

# **Personal Development Tutor**

## **Guidance for staff**

The aim of these guidelines is to provide support to Personal development Tutors, to enhance the student experience, and to provide a consistent approach to Personal Development Tutoring at Edinburgh Napier University.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Guidance for Students.

### **Personal Development Tutors should be:**

#### **Actively engaging**

- Be a consistent point of contact for student wellbeing and welfare needs
- Actively engage with individual students to help them achieve their desired learning outcomes

#### **Proactive not reactive**

- Students on most taught programmes are to be allocated a PDT
- PDT appointments should be arranged at least twice per year with the first meeting taking place as soon as possible after the start of teaching
- Additional contact can be instigated by the student and by the PDT
- Contact with students can be made in a variety of formats, and can be held in group forums, but at least one meeting per year should be conducted on a one-to-one basis
- If poor engagement is a concern, follow up with student
- Discuss and provide academic references
- Maintain notes of PDT contact.

#### **Academic Advising**

- Offer appropriate guidance in relation to studies whilst respecting students' learning needs
- Respect confidentiality
- Review academic progress and signpost students to Academic Skills and Student Wellbeing and Inclusion, as required
- Support personal and professional development and signpost students to Student Futures

#### **Signposting to support**

- Be familiar with the PDT Toolkit and support systems within the University
- Signposting services for academic skills, personal development, and individual support as/when necessary

## **Each PDT should endeavour to...**

### **Be a consistent point of contact**

At Edinburgh Napier University, PDTs are designated as a sustained and accessible point of contact for individual students to access wellbeing, welfare and academic support. All students should be allocated a PDT who is clearly identified in Moodle and their eStudent record.

### **Promote Active Engagement: Be proactive, not reactive**

Arrange to meet with students soon after they arrive at university, usually within the first three weeks. First meetings are important as this is the time when students are settling into university life and can be a period of uncertainty for some of them. It is evident from the literature that the first year is an important time in terms of student retention (Lindsay, 2011), so it is worthwhile investing time in developing the PDT relationship early on. Appointments should be arranged at least twice per year. Meetings can take a variety of formats, either face-to-face, by phone, or online, in groups or one-to-one, with at least one individual meeting per year. The PDT system needs to be adaptable to a wide variety of student needs, it is within the PDT role to meet these needs.

Aim to respond to PDT queries within three working days. If you will be out of the office, your out-of-office reply should indicate who to contact if the query is urgent.

### **Review academic progress and support personal development**

Assist students in their academic development by providing general feedback on academic performance and supporting development of independent learning strategies, which may involve signposting to Academic Skills, or to Student Wellbeing and Inclusion. PDTs also write mutually agreed academic references for students, signposting to Student Futures for personal development support.

### **Respect Confidentiality**

Students should be able to trust that PDTs will respect the confidential nature of the relationship, unless there is a requirement to disclose. Disclosure may be required where the PDT has concerns about the well-being of the student or others, the student has a disclosed support need, the student discloses, or the PDT suspects a criminal offence. It is preferable to come to an agreement with the student about to whom the information should be passed on. PDTs need to strike a balance between the rights of the student to confidentiality against other obligations and should take advice as appropriate from the School PDT Lead (contact details available from [PDT Toolkit](#)).

### **Signpost sources of support**

Signpost services that students might use to access academic, wellbeing and welfare support. Familiarise yourself with support services available to students via [the PDT Toolkit](#) and refer to support services as necessary. Additional information can be obtained from your PDT Lead.

### **Keep a record of PDT meetings**

- Maintain a record of PDT meetings (date, time, purpose)
- Ensure this record is confidential; if there is an issue beyond scope of competence, PDTs should gain consent to share the information with other university support systems
- Maintain a record of academic references provided to the student