



## **Personal Tutoring Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Norland recognises that the transition to Higher Education is often a period of great change and development. Norland is committed to creating a stable and structured environment in which students can thrive and achieve, guided by the principles of fairness, inclusivity and accessibility for all. The personal tutor system plays a vital part in this by providing opportunities for supportive partnerships between staff and students, which encourages students to take ownership of their studies, and access support and understanding for individual needs.

**1.2** Alongside supporting the student experience, this policy aligns with Norland's institutional goals, which include:

- Continuation and progression
- Inclusion
- Student engagement and feedback
- Achievement of graduate outcomes
- Establishing a 'caring' profile
- Protecting the Norland brand.

**1.3** This policy has been written with due regard to the OfS Quality and Standards Conditions and UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Advice and Guidance for Learning and Teaching (2018).

**1.4** This policy, together with the Improving Progress Policy and Procedure, forms a holistic approach to student achievement and progress.

### **2. THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR PERSONAL TUTOR**

**2.1** The senior personal tutor is a member of the academic team who is accountable for supporting personal tutors with advice and guidance on effective approaches to student engagement and academic success and help to ensure consistent monitoring and review of student progress.

**2.2** In collaboration with the Head of Learning, Teaching and Research, they have oversight of the efficacy, communications and implementation of the personal tutor system. Thus includes:

- supporting the induction of new personal tutors and signposting policies, training and toolkits which are available centrally;
- providing support and guidance for personal tutors to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities;
- communicating, promoting and encouraging student engagement with the personal tutor system at key transition points during the academic lifecycle;
- act as a key point of contact for the personal tutor system for staff;



- liaising with the Quality Manager each trimester to access data on student academic progress and wellbeing;
- meeting with personal tutors each trimester to discuss student academic progress and wellbeing and respond to concerns raised by personal tutors, as necessary;
- directing personal tutors the use of Quercus to document meetings and advise personal tutors when developing student action/support plans;
- systematically gathering and responding to student and staff feedback and sharing any emerging themes in Education Team meetings; and
- providing a summary update on student academic progress and wellbeing in Education Team meetings.

### **3. THE ROLE OF THE PERSONAL TUTOR**

**3.1** Personal tutors will be members of academic staff and should be the first point of contact for a student for general academic guidance and pastoral care. They play a pivotal role in supporting students to navigate key transitions in the student journey and engage with their studies. Personal tutors will support students in the following ways:

- Connect student to other support services
- Pastoral support
- Skills development
- Helping students to understand logic/purpose of curriculum and assessment feedback
- Supporting students to making appropriate decisions about their learning
- Supporting students to understand and demonstrate the Code of Professional Responsibilities and Competence Standards therein
- Supporting students with goal setting – academic and career
- Encouraging students to be autonomous about their learning
- Being a Brand Ambassador and role model
- Being able to listen to and offer initial advice and support.

**3.2** It is not expected that tutors are experts on all matters, and it is important that tutees are aware that there may be limitations to what a personal tutor can do before signposting a student to a more specialised source of support. The Support Framework gives more guidance on the boundaries and limitations of support that Norland can offer. This can be found in the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

**3.3** Norland will ensure that all personal tutors are aware of their role and responsibilities by providing relevant training and guidance.

**3.4** Personal tutors are encouraged to use the [Competency Framework for supporting Students in Distress](#) (shown below) when working with tutees. The framework was developed by [Advance HE](#) and the [Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce](#) and it offers a practical tool to support higher education providers, enabling

them to respond more effectively and consistently to student wellbeing and mental health needs.

