



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



Personal Tutoring Policy & Procedures



Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Guiding principles and external frameworks	3
Aims of the policy	3
Applicability and Scope	3
Principles for Personal Tutoring Arrangements	4
Responsibilities	4
Scope of the Personal Tutor Role.....	4
Personal Tutor Responsibilities.....	5
Tutee Responsibilities	6
College Responsibilities.....	6
Institution Responsibilities	7
Procedure	8
Personal Tutor Allocations	8
Meetings between Personal Tutors and Tutees.....	8
Table of Definitions	10
Appendix 1: Suggested prompts for personal tutoring conversations	11
Appendix 2: Possible workload scenarios for personal tutoring	13
Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment	14

Approved by:	Senate	Date first published:	Jun-2014
Owner:	Director of Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice	Date updated:	Sep-2025
		Review Date:	Jul-2026

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Purpose

1. Personal Tutoring is a core part of the BNU student experience. It supports transition, progression and attainment; fosters belonging; and helps students navigate academic and personal challenges through timely guidance and appropriate signposting to specialist services.
2. The policy underpins BNU's commitments in the Access and Participation Plan (2025/26–2028/29) to close continuation, completion and awarding gaps for underrepresented students, and aligns with Office for Students (OfS) Condition B2 on resources, support and student engagement.

Guiding principles and external frameworks

3. This policy is shaped by the following principles and external frameworks:
 - a) Student-centred and equitable access: every student has a named Personal Tutor and regular, proactive contact opportunities.
 - b) Inclusive practice: duties under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate and make reasonable adjustments; commitment to culturally responsive tutoring and the BNU Equality Strategy.
 - c) Safety and safeguarding: BNU's safeguarding and fitness to study procedures, and the University's duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty).
 - d) Data protection and privacy: lawful, fair and transparent handling of student information under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; clear student access to records.
 - e) Transparent information for students: compliance with consumer protection law and relevant CMA guidance on clear, accessible information and fair terms.
 - f) Regulatory alignment: OfS Conditions (particularly B2) and requirements associated with APP Condition A1; coherence with BNU academic regulations and policies.
 - g) Partnership and integration: working with Students' Union and professional services.

Aims of the policy

4. The policy aims to:
 - a) Ensure every undergraduate (UG) and post-graduate taught (PGT) student has a named Personal Tutor and a consistent baseline of scheduled contact.
 - b) Improve continuation, completion, progression and awarding outcomes, with particular attention to APP priority groups.
 - c) Clarify role boundaries (academic and pastoral guidance with signposting, not specialist therapy) and referral pathways to University services.
 - d) Promote transparency and student agency, including clear information and an accessible route to change tutor where appropriate.
 - e) Ensure that staff feel confident in the role of personal tutor, recognise that the role can become personally and professionally challenging, and create appropriate support structures for personal tutors.

Applicability and Scope

5. All BNU taught students must be allocated a named individual to provide personalised academic and pastoral support. This support takes different forms for different types of provision:
 - a) Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students should have a Personal Tutor, which is covered by the scope of this policy.

- b) Postgraduate research (PGR) students should have a research supervisor. This role falls outside the scope of this policy.
- c) Apprentices will have supervision through regular tripartite progress reviews. This falls outside the scope of this policy, and is covered by the Apprenticeship Procedures.
- d) All staff who are allocated personal tutees, or have oversight of Personal Tutoring, are required to work within the scope of this policy.
- e) BNU students taught through franchise or partnership provision are outside the scope of this policy
- f) Only BNU taught students enrolled on a named degree programme (e.g. BA, BSc, LLB, MA, MSc or equivalent) are covered by this policy. Students enrolled on short courses are outside the scope of this policy; the course/programme leader should be the primary point of contact for these students.

