrawal.

4.5    Academic Support

4.5.1  In terms of Academic Support, the Personal Tutor will:

- Encourage and support students to engage with tracking their progress through the Tutorial programme;

- Undertake regular reviews and evaluation of students' progress;

- Ensure progress reviews are completed by the programme team and records updated;

- Inform lecturing team of individual learning support requirements (where student has provided consent for disclosure of such information); and

- Refer students to the Learning Support Officer (where concerns are raised regarding a student's ability within his/her programme of study).

4.6    Personal Development and Careers Education

4.6.1  This element of the Tutorial Programme is led by Student Engagement and Support Services. However, the Personal Tutor will:

- Offer impartial guidance and information on future plans and refer students for careers advice where more specialist knowledge is needed;

- Assist students in the application process, write references and send forms, for further/higher education where required e.g. UCAS;

- Assist students in the development of their employability skills;

- Give guidance and advice, where appropriate and possible, to students when applying for jobs;

- Discuss work experience placements, if required; and

- Ensure that all students are made aware of, and encouraged to participate in, College-wide activities.

## 4.7   The Programme Team

4.7.1   The Programme Team will:

- Accept the role of the Personal Tutor as an integral part of programme delivery;

- Support the Personal Tutor in carrying out his/her role by providing the required information on student progress as required;

- Report to the Personal Tutor any issues or concerns regarding student progress; and

- Work in partnership with the Personal Tutor to support students in achieving their qualification.

## 4.8   The Programme Co-ordinator

4.8.1   The Programme Co-coordinator (who may also be the Personal Tutor) will:

- In addition to the above, use feedback from the Tutorial Programme to contribute to the achievement of College standards on retention and achievement.

## 4.9   College Management

4.9.1   The College Management will:

- Provide adequate and effective systems and resources to support student needs;

- Provide relevant support, training and guidance for staff involved in the Personal Tutor role; and

- Ensure appropriate action plans are implemented with a view to continuous

improvement and raising standards in the interest of all our students.

### 4.10 Student Engagement and Support Services

4.10.1 Student Engagement and Support Services provide an important support function to the Tutorial Programme. The main personnel involved include the Student Engagement Officer – Learning Support, the Student Engagement Officer – Learning Mentor and the Student Engagement Officer – HE and Employability.

4.10.2 Student Engagement and Support Services will:

- Work in partnership with the Personal Tutor and the Programme Team to support students in achieving their qualification;

- Provide ongoing support and feedback to Tutors, assisting them in the implementation of their role;

- Organise workshops appropriate to the Tutorial programme;

- Provide guidance and support to students as required and/or refer students to external sources of support;

- Record details of student's initial learning support assessment and ensure support is in place and regularly reviewed;

- Ensure that changes to a student's support circumstances are recorded in order that this information is available to the Programme Team, including Essential Skills tutors;

- Lead the Careers Education programme.

### 4.11 Students

4.11.1 The Student will:

- Enter into a College contract and respect his/her role within the College Charter and Student Agreement;

- Actively participate within the wider College provision to enhance personal development;

- Engage fully with the Tutorial programme using it to record and develop opportunities for personal and academic development; and

- Record their own personal learning plans.

### 4.12 Data Protection

4.12.1 The implementation of the Personal Tutoring and Academic Support Policy will be

compliant with the relevant data protection legislation i.e. the Data Protection Act 2018. All information must be treated confidentially and passed to appropriate personnel on a 'need-to-know' basis.

## 5. Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Head of Department, together with the Deputy Head of Department, have responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the Tutorial Programme.

5.2 The College will establish systems to effectively implement this Policy.

5.3 The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively. The College is committed to reviewing this Policy on an annual basis to ensure that it is effective in supporting students and is having a positive impact on student retention.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: _____

Date:                 05.02.25

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Date:                 05/02/2025