### The Competency Framework



The Competency Framework is organised into three sections

**APPROACH:** How I am expected to do things and approach students.

**SKILLS:** What I am expected to be able to do when interacting with students.

**KNOWLEDGE:** What I am expected to know to support me with implementing skills and approaches.

#### APPROACH

- Understand the principles of the [Compassionate Communication Statement](#) and apply them to interactions with distressed students.
- Work collaboratively with the student, seeking to develop their skills and confidence in their ability to overcome difficulties.
- Create a safe space for the student to share their concerns by being a calm, reassuring and containing presence.
- Use active listening to allow the student to disclose all the causes of their distress, recognising that the primary cause of their distress may not be the first thing they disclose.
- Be proactive in helping the student to manage their feelings.
- Assess the level of distress and risk to the student to determine which specialist support services may be appropriate for their needs.
- Where you are concerned that there is an imminent risk, calmly but immediately facilitate a referral to Security and/or emergency services in line with the institution's protocols.
- Provide support to the student through effective collaboration with other relevant teams and services.
- Where relevant, follow institutional procedures in place and any advice received from specialist teams to support the student.
- Document the interaction with the student in accordance with your institution's protocols.

## SKILLS

- Discuss the boundaries of your role and manage expectations with the student.
- Ask effective questions and listen actively.
- Demonstrate empathy in your interactions by acknowledging how the student is feeling.
- Communicate effectively, adapting your style and approach to suit the needs of the student.
- Ask questions or provide more directive advice in a respectful and supportive way, and intervene with confidence to offer support when needed.
- Build a sense of shared responsibility and understanding with the student.
- Encourage the student to draw on their own sense of agency when seeking help, where appropriate.
- Consider whether a student may have a long-term mental health condition which would meet the definition of a disability or mean the student would benefit from disability support.
- Recognise a change in behaviour or engagement that might indicate a student is in distress.
- Respond calmly if a student discloses thoughts of suicide or self-harm.
- Be sensitive and understanding of the diversity in cultural perception of mental health and wellbeing that may affect students differently.
- Recognise the impact of distressed states in others on yourself and how this may impact your own response.
- Identify when you need more support or advice after a challenging interaction.

## KNOWLEDGE

- The institutional procedures in place to support or refer students who are experiencing a health or wellbeing issue.
- Student support services provision, including specialist counselling and mental health support services, disability support, university teams (e.g. Security) or external services (e.g. emergency services) providing emergency support, and their contact details, so that these can be communicated to a student in a clear way without overloading them with options.
- Related institutional policies and procedures (e.g. Safeguarding, Prevent, Fitness to Study and/or Fitness to Practice) to be ready to make internal referrals, when required.
- Appropriate web resource (often on your institution's website) listing crisis and emergency support services, so that you can provide this to a student who may be at a higher level of risk.
- Understanding about things a student might say that could indicate they are feeling hopeless or potentially considering suicide.
- The role of – and the challenges facing – a university in relation to student mental health and wellbeing.
- Common disabilities among the student body and how they may affect mental health and the wider student experience.
- Who can support you with your own wellbeing and how you can contact them.

**3.5** Members of SLT, the senior personal tutor and Student Support will provide additional support and assistance to personal tutors as and when required.



#### 4. COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION COMMITMENT

The [Compassionate Communication Statement](#) sets out principles for higher education providers in England through the work of the [Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce](#) - Academic Registrars' Council (ARC), commended by Prof. Edward Peck.

The principles are consistent with the principles of the [Good Practice Framework](#) published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) and may be taken into consideration by the OIA when reviewing student complaints about higher education providers in England.

**Norland is committed to ensuring all staff embed these principles into everything they do, and the same commitment is expected from Norland students.**

##### Compassionate Communication Commitment

1. *We commit to adopting a **Culture of Kindness** and incorporating it into student facing policies, processes, and communications.*
2. *We commit to **Mindful Communications** which are clear, empathetic, action focused, and supportive.*
3. *We commit to **Timely Communications** ensuring that careful consideration has been given to both delivery and timings, enabling students to access advice and support when they most need it.*
4. *We commit to **Inclusivity** by actively identifying and addressing barriers to engagement, as well as carefully considering the impact of processes and communications on all student groups.*
5. *We commit to the principle of **Reflection and Continuous Improvement** by dedicating time to review challenges and successes in delivering student-facing policies, processes and communications with compassion and empathy*