Principles for Personal Tutoring Arrangements

6. These general principles apply across BNU and inform programme level implementation:

- a) Student-centred and strengths based: tutoring builds students' confidence, autonomy and sense of belonging, recognising diverse strengths and aspirations.
- b) Equity and proportionality: all students have a guaranteed baseline of contact; additional support is prioritised proactively for those who need it.
- c) Boundary aware practice: PTs offer academic and pastoral guidance and signpost to specialist services; they do not provide therapy or specialist mental health support.
- d) Early, proactive engagement: contact begins at induction and includes regular, structured check-ins designed to surface and address issues early.
- e) Accessibility and inclusion: communication and scheduling are inclusive; reasonable adjustments are anticipated and barriers minimised.
- f) Partnership working: PTs collaborate with programme teams, LEAP, professional services and the Students' Union to provide coherent support.
- g) Transparency and agency: students receive clear information on what tutoring offers, how to access it, how to change tutor, and where to get additional help.
- h) Confidentiality with safety: information is handled lawfully and sensitively; risk and safeguarding concerns are escalated promptly via university procedures.
- i) Data informed improvement: engagement information is used responsibly to support students; practice is reviewed regularly to drive enhancement.

Responsibilities

Scope of the Personal Tutor Role

7. What the Personal Tutor role is
- a) A consistent, trusted point of contact who offers structured academic guidance and pastoral support within clear professional boundaries.
 - b) A developmental relationship focused on reflection, goalsetting, feedback literacy and navigation of university systems and opportunities (skills, employability, belonging).

- c) A coordinator and 'sign-poster', helping students access the right specialist services promptly and effectively.
 - d) A proactive presence that notices patterns of nonengagement and initiates supportive outreach in partnership with programme teams.
8. What the Personal Tutor role *is not*
- a) It is not a counselling, psychotherapy, or clinical mental health role, nor does it provide diagnosis or treatment.
 - b) It is not a substitute for Module/Programme leadership or specialist advice services (e.g., immigration, finance, legal); PTs do not adjudicate complaints/appeals.
 - c) It is not a 24/7 emergency service; out-of-hours crises follow University emergency and safeguarding procedures.
 - d) It is not case-management for complex personal issues; Personal Tutors make timely referrals and maintain appropriate boundaries.
 - e) It is not a safe-guarding lead position. All Personal Tutors should comply fully with the BNU Safeguarding Policy and escalate concerns in the appropriate manner.
 - f) It is not synonymous with the clinical supervisor, placement supervisor or equivalent local titles. These are additional responsibilities on top of the core personal tutor role, and should be resourced accordingly.

Personal Tutor Responsibilities

9. Personal Tutors are responsible for helping students to take a holistic view of their BNU experience. They support students' academic development through the provision of appropriate and timely advice, guidance and, where appropriate, signposting to specialist services.
10. Personal Tutors are expected to:
- a) Act as the first point of contact for academic guidance and pastoral support within clear professional boundaries.
 - b) Arrange tutorial meetings with their students, giving at least one week's notice of the meeting through a mutually agreed communication platform.
 - c) Meet with tutees at least once within the first two weeks of the academic year, and a minimum of once per term in subsequent terms, with the opportunity for a reasonable number of additional meetings as required by student need. This may be through group or individual meetings, and can be conducted in-person or online.
 - d) Facilitate effective pastorally focused conversations with students and undertake proportionate, supportive outreach where there are concerns.
 - e) Facilitate conversations about academic progress, feedback and study skills, helping students to plan next steps and make effective use of support.
 - f) Refer/signpost promptly to specialist services and escalate urgent risk/safeguarding concerns in line with university procedures.
 - g) Share contact details and availability with tutees, and notify students of any changes. Contact must be via official BNU systems (email, Teams, Blackboard) and not via alternative platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Social Media).
 - h) Respond to contact from individual tutees in a timely manner, usually within two working days.

- i) Keep brief, factual records of contacts, meetings and agreed actions in an approved, GDPR-compliant system.
- j) Where appropriate, provide fair, evidence-based personalised academic references in a timely manner when requested by tutees. If a Personal Tutor cannot supply a personalised academic reference, this should be referred to the College Personal Tutoring Lead. Personal tutors must not provide an official award verification or confirmation of student status letters; these are provided by Registry and the Student Hub respectively.
- k) Undertake at least one hour of mandatory training with respect to the Personal Tutor role every year to ensure that practice is effective and reflects current policies and expectations.

