Introduction
Personal tutoring continues to be a key student support resource at Heriot-Watt University. It is central to student retention and to the wider student experience, and the University is committed to providing training and support to enable academic colleagues to fulfil the role effectively. This paper outlines some key elements of how personal tutoring will operate in the 2022-23 academic year, during which there will be far greater scope for on campus learning, teaching and activities, as well as more professional services support being delivered face to face.

The paper will address:
- Personal Tutor and Tutee Contact Points
- Personal Tutor Training and Guidance
- The Allocation of Students to Personal Tutors
- Introducing Personal Tutoring to New Students in Induction

Personal Tutor and Tutee Contact Points
A contact point is an occasion where the personal tutor initiates a conversation or consultation with a tutee and these take place at regular intervals throughout the academic year. This may be a face to face meeting, an online meeting via MS Teams, an email exchange or a phone conversation. Personal tutors can judge the appropriate contact, for example, whether an email check in is sufficient, or whether a more in depth online or face to face discussion is required. The latter would be the case where there are particular concerns about a student. In addition to one to one contact, personal tutors can also use MS Teams for group sessions with their personal tutors where common issues affecting tutees can be discussed. The personal tutor group can also be developed as a peer support network.

For 2020-21, LTAYG agreed that the minimum number and frequency of contact points would be three per semester: at the start of the semester, during Consolidation Week and during Week 10; with additional contacts arranged as required and initiated by personal tutor or tutee. University survey data show an increasing engagement of students with their personal tutor: in May 2020 only 35% of students surveyed “felt that their personal tutor was an effective form of support.” By semester 2 of 2020-21 the equivalent figure was 77%, and for semester 1 of 2021-22 it was 79% (including supervisor support for PGR students) (Wellbeing Check In 2021-22 Semester 1). It is proposed that this minimum number and frequency of contact points continue for 2022-23.

Personal Tutor Training and Guidance
Training and support resources are available to personal tutors. In particular, the WorkRite online training module and the Supporting Our Students Sharepoint Site.

In order to ensure consistency of support for our students across the University, training continues to be mandatory for all personal tutors and in addition to the online module, Student Wellbeing Services are now offering live sessions, both online and on campus. The training has a strong wellbeing component, allowing personal tutors to find out more about the services and resources they can refer students to, and work with, in supporting their tutees. Live training sessions are interactive, collaborative and include discussions on student case studies, as such they are suitable for new starters and more experienced staff. Schools are asked to ensure staff engage with training as a key component of their professional development. Schools and subject teams at Scottish campuses can...
contact Keith MacAskill, Student Experience Manager, (K.MacAskill@hw.ac.uk) to arrange training sessions with groups of staff, so participation can be maximised.

Dubai and Malaysia campuses will be developing campus specific versions of the WorkRite training module which can highlight campus specific resources and services. This will be available during 2022-23.

The Allocation of Students to Personal Tutors
The allocation and reallocation of students to personal tutors is the responsibility of teams within Registry and Academic Support and it is recognised that staffing challenges and delays in applicants being able to ‘firm up’ their offers due to global HE/immigration systems issues will be particularly challenging, therefore it is proposed that personal tutor allocation for incoming new students is completed no later than the end of teaching week 1.

Introducing Personal Tutoring to New Students in Induction
An introduction to personal tutoring remains a vital component of new student induction and subject teams should consider how the topic can be introduced in an engaging and interactive way e.g. quizzes such as identifying true and false statements about the personal tutor role, discussing ways of how to contact your personal tutor, arranging for current students to share their experiences of being a tutee, and opportunities for new students to ask questions about personal tutoring.