#### 5. PERSONAL TUTOR ALLOCATION

- 5.1 All students will be allocated a named personal tutor and provided with their details after A-Level results day. It is normally the case that all students will have the same personal tutor for the duration of their studies at Norland. If a member of staff leaves, their tutor group will be reallocated and the students will be notified via email in a timely manner of the details of their new tutor.
- 5.2 In exceptional circumstances a student may request to change their personal tutor. These requests should be emailed to the Head of Learning, Teaching and Research and it will be at their discretion as to whether this request is accepted. When considering the request, they will take into account the reason for the change, staff workload allocation and availability.



**5.3** If approved, the student will be notified by email, copying in their new tutor and the Education Administrator to ensure that records are maintained.

**5.4** If a personal tutor feels that their role as tutor to a student is compromised, perhaps due to a conflict of interest, they should ask the Head of Learning, Teaching and Research to provide an alternative tutor to the student, and again the Education Administrator should be advised of the change.

## **6. MEETINGS – TIMING AND ATTENDANCE**

**6.1** Students will be offered a minimum of three personal tutoring sessions, one each trimester, during each academic year at Norland.

**6.2** First year students will additionally meet with their personal tutors and their tutor group during Welcome Week to get to know each other, as well as engaging in a day's team building exercise.

**6.3** For second- and third-year students, the first session with their tutor will be a group session with one-to-one sessions thereafter.

**6.4** Third year students will have additional one-to-one support from their dissertation supervisor. This will not replace personal tutoring but it is recognised that there may be some overlap in support which will require clear lines of communication between dissertation supervisors and personal tutors.

**6.5** In addition to this basic offer, additional personal tutoring sessions will be offered to students who are highlighted as struggling through the regular monitoring of students by the Senior Personal Tutor and Quality Manager and those who require support through discrete action plans following assessment results.

**6.6** Furthermore, both students and personal tutors can request additional personal tutoring sessions if these are required.

**6.7** Personal tutors will arrange the meetings with their tutees and confirm the time and date via email. It is expected that students will make every effort to attend these meetings and must advise their tutors in advance if they are unable to do so.

## **7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

**7.1** Personal tutors will always respect the confidentiality and privacy of their tutees, however they will not always be able to guarantee complete confidentiality. If it is clear that issues raised by a tutee may have significant risk to their health and safety or that of others, then the personal tutor has a duty of care to disclose this information to other relevant parties.



**7.2** All personal tutors will need to document meetings with their tutees on the Quercus student records system (SRS), outlining the time and date of the meeting, some brief notes of the discussion that has taken place and any referrals/follow ups to be made. Further details on what information should be recorded and how it should be recorded can be found in the [‘Personal Tutoring Role’](#) document.

## **8. OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES**

**8.1** The personal tutor system does not operate in isolation, but as part of a wider framework that provides help and support to students so that they can develop and achieve their full potential. Personal tutors will work closely with other members of staff in the academic support team to ensure that there is a coherent and consistent level of support offered to all students at Norland which acknowledges the diversity of the student body and considers each student’s individual needs. Personal tutors will signpost their tutees to other services offered by Norland such as student support and counselling where this is appropriate, the resources offered by the library, or additional learning opportunities that are provided by Norland on an ad-hoc basis.

**8.2** It is imperative that students engage with the support offered by Norland in order to enhance their learning experience.

## **9. MONITORING**

**9.1** In collaboration with the Senior Personal Tutor and the Quality and Regulations Manager, personal tutors will be responsible for monitoring the student’s academic and general progress including fitness to practise and fitness to study, using a traffic lights system. Feedback on progress is gathered each trimester in a meeting with between the senior personal tutor and personal tutor, informed by data maintained by the Quality and Regulations Manager. An overall RAG (red, amber, green) rating will be given. and any student with an amber or red rating will be asked to meet with their personal tutor and develop an action plan for improvement. A copy of this document will be saved to the student’s record on the SRS. The action plan will include SMART targets and will be monitored by the tutor and student at regular intervals. Further details on the monitoring progress can be found in the Improving Progress Policy and Procedure.