Tutee Responsibilities

11. Students are active partners in the Personal Tutoring system and as such they should familiarise themselves with the roles and responsibilities of both Personal Tutors and tutees.
12. Individual students are expected to:
 - a) Ensure they know who their Personal Tutor is and how and where to contact them.
 - b) Attend each session as and when specified by their Personal Tutor, i.e. during induction and at least twice during each academic year.
 - c) Fully engage in Personal Tutorials to discuss course progress and career aspirations as well as any additional advice and guidance which will help them to succeed in their studies and beyond.
 - d) Request additional appointments if necessary and respond to requests to see their Personal Tutor if additional appointments are scheduled.
 - e) Let their Personal Tutor know if they are unable to make an appointment or would like to arrange an alternative date.
 - f) Inform their Personal Tutor of any special circumstances which might affect their studies.
 - g) Use the Course Handbook as a guide to information about university policy, procedures and requirements.
 - h) Recognise the limits of the role of the Personal Tutor, and that they cannot provide specialist support, particularly with respect to mental health. This means accepting that the Personal Tutor may refer students to other support services in the institution.

College Responsibilities

13. Each college must identify a named individual who is responsible for the oversight of Personal Tutoring, hereafter referred to as the College Personal Tutoring Lead. This individual may delegate some activities to a more local level (e.g. programme level), but they remain accountable for Personal Tutoring in their college.
14. Colleges must ensure that Personal Tutoring workloads are allocated fairly amongst relevant staff, so that individual tutors are able to fulfil the role to a high quality. Line managers should refer to the personal tutoring allocation in the current academic workload model, and ensure that staff get this protected time to carry out their personal tutoring responsibilities.
15. The college Personal Tutoring lead must ensure that all Personal Tutor allocations have taken place at the start of the academic year. Allocations should be done at the most appropriate level (e.g. programme level, cluster level) and communicated to the college Personal Tutoring lead.

16. The college Personal Tutoring lead is responsible for ensuring an up-to-date register is kept of tutors and their tutees. This register should be shared with relevant support services.
17. Line managers are responsible for coordinating with the college Personal Tutoring lead to ensure that students have appropriate Personal Tutoring support if their tutor is unavailable e.g. through prolonged absence or staff departures.
18. The college Personal Tutoring lead must ensure that relevant information is cascaded to Personal Tutors within their colleges where appropriate.
19. The college Personal Tutoring lead must ensure that Personal Tutor meetings are taking place. Where meetings are not taking place, this should be addressed via the relevant line manager.
20. The college must identify at least two named individual(s) who can act as a 'debrief' point where required by individual staff, and ensure that all Personal Tutors are aware of these individuals. These individuals must have undergone specific training for this role. They must be aware of institutional support available to support staff wellbeing, and be able to signpost appropriately to other services.

Institution Responsibilities

21. Institution level oversight of Personal Tutoring is the responsibility of Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP). LEAP will report annually on Personal Tutoring to Teaching and Learning Committee.
22. Coordinating training for Personal Tutors is the responsibility of LEAP, with relevant input from other professional services directorates and teams (e.g. Safeguarding, Student Learning and Achievement). Training may also be delivered by external organisations where this is appropriate.
23. LEAP will ensure that there is an up-to-date signposting resource available, making it easy for Personal Tutors to refer students to specialist services where appropriate.

Procedure

Personal Tutor Allocations

- All BNU UG and PGT students must have a named individual allocated as their personal tutor. For small programmes this person may be the same individual as the programme leader.
- Overseeing personal tutor allocations is the responsibility of the College Personal Tutoring Lead. Allocations should be done at the most appropriate level (e.g. programme level, cluster level) and communicated to the college Personal Tutoring lead.
- Tutees must be allocated prior to the start of the academic year, and recorded on a college-approved, GDPR-compliant system, with an up-to-date register kept and shared with relevant support services.
- Where possible, a personal tutor should be a member of staff who teaches on the student's programme of study to provide a consistent point of contact. Associate Lecturers should not be allocated tutees, unless in specific programme contexts where they are provided with full support for completing the role.
- If a member of staff with personal tutees leaves the institution or is unable to act as a personal tutor for reasons agreed with their line manager and/or Dean of College, then their tutees must be reallocated to an appropriate member of staff.
- Students must be informed who their personal tutor is at the start of their programme, and be informed of any changes to their personal tutor allocation (e.g. due to staff departures).
- Students have the right to request a new personal tutor if appropriate (e.g. the personal tutoring relationship has broken down, a conflict of interest arises). They do not have the right to request a specific personal tutor, as staff workload allocation must also be considered. Changes to personal tutor allocations must be formally agreed with the College Personal Tutoring Lead and records updated to reflect the change.
- Staff have the right to request reallocation of individual tutees if appropriate (e.g. the personal tutoring relationship has broken down, a conflict of interest arises). Changes to personal tutor allocations must be formally agreed with the College Personal Tutoring Lead, and records updated to reflect the change.
- All academic staff may be required to act as a personal tutor where this is clearly indicated in their contract of employment. Not all staff are required to act as a personal tutor every year.
- Individual academic members of staff should have no more than 50 tutees allocated. This is to ensure that staff have sufficient capacity to develop a high-quality relationship with their tutees while having a sustainable workload.