## Appendix 1: Process for Supporting 'At Risk' Students

| R/A/G Level | Action by Personal Tutor | |
|---|---|---|
| **0 Ticks**<br>a student is coded as Green | - No action;<br>- Personal Tutor continues to monitor. | Monthly Review Student Progress at Course Team meetings and Tutorial Sessions |
| **1-3 Ticks**<br>A student is coded as Amber | - Personal Tutor continues to monitor;<br>- Liaises with Programme Co-ordinator and Team to ensure student is supported – Action Plan is developed with interventions identified (Personal Tutorial Record);<br>- Referral to Student Engagement and Support Services as appropriate;<br>- Communicates with the Deputy Head of Department/ Curriculum Manager – ensures support is appropriate and monitoring ongoing;<br>- Engages with parents/guardians. | |
| **4 Ticks**<br>a student is coded as Red | - Referral to Student Engagement and Support Services as appropriate;<br>- Referral to Learning Mentor who will provide ongoing communication with Personal Tutor, the Deputy Head of Department/Curriculum Manager and Head of Department as appropriate;<br>- Liaises with Programme Co-ordinator and Team to ensure student is supported – Action Plan is reviewed and updated; further interventions identified as appropriate (Personal Tutorial Record);<br>- Communicates with the Deputy Head of Department and Curriculum Manager as appropriate – ensures support is appropriate and monitoring ongoing;<br>- Engages with parents/guardians. | |

## Appendix 1a: 'At Risk' Alert – Retention Checklist

| Student Name | Late application | Missed induction | Borderline Entry Qualifications | Started a programme before/failed to complete previous programme | Lack of preparation for class | Erratic / poor attendance record | Not Punctual | Financial social or domestic pressure | Missing deadlines | Requires learning support | Not preferred programme | **Other factors** |
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| 0 Ticks | Student is coded as Green |
|---|---|
| 1-3 Ticks | Student is coded as Amber |
| 4 Ticks | Student is coded as Red |

## Appendix 2: Personal Tutor Code of Practice

This Code of Practice outlines the standards that the College expects its Personal Tutors to maintain.

The Tutor will:

- Act as a mentor for the individual student.

- Treat each student as an individual with unique needs.

- Treat each student with respect.

- Ensure student confidentiality - subject to legal constraints and College guidelines.

- Refer problems sensitively to other support functions within the College and external agencies where necessary.

- Be responsible for delivering a structured and meaningful tutorial programme.

## Related Documentation

| Title | Location | Owner |
|---|---|---|
| South West College 'Good Practice Guide' To Tutorials | Gateway | |
| Supporting At Risk Students (EWS).pdf | Gateway | |
| Personal Tutorial Toolkit \| General \| Microsoft Teams | Gateway | |

## Change Log

| Location | Change from deletion/addition | Change to |
|---|---|---|
| Entire document | Reference to Head of Faculty, Head of Department and Heads of School | Head of Department, Deputy Head of Department, Curriculum Manager |
| 3. Programme Overview | Addition | Documents relating to the tutorial process can be found at Personal Tutorial Toolkit \| General \| Microsoft Teams<br><br>The process for supporting at risk students can be found at Supporting At Risk Students (EWS).pdf" |
| V4.0 | Update to formatting | |
| V5.0 | Simplification of language in Sections Introduction and Purpose, Key Elements of the Tutorial Process, Programme Overview, Induction and Support, Roles and Responsibilities, and Monitoring and Support. | |
| V5.0 | In Introduction section, the size of the programme that the tutorial policy applies to, is changed from 5 hours er week, to 10 hours per week. | |

## Communication

| Who needs to know (for action) | Heads of Department, Deputy Heads of Department, Curriculum Manager, Course Coordinators |
|---|---|
| Who needs to be aware | All academic staff |

## Communication Plan

| Action | By Whom | By When |
|---|---|---|
| Upload to Gateway | N Nugent | On approval |
| Communication to key staff | P McNamee, Director of Curriculum | On approval |

**Document Development**

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

| Name | Role |
|---|---|
| P McNamee | Director of Curriculum |
| O Kelly | Advanced Teaching and Learning Practitioner |

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

| Name | Organisation | Date |
|---|---|---|
| HOD / DHOD / CM / representatives from all Departments / Student Services Manager | SWC | October/November 2024 |

**Approval Dates**

| Approved by | Date |
|---|---|
| Governing Body | 5 February 2025 |

**Document History**

| Issue no. under review | Date of review: | Persons involved in review | Changes made after review. Yes/No If yes refer to change log | New Issue No. | If changes made was consultation required? | If changes made was Equality Screening required? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V4.0 | November 2024 | Director of Curriculum | Yes | V5.0 | NA | NA |
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