## **10. REFERENCES**

**10.1** Personal tutors are likely to receive reference requests from current and previous (alumni) tutees from time to time. As Norland is an academic institution, it is not appropriate for personal tutors to provide character references. However, academic references can be provided.

**10.2** For current students asking for a reference, their request should be forwarded to the Quality and Regulations Manager who can provide them with a letter which confirms the



start date of their course(s), details of the course(s) they are studying, confirmation that they have been DBS checked, and information about the stage/level at which they are studying.

**10.3** Personal tutors are permitted to provide alumni with an academic reference, and a template for this is provided in appendix 3 of this policy.

## **11. FEEDBACK**

**11.1** Norland continually reviews the provision offered to its students. The personal tutoring system will be evaluated through student feedback and representation at Programme Committees and may also be a focus for discussion in staff review meetings.

## Appendix 1

### Personal Tutor System - Working in Partnership

The personal tutor system is intended to provide a stable, holistic and developmental form of support for individual students that is course related. As such, Norland encourages its students and personal tutors to meet regularly throughout the course. The information below provides guidance and suggestions on how to get the most out of your meetings:

#### Personal Tutor is responsible for:

#### Tutee is responsible for:

##### Arranging meetings

Your personal tutor will meet you within Welcome Week (for first years) or within the first 3 weeks of the academic year for students in other years. They will arrange meetings with you at least three times during the academic year, one each trimester. This will initially be a group meeting and then on an individual basis.



##### Attendance at meetings

You should attend all scheduled personal tutoring sessions and prepare for these sessions as guided by the personal tutor. In exceptional circumstances when you are unable to attend you should advise your personal tutor in a timely manner and ensure that you rearrange the appointment.

##### Discussing your academic progress

Personal tutors will be your first point of contact for advice on matters affecting academic progress on the course, including general advice on time management, and organisational skills. They will help you to understand the requirements of the course in terms of knowledge, skills development and assessment requirements.



##### Discussing your academic progress

Personal tutors will assist you to take responsibility for your own learning, helping you to reflect on your progress, identify learning needs and develop appropriate strategies to achieve. You need to make the most of the learning resources and other forms of learning support available to you, and advise your personal tutor if you are struggling to utilise these resources.

##### Providing general assistance and advice

Personal tutors can offer advice in relation to various matters associated with the course and issues which may impact your ability to focus on your studies, such as the transition to HE and your relationship with peers and housemates. They will support your academic, professional and career related planning and development, and appropriate recording of this.



##### Asking for assistance when it is needed

It is important that you take the initiative in contacting your personal tutor in relation to problems or if in need of advice outside of the scheduled sessions. Inform your personal tutor of changes in your personal circumstances which may affect your studies and/or progress. Additional personal tutoring sessions can be requested by you at any time.

##### Signposting support services

Your personal tutor will advise and guide you on issues arising whilst you are at Norland and signpost you to the broader range of services provided by Norland, including counselling and student support. With your permission they will share information with others so the right support can be offered.



##### Helping yourself

Once you have sought advice from your personal tutor or other services provided by Norland, it is up to you to act on this advice. Your personal tutor will endeavour to touch base with you on a regular basis but further sessions should be requested by you if you require them. You should feel free to provide feedback to your personal tutor regarding the course.



## Appendix 2

### **Personal Tutoring and Tutee guidance**

This guide has been developed with the help and support of the student staff liaison committee (SSLC) and the academic team which also encompasses personal tutors. This guide should be read in conjunction with the Personal Tutoring policy which can be found on the Norland Website.