Meetings between Personal Tutors and Tutees

- Meetings between personal tutors and tutees can be in person or online.
- Meetings between personal tutors and tutees can be individual (i.e. one-to-one) or as group tutor meetings. Where students wish to discuss more personal circumstances it would be expected that this happens in a one-to-one setting.
- Personal tutors are required to meet their tutees as follows:
 - a. For new students, within the welcome week or as soon as possible after welcome week. This can be as individual or group meetings.
 - b. For returning students, within the first three weeks of the start of the academic year
 - c. For all students, at least one check-in meeting per term.

- It is recognised that individual students vary in their needs for personal tutoring. Some students may require more regular meetings than this, but others will require less.
- Personal tutors are allocated hours per student per year in the BNU workload model. This is to be averaged across all tutees; some may take significantly less than this, some may take more. Appendix II gives some worked examples of how this time might be allocated.
- Personal tutors are not expected to be infinitely available to students.
- Meetings with students should take place during normal working hours.
 - a. Most meetings with tutees should be pre-arranged. In exceptional circumstances it may be that meetings with tutees occur on an ad-hoc basis, but the tutor should (i) ensure that the student is safe, and if not refer them to specialist services via the student hub and (ii) arrange a meeting for as soon as reasonably possible.
 - b. Tutors are not expected to deal with students in distress outside working hours. Out-of-hours crises follow University emergency and safeguarding procedures.
 - c. For staff teaching online to overseas students, there may need to be flexibility on the timing of personal tutor meetings to accommodate differences in time zones.
- While additional tutor meetings may be required for some students, these should be reasonable in scope. If a student is requesting an unreasonable number of additional meetings with their tutor, then it is likely that specialist support is more appropriate.
- Students should not typically be expected to attend personal tutor meetings on days with no scheduled timetabled activities. Students may need to keep these days clear for paid employment or other external commitments.
 - a. Staff should make reasonable efforts to schedule meetings adjacent to timetabled sessions or days that students are expected to be on campus.
 - b. However, it is recognised that this may not be possible in some circumstances e.g. for staff on part-time contracts, or where timetabled days are fully scheduled with no space for personal tutoring meetings.
 - c. Reasonable flexibility may also be required for commuter students, those with caring responsibilities and paid employment. Personal tutors should adopt a flexible approach here that balances the needs of students with reasonable working patterns.
- Personal tutor meetings may focus on a variety of topics. It is recommended to agree the scope of a personal tutor meeting in advance, although this may not always be possible. Appendix I gives some suggested themes for tutor meetings and effective question prompts to stimulate discussion.
- Personal tutor meetings must be logged using the Personal Tutor Meeting Form which can be found via BEN. Comprehensive notes of topics discussed are not required, but an indication of the primary area of focus should be recorded, including any appropriate referrals to other services.
- Personal Tutors should bear in mind that students have the right to see any information that is kept about them, in compliance with Data Protection legislation.

