

Royal Marsden School
Personal Tutor Policy

The Purpose of the Personal Tutor System

The Royal Marsden School (RMS) has an excellent reputation for the support offered to students, who report high levels of satisfaction with the academic and pastoral support they receive from staff.

The Personal Tutor system aims to support students in a systematic manner, through their studies by providing academic, professional and pastoral advice to students and to monitor their academic and professional progress.

The Personal Tutor will help their personal students to reflect upon and benefit from the feedback they receive on their work, and to review their academic and professional development throughout their course so that by the time they successfully complete their studies, they not only have the skills, knowledge and experience to secure the next opportunity in their career, but are also able to articulate this to prospective employers, or to Universities if they wish to go on to further study.

The Scope of the Personal Tutor System

The Tutorial System is available to all students registered on a course. For those students on 'stand-alone' modules, the Module Leader will undertake the Personal Tutor role.

Personal Tutor – What students can expect:

1. All students are allocated a Personal Tutor on registering for a course of study. The Module Leader will fulfil the same function for students on 'stand-alone' modules, which is to provide the opportunity to help them reflect on their academic performance and future career preparation and goals, and ask for advice on addressing any difficulties they may be facing.
2. Personal Tutors will invite students to meet with them during their first module following registration for the course.
3. Students should make contact with their Tutor at least twice during the academic year, but must attend a minimum of one of these meetings.
4. The ideal means by which the student maintains contact with their Tutor is by face-to-face meetings, however, other strategies, such as email, telephone are also acceptable, particularly for those students who live or work some distance from the School. The mode of contact should be negotiated and agreed with the student.
5. Students can contact their Tutor at other times if they would like to discuss pressing matters impacting on their RMS experience. Tutors will ensure that their students are informed about their availability and their preferred contact method(s).
6. If the School has concerns about a student's attendance and engagement, the student may be invited to a meeting with their Tutor to discuss these concerns. This may be part of the routine meeting, or an extra meeting may be arranged. Meetings specifically convened to discuss attendance and engagement are not optional.
7. A student's Tutor will offer advice and guidance to support the student's academic, personal and professional development. This will include helping the

student to reflect upon and benefit from the feedback they receive on their work, along with the person who provided the feedback.

8. Students may also choose to speak to their Tutors about personal issues affecting their studies or their welfare. The Tutor should be open and receptive to offering initial support, but will also be aware of the limitations of their role and refer on to specialist services whenever appropriate.
9. Students should note that where they have discussed extenuating circumstances with their Tutor, they will still need to request any subsequent extension or other adjustment via the School Assessments Officer.
10. A student's Tutor is the most likely person to write references to accompany job applications and applications for postgraduate courses. If a student does not attend meetings with their Tutor, then the effectiveness of references is likely to be hampered. A Tutor who has rarely seen a student should inform that student that they are unlikely to be able to write an effective reference.
11. The School will endeavour to ensure that students have the same Tutor throughout their period of study, but there may be times when another Tutor has to be allocated to a student. If this is the case, the student will be told, usually by the Course Leader, the reason for the change, whether it is temporary or permanent, and the arrangements for meeting the new Tutor.
12. If a student has any difficulties with the Personal Tutor System or wishes to change their Tutor, they should initially speak to the Course Leader or Head of School. The School will try to accommodate any request for a change of Tutor and will not insist on an explanation for the request to change.
13. There may be instances when information discussed in confidence with an Tutor is shared with others, confidentially, to ensure the student receives the best support from the School. The student will be informed of this. All records and documentation regarding students are held securely and access to them is controlled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The role of the Personal Tutor

1. Tutors will be available to see their personal students as part of their induction onto their new course, and at least two times each year during their studies.
2. Tutors will ensure that they offer opportunities for students to discuss any concerns at other times. Tutors are expected to respond within 48 hours to such requests so personal students can be given timely advice, reassurance or further referral as required.
3. Tutors should ensure that their personal students know how to contact them and to whom to go to when they are unavailable.
4. A good Tutor listens, avoids making judgements, is proactive when difficulties become apparent, and is fully aware of RMS / UEA regulations and sources of further advice and guidance.
5. Tutors will provide on-going support to personal students. They are expected to discuss academic progress, personal and skills development and general wellbeing at the meetings.
6. It is expected that Tutors will be able to assist their personal students in interpreting and reflecting upon feedback on their assessments across modules. Helping support students holistically in their studies is a key component of the Personal Tutor System. Where the Tutor does not have sufficient specialist expertise, they may facilitate a meeting with another relevant academic.
7. Personal Tutors will ensure that they are informed about their students' progress by considering their assessment grades and feedback (theory and practice), their engagement and attendance (including reasons for absence and details of sickness) as well as any specific information regarding their students' conduct

within RMS (or clinical environment in the case of students on the Cancer Nurse Rotation Programme) .

8. Tutors are expected to meet with any personal student where the School has concerns about the student's attendance and engagement, as part of the *Attendance, Progress and Engagement Policy*.
9. Tutors are expected to write references for those personal students who have regularly attended tutorial meetings. A Tutor who has rarely seen a student should inform them that they are unlikely to be able to write an effective reference.
10. Tutors are expected to record meeting attendance and to make brief notes of the main points covered in meetings and any action points to inform future discussions with their personal student. These records will be available to the student.
11. The Personal Tutor is required to report any factors that affect the performance of their personal student to the relevant Course Leader, whilst respecting as far as possible the confidential nature of the Tutor/student relationship.