#### **What is a Personal Tutor?**

Norland is committed to providing a stable and structured environment in which you can thrive and achieve. Your partnership with your Personal Tutor is a vital part of this and will develop over each academic year. Broadly, your Personal Tutor will act as a key contact for you and will help you to:

- settle into Norland;
- understand the difference between school/college and higher education (HE);
- understand what you need to do to obtain your degree and diploma;
- review and progress in your academic studies;
- take ownership over your studies;
- consider your progression to your Newly Qualified Nanny; and
- progress personally, through offering pastoral care and by directing you to other sources of support across Norland, as necessary.

#### **What are the core requirements for Personal Tutors?**

You will be assigned a Personal Tutor and there is an expectation that you will keep the same named tutor throughout your programme of study. This will help us to provide a point of oversight and ensure continuity across semesters and years of study. It will enable us to understand how you are engaging with your studies and identify when you may need support as early as possible.

Personal Tutors are expected to:

- meet with you according to the Personal Tutoring protocols laid out in this document;
- use the data provided the Senior Personal Tutor and Quality and Standards team to proactively engage with you;
- provide a point of contact for you if you have concerns about your ability to succeed within your programme of study;
- arrange meetings with you and confirm the time and date via email;
- ensure that you have an alternative contact point in case of Personal Tutor absence from the University, and that this contact is clearly detailed in an out of office reply;
- document all meetings with you on the Quercus student records system, outlining the time and date of the meeting, brief notes on the discussion and any referrals/follow up to be made; and
- maintain, at all times, an appreciation of guidance on confidentiality and data protection, unless there is an identified safeguarding risk.



### **What are the core requirements for Personal Tutees?**

As a Personal Tutee we expect you to:

- attend all scheduled and other requested meetings or agree an alternative time if it is inconvenient, with respect for your Personal Tutors office hours;
- check email every day for messages and respond to communication as appropriate;
- be familiar with Norland's procedures and practices in Personal Tutoring and respect the boundaries of the Personal Tutor's role;
- seek support and advice from your Personal Tutor as early as possible, when in need;
- reflect on your academic achievements, identifying areas of strength and development, and possible actions to support you to make progress in your studies;
- record your reflections on how your learning contributes to your long-term aspirations;
- engage as a member of a community of learners by attending and participating actively in meetings with your Personal Tutor; and
- notify your Personal Tutor if you are experiencing problems which are affecting your attendance or having an adverse effect on the standard of your work or progress on your programme.

### **Meeting your Personal Tutor**

Personal Tutors are expected to meet with you at the following points each year:

1. Group tutorial during welcome week for all new students;
2. Group tutorial for second- and third-year students during trimester 1; and
3. Individual tutorial during each trimester – these are compulsory sessions, failure to attend may result in a Cause for Action.

### **What are the expectations for Personal Tutoring in your first year (level 4)?**

- During welcome week, you will meet with your Personal Tutor in a group to introduce you to Norland's academic community and support you in developing your sense of belonging within it. You will also meet individually to complete an All About Me form and engage in a day of team building in your tutor group with your tutor.
- Personal Tutors will offer you additional support and guidance, as required, while you settle during your first few weeks at Norland.
- Personal Tutors will arrange to meet you each trimester to review your progress and to support you with your transitions between trimesters. These meetings will focus on your progress to date, on your strengths and any areas for improvement. They will also help you identify if any additional learning support is required.
- Additional personal tutoring sessions will be offered to students who require further academic support.



- Both students and Personal Tutors can request additional personal tutoring sessions if these are required.

#### **What are the expectations for Personal Tutoring in your second year (level 5)?**

- You will have the opportunity to take part in a welcome back group tutorial with Personal Tutors to support your transition into your second year. The focus of this meeting will be to discuss acting on your assignment feedback and getting the right support academically and pastorally.
- You will be offered an opportunity for review meetings with your Personal Tutor each trimester.
- The focus of these review meetings will be on your understanding of your learning on your programme. They will provide further opportunities to identify and action any issues that you have with your studies and provide you with support as you progress towards your final year (level 6). The meetings will also enable you to highlight opportunities for personal development, employment and any extra-curricular engagement or voluntary and community activities that you may have identified.
- Additional personal tutoring sessions will be offered to students who require further academic support.
- Both students and Personal Tutors can request additional personal tutoring sessions if these are required.