Table of Definitions

College Personal Tutoring Lead	A named individual identified in each college responsible for the oversight of Personal Tutoring
Personal Tutor	Personal Tutor (PT) A consistent, trusted point of contact who offers structured academic guidance and pastoral support within clear professional boundaries
LEAP	Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP). The owner of the policy
Pastoral	Support provided by Personal Tutors that addresses students' personal, emotional, and wellbeing needs to help them engage successfully with university life within clear professional boundaries
Specialist Services/University Services	Services to which Personal Tutors provide appropriate signposting for students navigating academic and personal challenges
Wellbeing	Refers to the specialist services (e.g., mental health or counselling) to which the Personal Tutor signposts or refers students when their needs extend beyond the tutor's direct remit
Tutee	Students assigned to a Personal Tutor who are active partners in the Personal Tutoring system
Underrepresented Students/APP Priority Groups	Specific student groups identified within the Access and Participation Plan for whom BUN aims to close continuation, completion, and awarding gaps

Appendix I: Suggested prompts for personal tutoring conversations

Type of Tutorial	Time of Academic Year	Format	Suggested Prompt / Question / Activity
Welcome focused	Pre-arrival / Induction / Welcome Week	Individual or Group	“What are you hoping to achieve during your time at university?”; “Tell me a bit about your background and interests outside academia.”; “What are you most excited about, and what concerns do you have about starting university life?”
Welcome focused	First 3 weeks	Group	Icebreaker activity – students introduce themselves, share one academic goal and one personal interest. Discuss purpose of personal tutoring.
Welcome focused	First 3 weeks	Individual	“What do you understand about the purpose of personal tutoring and how it can support you?”; Clarify availability and communication channels.
Academic focused	First term (Weeks 4–8)	Individual	“How are you managing your study time and workload?”; “What strategies are you using for referencing and avoiding plagiarism?”; Identify academic skills gaps (writing, digital literacy, research).
Academic focused	Mid-year / After first assessments	Individual	“How are you adapting to university-level teaching and assessment expectations?”; Review feedback on assignments.
Academic focused	Ongoing	Individual	“How do your marks compare to your expectations?” “Are you achieving the highest marks you are capable of?” “How could you take your grades to the next grade classification up”. Walk through an upcoming assignment brief and discuss the requirements for the next grade category up; how are you going to achieve these?
Community & Belonging	Ongoing during Year 1	Group or Individual	“How are you connecting with peers in your course?”; “Are you engaging with societies or extracurricular activities?”; Encourage involvement in university life.
Review of academic progress	End of each term / Yearly review	Individual	“Let’s review your performance and feedback from last semester.”; “What consistent patterns do you notice in your feedback, and what steps will you take to improve?”
Review of academic progress	Beginning of new academic year (Years 2+)	Individual	“How do your module choices align with your academic or career goals?”; “Are you considering a specialisation?”
Careers focused	Mid-degree (Year 2 onwards)	Individual or Group	“What work experience or volunteering activities are you engaged in?”; “Have you thought about internships, placements, or study abroad?”; “Let’s discuss your personal development plan and new goals.”
Careers focused	Final Year (Term 1–2)	Individual	“What are your career aspirations after graduation?”; “Have you started preparing your CV or job applications? I can help review them.”; “What professional skills can you evidence from your degree?”

Careers focused	Final Year (Term 2–3)	Individual	“Are you considering postgraduate study?”; “How can I support you with references for employment or further study?”
Student in distress / wellbeing	Any time of year (reactive)	Individual	“How are you generally feeling, and are there any personal difficulties impacting your studies?”; Signpost to specialist services (counselling, financial advice, mental health).
Student in distress / wellbeing	Any time of year (after signs of disengagement)	Individual	“I’ve noticed [e.g., low attendance, missed deadlines]. Is there anything you’d like to discuss or any support you might need?”
Policy and Procedures	Any time (esp. around assessment deadlines)	Individual	“Do you have any questions about exceptional circumstances, appeals, or engagement expectations?”
Feedback on tutoring system	End of year	Group or Individual	“What’s working well in these sessions?”; “What improvements would make your personal tutoring experience more valuable?”; “How do you prefer to communicate?”

Appendix 2: Possible workload scenarios for personal tutoring

These scenarios are constructed assuming the maximum of 50 tutees per staff member, with 2 hours allocated per student per year = 100 hours allocated for personal tutoring [agreed workload model for 2025/26 academic year]. These are not intended to be prescriptive, but to indicate how the personal tutoring workload allocation could be budgeted across a cohort of tutees.

'Additional meetings' are those required for those with most complex needs go beyond what can be accommodated during expected individual and group tutorials.

