POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Title	Academic Tutorial Policy
Policy Number	WLC-041
Responsible	Director of Studies
Approval By	Academic Committee
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Academic Tutorial policy

1: INTRODUCTION

Academic Tutorial Policy and Guidelines set out the aims and objectives of academic tutorials for students, and provide guidelines for staff conducting academic tutorials.

2: PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and its guidelines is to ensure that:

- Students are aware of the aim and definition of academic tutorials within the framework of their learning experience.

- Student entitlement and access to academic tutorials is clearly defined.

- All students have access to constructive advice and guidance to support their progress throughout their individual programme.

- There is clarity for staff with regard to the parameters and responsibilities associated with academic tutorials.

- There is a process in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the academic tutorial policy and guidelines, and to reflect on the outcomes of the policy and guidelines and make enhancement where necessary.

3: DEFINITIONS

- A student(s) includes any current student(s) of the College and those on work experience or engaged in work-related learning.

- Academic staff refers to members of staff responsible for the academic progress of the student(s), including lecturers, Programme Heads.

- Within this policy and guidelines, an academic tutorial refers to an opportunity provided to the student(s) by academic staff to discuss academic progress on a formal or informal basis, including feedback for formative and/or summative purposes.

4: RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that:

- There is a regular review of the academic tutorial policy, which should evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure, reflect on the outcomes and make enhancements where necessary.

- Academic staff are provided with the appropriate information, including any changes to the academic tutorial policy, in order that the policy can be effectively implemented.

- Academic tutorials are organised and monitored to enable equality of access and regular feedback for all students.

- Academic tutorial arrangements are communicated to students accurately, effectively and in a timely manner.

- Academic staff within the individual Programme Teams receive appropriate training and support to carry out academic tutorials.

- 4 Academic tutorial records are maintained and reviewed regularly.

4.2. Academic staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- Academic tutorials are conducted within the guidelines provided (Appendix B).

- Academic tutorial support and guidance offered to students is constructive, objective and non-discriminatory.

- Academic tutorials are delivered according to the schedules given to students, and any changes to these arrangements are communicated to students in a timely manner.

- Students are advised of any preparations they need to make in order that academic tutorials provide effective and useful feedback.

- Academic tutorial records are maintained with accuracy and in a timely manner.

- Where appropriate, physical academic tutorial forms are signed by staff and student(s) to indicate that tutorial feedback has been given and received.

- In the case of electronic academic tutorials, the process of feedback is clearly communicated to.

4.3. Students are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Follow the academic tutorial guidelines set out in Appendix A.

- Prepare for academic tutorials as advised by academic staff.

- Attend academic tutorials on time and make the most of the opportunities provided to secure academic advice and feedback.

- Notify academic staff if unable to attend an academic tutorial for a genuine reason.

- Respond to academic support and guidance in a positive and respectful manner, and clarify any points that they are not sure about during the tutorial.

- Inform the Programme Leader of any matters that may affect academic performance.

- Access their College email or the VLE regularly in order to receive electronic feedback and arrangements for academic tutorials.

- Do not contact academic staff outside of normal working hours, including communication by email.

The Annual Programme Review will contain an evaluation of the academic tutorial process and its impact on student achievement and retention for each programme.

Appendix A: – Academic Tutorials: Guidelines for Students

1.   Academic support and advice is provided throughout the programme, through discussions between staff and students. This includes advice given through "critiques" and written feedback, as well as guidance on practical work and informal discussion about student concerns about academic progress. These sessions may be individual or, in the case of collaborative work, in small groups.

2.   Academic tutorials are scheduled on every programme of study and allow you to discuss in depth matters relating to creative or theoretical work or the programme in general. You will be entitled to at least one formal recorded academic tutorial per term with the Programme Leader or a nominated programme tutor. Generally, these tutorials are recorded on an Academic Tutorial Form, which are retained by the Programme Team, but you can request a copy. In some cases, tutorial feedback is given electronically and it is your responsibility to check your College emails and VLE regularly so that you receive it.

3.   In order to maximise the benefits of tutorial discussion, it is important you prepare for academic tutorials, and follow any guidance given by staff for preparations. During tutorials, academic staff will give you constructive guidance on how to improve and fulfil your potential. This often highlights areas that you need to develop, and is intended to help and support you, so you should respond with a positive attitude. If you are not sure about any points made by academic staff during tutorials, try and clarify these during the discussion.

4.   It is essential that you attend scheduled tutorials on time. If you miss a timetabled session, or fail to attend for an agreed tutorial without prior notification, this will not normally be re-arranged. It is your responsibility to ensure that you make the most of opportunities to secure advice and feedback.

6.   Academic staff are responsible for providing you with feedback on your work and your general academic progress, and for providing academic support and guidance through the programme. You should not expect academic staff to provide support on personal or financial matters, as this is provided by Student welfare Officer.

7.   You must respect the fact that academic staff have a range of duties alongside teaching and direct student support, and that specific arrangements are in place for accessing staff advice. Academic staff will be available at set times, and you should normally make appointments to see them, although some staff may also have drop-in sessions, or be available for informal discussion. Outside these times, staff will be engaged in other activities (which may include research, teaching preparation, programme administration or other College business), and should only be contacted in a genuine emergency.

Appendix B: – Academic Tutorials: Guidelines for Academic Staff

1.   Academic staff will often be aware of issues that are affecting students, and should take due account of these circumstances (for example, when considering requests for extensions, or student absence). However, academic staff should not attempt to counsel or advise a student on non-academic matters. Tutorial discussions with students should focus on academic progress and development.

2.   Written feedback for formal academic tutorials should record the discussion with the student(s) as accurately as possible. The aims and objectives of the tutorial and any agreed actions should be clearly stated.

3.   You can provide written tutorial feedback in a variety of ways within the following guidelines:

   3.1   Written paper feedback using the standard Academic Tutorial Forms (available on the intranet) – these should be signed both by the relevant member of staff and the student(s) to indicate that the student(s) agree(s) with the written record. If the student(s) request(s) a copy, this can be given physically or a scanned copy sent by email.

   3.2   Written feedback can be sent directly by email to the student's College email account or via the Ulearn, and it is the students' responsibility to check their emails/Ulearn once they have received notification from the tutor that this is the method of providing the feedback.

4.   In relation to good practice for academic tutorials, the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education – *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* highlights the following:

   To derive maximum learning benefit from assessment, students need to receive timely feedback in a manner that is supportive, yet includes some personal challenge. Effective feedback is the result of: agreeing and communicating clear criteria before students complete the task; assessment that uses those criteria; and feedback based on the criteria and timed so that students can use it constructively in their next stage of learning. Effective feedback for learning also takes into account the need to build confidence as well as to communicate where and how improvements can be made.