#### **What are the expectations for Personal Tutoring in your final year (level 6)?**

- You will have the opportunity to take part in a welcome back group tutorial with Personal Tutors to support your transition into your third year. The focus of this meeting will be to discuss acting on your assignment feedback and getting the right support academically and pastorally.
- You will be offered an opportunity for review meetings with your Personal Tutor each trimester.
- The focus of these meetings will be on the progress that you are making through your final year, planning for next steps after graduation with a focus on your transition to your Newly Qualified Nanny Year.
- Your final meeting will include an opportunity to meet your Personal Tutor in the Newly Qualified Nanny team.
- Review meetings will also provide you with the opportunity to engage in positive and constructive dialogue on your experiences across your programme of study.
- Additional personal tutoring sessions will be offered to students who require further academic support.
- Both students and Personal Tutors can request additional personal tutoring sessions if these are required.



### **What are the boundaries?**

- Personal Tutors will not be able 'solve' all of a tutee's issues. Personal Tutors are guided by the principle that their primary aim is to support you in your learning. The key word here is 'support'; they will be prepared to listen to you, offer advice, refer to other sources of help, and consult with colleagues to do this. We recognise that sometimes the best way to support you is to recognise our own limitations and so help you find the person best suited to assist.
- A Personal Tutor provides a point of oversight for each of their tutees, to help gain insight into how you are engaging with your studies. Where specific module or programme-related issues are highlighted, Personal Tutors will inform Module Leaders where appropriate. Importantly, Personal Tutors provide a point of contact for you, helping to engender your sense of your belonging to your academic discipline and to Norland's academic community.
- The remit of Personal Tutor does not include a welfare or counselling role, although you may come to your Personal Tutor with personal issues. In such instances, the Personal Tutor's will signpost and refer you to the Norland Student Support Team.



## Appendix 3

### Alumni Academic Reference Template

*Information should be found on the student's Quercus profile. However, please contact the Quality and Regulations team should you need any assistance with this. For extracurricular information, please contact the Student Engagement Manager. All reference letters should be written on headed paper.*

DATE

To whom it may concern,

Reference for **STUDENT NAME**

I have known **student name** from **starting year of course** to **end year of course** in my capacity as their Personal Tutor at Norland College, where they studied the **BA (Hons) Early Years Development and Learning / BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education and Care** alongside the Norland Diploma.

The BA (Hons) degree is a three - year full - time course which consists of theoretical and practical modules, covering the skills and knowledge needed for working with babies, young children and their families. Key themes of the course include psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, social sciences and education. The degree incorporates practical placements in a range of childcare settings such as schools, nurseries, special needs settings and a hospital placement.

The Norland Diploma runs alongside the BA (Hons) degree and incorporates practical elements such as Food and Nutrition, Sewing Skills, Care and Wellbeing, and Play and Learning. Following completion of the BA degree, students complete the Newly Qualified Nanny (NQN) year which is the final module of the Norland Diploma. This is a 12-month placement as a probationary nanny in paid full-time employment. Successful completion of the NQN year entitles a graduate to call themselves a 'Norlander' or 'Norland Nanny.'

**Student name** particularly excelled in module **XXX**, which focussed on **XXX (tutors to take this information from module descriptors)**. They also performed well in **XXX**, where they demonstrated their knowledge regarding **XXX (tutors to take this information from module descriptors)**. For their dissertation, titled **XXX**, they achieved a mark of **XXX**, demonstrating their skills in research, analysis and synthesis of ideas.

Whilst a student at Norland, **student name** was actively involved with extracurricular activities, such as **XXX (mention clubs/ societies/ SSLC membership/ volunteering)**.

It is a pleasure to provide this reference for **student name**. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.



Please note that this letter has been written in good faith and reflects information believed to be accurate at the time of writing. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Norland accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions.



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