Scenario 1

Tutorial Type	Length of tutorial	Total students	Students per tutorial	Tutorials run	Length of Tutorial (hours)	Hours
Group Tutorial Welcome	1 hour	50	10	5	1	5
Group Tutorial Term 2	1 hour	50	10	5	1	5
Group Tutorial Term 3	1 hour	50	10	5	1	5
Individual Tutorial 1	30 minutes	50	1	50	0.5	25
Individual Tutorial 2	30 minutes	50	1	50	0.5	25
Individual Additional Meeting 1	20 minutes	10	1	10	0.33	3.3
Individual Additional Meeting 2	20 minutes	8	1	8	0.33	2.64
Individual Additional Meeting 3	20 minutes	6	1	6	0.33	1.98
Individual Additional Meeting 4	20 minutes	4	1	4	0.33	1.32
Documentation/follow-up/liaison	20% of tutorial time budget					20
Mandatory Training	1 hour					1
Additional Training	1 hour					2
				Total Hours		97.24

Scenario 2

Tutorial Type	Length of tutorial	Total students	Students per tutorial	Tutorials run	Length of Tutorial	Hours
Group Tutorial Welcome	30 minutes	50	8	7	0.5	3.5
Individual Tutorial 1	30 minutes	50	1	50	0.5	25
Individual Tutorial 2	20 minutes	50	1	50	0.33	16.5
Individual Tutorial 3	20 minutes	50	1	50	0.33	16.5
Individual Additional Meeting 1	20 minutes	10	1	10	0.33	3.3
Individual Additional Meeting 2	20 minutes	8	1	8	0.33	2.64
Individual Additional Meeting 3	20 minutes	5	1	5	0.33	1.65
Individual Additional Meeting 4	20 minutes	5	1	5	0.33	1.65
Individual Additional Meeting 5	20 minutes	3	1	3	0.33	0.99
Documentation/follow-up/liaison	20% of tutorial time budget					20
Mandatory Training	1 hour					1
Additional Training	1 hour					2
				Total Hours		94.73

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

1) With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?

The Personal Tutoring Policy is designed to significantly enhance equality and access to opportunity at BNU through several key mechanisms:

- **Direct Support for Access and Participation Plan (APP) Priorities:** This policy directly underpins BNU's commitments in the Access and Participation Plan (2025/26–2028/29) to close continuation, completion, and awarding gaps for underrepresented students. Personal Tutoring is recognised as an evidence-based initiative to support the success and personal development of all students, with the potential to reduce outcome gaps. The policy specifically aims to improve these outcomes, with particular attention to APP priority groups.
- **Student-Centred and Equitable Access:** A core principle of this policy is student-centred and equitable access, ensuring that every undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) student has a named Personal Tutor and regular, proactive contact opportunities. This universal provision aims to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have access to a consistent point of support.
- **Inclusive Practice and Reasonable Adjustments:** The policy is shaped by the principle of inclusive practice, acknowledging and adhering to duties under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate and make reasonable adjustments. This ensures that disabled learners, and those with other protected characteristics, are not disadvantaged and can fully participate in their studies.
- **Early Identification and Proactive Support:** Personal Tutors are expected to be a **proactive presence** that notices patterns of non-engagement and initiates supportive outreach in partnership with programme teams. This early identification and timely intervention, similar to the Attendance and Engagement Policy, is particularly beneficial for learners from marginalised or under-represented groups who may face additional barriers, enhancing their retention and wellbeing.
- **Clear Role Boundaries and Effective Signposting:** The policy clarifies the Personal Tutor's role, emphasising academic and pastoral guidance and their function as a coordinator and 'sign-poster' to specialist services. This ensures students are directed to appropriate and professional support (e.g., safeguarding, mental health, finance, immigration) promptly and effectively. This structured approach prevents misdirection and ensures students receive the specific help they need.
- **Mandatory Training for Tutors:** Personal Tutors are required to undertake at least one hour of mandatory training annually. This training is crucial for ensuring that practice is effective, culturally responsive, and explicitly reflects current policies and expectations regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Transparency and Student Agency:** The policy aims to promote transparency and student agency by providing clear information to students on what tutoring offers, how to access it, how to change tutors where appropriate, and where to get additional help. This empowers students and ensures they are active partners in their Personal Tutoring system.

2) In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?

While the Personal Tutoring Policy is designed to be inclusive, there are specific limitations in its scope and potential perceptions that could be considered adverse impacts for certain marginalised and underrepresented communities:

- **Exclusion of Specific Student Groups from Direct Provision:** The policy explicitly states that it does not apply to several categories of students.
 - Postgraduate Research (PGR) students (who have research supervisors)
 - Apprentices (who have supervision through regular tripartite progress reviews).

- BNU students taught through franchise or partnership provision.
- Students enrolled on short courses; only students enrolled on a named degree programme (e.g., BA, BSc, LLB, MA, MSc or equivalent) are covered
- While alternative support structures are noted for these groups, their explicit exclusion from the Personal Tutoring Policy means they do not receive the "consistent baseline of scheduled contact" or the specific Personal Tutor responsibilities outlined within this document. If these alternative arrangements are not fully equivalent or as robust, this could disproportionately affect members of marginalised communities who might be more likely to pursue these alternative study paths or who might particularly benefit from the consistent Personal Tutoring model outlined here.
- **Perception of Time Commitment for Students with External Responsibilities:** There may be a perception of negative impact in terms of the time taken for Personal Tutoring for students with significant external commitments (paid employment, caring responsibilities etc)". These significant external commitments are often more prevalent among students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, student parents, and carers, who may also belong to other marginalised groups. Although the policy states that the benefits will outweigh this time commitment, the initial perception and practical challenge of scheduling and attending regular meetings could be a barrier for some.

3. How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the Equality Strategy 2023-2028?

The Personal Tutoring Policy aligns directly with and contributes significantly to achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the Equality Strategy 2023-2028, particularly through its focus on engagement, tackling inequalities, and fostering an inclusive community.

• Priority 1: Involve and Empower Our Community

- **Proactive Engagement and Support:** By ensuring every undergraduate and postgraduate taught student has a named Personal Tutor and consistent baseline contact, The policy actively involves students in their educational process. Personal Tutors are required to be a "proactive presence that notices patterns of nonengagement and initiates supportive outreach". This early and continuous engagement supports learners to succeed and empowers them in their academic journey.
- **Transparency and Student Agency:** The policy aims to promote transparency by providing clear information to students regarding what tutoring offers and how to access it, including an accessible route to change their tutor. This empowers learners by giving them a voice and choice in their support, fostering a sense of ownership over their academic experience and ensuring their concerns are addressed.

• Priority 2: Take Action to Tackle Inequalities

- **Targeted Support for APP Priority Groups:** The policy directly supports the objective to "Make continuous progress against our Access and Participation Plan for students". It explicitly aims to improve continuation, completion, progression, and awarding outcomes, with particular attention to APP priority groups, recognising that Personal Tutoring can reduce outcome gaps for disadvantaged or minoritised students. This represents a direct action to mitigate existing inequalities.
- **Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments:** The policy's commitment to "Inclusive practice" and "duties under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate and make reasonable adjustments" ensures that learners with disabilities are not disadvantaged. This proactive approach to support directly tackles barriers and promotes equitable access to education.
- **Early Intervention and Referral Pathways:** Personal Tutors are responsible for facilitating conversations about academic progress and study skills, and critically, for promptly referring or signposting students to specialist services for urgent risk/safeguarding concerns or other support needs. This early identification and intervention system helps to mitigate the effects of any socio-economic, health, or personal disadvantages that students may face.

• Priority 3: Build a University Community Where People Can Be Themselves

- **Fostering Belonging and Inclusive Environment:** The purpose of Personal Tutoring is to "support transition, progression and attainment; foster belonging; and help students navigate academic and personal challenges". The policy's principles emphasise a "student-centred and strengths based" approach, building students' "confidence, autonomy and sense of belonging". This commitment to creating an inclusive and

supportive environment helps students feel valued and secure, allowing them to truly be themselves within the university community.

- **Confidentiality and Sensitive Handling:** The policy ensures that student information is handled "lawfully and sensitively" and that "risk and safeguarding concerns are escalated promptly via university procedures". This commitment to confidentiality with safety helps build trust between students and their tutors, creating a safe space for students to discuss personal circumstances that might impact their studies, thereby enabling them to feel comfortable being open about their needs.



Signed:

Name: Dr Katharine Hubbard, Director of LEAP

Date: 19th September 2025