

University of Warwick - Personal Tutoring Review 2017 (PTR 2017)

1. Introduction

Personal tutoring is the focus of current attention at a number of UK universities. The sector is seeking to ensure optimal provision relating to duty of care, student retention, student experience and academic progression in a climate where the learning environment and student support are of strategic importance. In broad terms, personal tutoring tends to be understood as the provision of generic academic support and basic welfare advice. It has a long history in the UK where the idea of some academic oversight of students can be traced back to the traditions of safeguarding and concerns about improving the character of students. Since the late 1960's, the role has evolved as universities were no longer required to act *in loco parentis* and as participation targets within higher education (HE) have grown significantly. In recent years, the changing needs, positioning and expectations of a growing body of students, and prevailing research pressure have put personal tutoring practices under significant pressure. Huyton (2013) describes personal tutoring as an 'institutionally invisible practice', one open to different interpretations and with a need for clearer guidance around its scope and boundaries. PTR 2017 is therefore timely, and with a focus on developing effective academic and pastoral support, that facilitates students' academic success, it directly links to institutional achievement of Goal One of the University's *Looking Forward* Strategy.

At Warwick, personal tutoring sits within a broader institutional framework of student support and development services including those of Wellbeing Support Services, Student Careers and Skills, Health and Wellbeing Services, Residential Life Team, Chaplaincy and Library. Unlike these centrally delivered services, personal tutoring is managed and delivered locally by academic departments each in their own form and style. Whilst devolved provision enables personal tutoring to support the wider academic process of inculcating students into different disciplinary ways of learning and working across departments, there is minimal central governance or oversight of the form and quality of provision. Working alongside other support services, personal tutoring is also distinctive in seeking to provide, personalised, long-term, and embedded (departmental) opportunities to listen and engage with students (both UG and PG) in respect of academic and broader support/learning environment issues. When performed well it enhances the student experience and facilitates academic success. When performed badly, including scant or non-delivery, it engenders student feelings of being let down and not valued that adversely colours their HE experience and may also impinge on academic development.

The previous Personal Tutoring Review undertaken in 2011 (PTR 2011), gathered evidence via an online semi-structured questionnaire sent to all staff and students (40% and 24% response rates respectively) and discussions with Senior Tutors and Heads of Departments. Overall, PTR 2011 reported high levels of satisfaction with personal tutoring provision (84% staff and 76% student respondents). Although these levels of satisfaction were regarded as high at that time, a 76% student satisfaction rate would no longer be considered acceptable in the context of NSS and TEF focus. PTR 2011 also identified a number of practical issues including, constraints on staff availability and contact time; absence of ongoing training; lack of a clear referral protocol; inconsistency of provision within and across departments; increasing numbers of tutees with increasingly complex support needs; and a lack of engagement by some tutees with personal tutoring. PTR 2011 sought to address some of these difficulties through updated Personal Tutoring Guidance that set out the minimum requirements for personal tutoring, approved by Senate in 2012. Further detailed guidance (Personal Tutoring Handbook) was also produced, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Personal Tutors, Personal Tutees, Senior Tutors and Heads of Department in providing effective and consistent personal tutoring.

Beyond these matters, the PTR 2011 Survey Report (p 20) also noted a number of broader areas of concern (expressed by staff and student respondents) for longer-term consideration as follows:

- Greater acknowledgement of personal tutoring as a key aspect of teaching and learning.
- Need for additional resources to release staff time to devote to personal tutoring.
- Closer monitoring of personal tutoring provision.
- Selection of personal tutors based on suitability and commitment rather than it being a required academic staff responsibility.
- Greater awareness by students of their responsibilities within the personal tutoring relationship.
- More effective and extensive use of IT to support personal tutoring.

Whilst these issues were flagged, the extent of developments subsequently arising from them is less clear. Nonetheless, this earlier review provides a constructive foundation from which to undertake PTR 2017.

2. Process and Scope

2.1 Process

Within departments across the institution, there is some excellent personal tutoring practice. However, the impetus for PTR 2017 arose from informal feedback from Senior Tutors across the University, from concerns raised by Heads of Department within the Faculty of Social Sciences, and from students via NSS and SSLC comments highlighting concerns around the effectiveness of existing personal tutor provision and the management of personal tutoring workloads. In response to this, and at its meeting on 20 February 2017, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved a process for the review, and the constitution and terms of reference of a Personal Tutoring Review Group (Appendix 1). The review is timely given the University's recent commitment to personal tutoring development, via its investment in the Dean of Students' Office and the recent fractional appointments of the Dean of Students and three Faculty Senior Tutors.

Careful consideration was given to the appointment of the External representative, Dr Alison Stenton; College Senior Tutor at King's College London, who recently led a review of personal tutoring at King's and is part of a successful joint HEFCE bid exploring the effects of personal tutoring particularly around engendering students' sense of belonging.

AQSC mandated the Review Group (RG) to explore the purpose and requirements of personal tutoring and make recommendations to the University relating to future provision of personal tutoring that is fit for purpose, informed by best practice, demographic and diversity considerations, together with resourcing implications and timescales for implementation. It was noted that the interface between personal tutoring and wellbeing support should also be clarified as part of the review.

The RG met four times (20th March, 5th June, 28th June and 15st September 2017) to plan, undertake, discuss findings and agree recommendations culminating in this final report to AQSC. Interim updates and reports to AQSC, Faculty Boards and Departmental meetings were provided throughout the review period.

2.2 Scope

As part of its scoping considerations, the RG considered the range of student cohorts at Warwick agreeing that the following cohorts of students fell outside the scope of this review:

- Those studying non-accredited courses at Warwick.
- Those studying franchised courses (two in 2016/17 within CLL). The RG considered it reasonable to place reliance on existing validation and review processes in ensuring appropriate academic and pastoral support was in place at host institutions.
- Those studying courses of less than a full academic year duration, and/or at an intensity level of less than 0.25 FTE. Although excluded from this review, the RG recognised the role that Senior Tutors might play in supporting students within these cohorts.

3 External Analysis - Personal Tutoring within the Higher Education Sector

3.1 Approach

The RG sought to understand personal tutoring more broadly across the sector in a number of ways including:

- (i) Review of relevant academic, practice and policy strands of the literature.
- (ii) Consultation and discussion with relevant external parties as follows:
 - a. PTRG External Member (Dr Alison Stenton – Kings)
 - b. UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT) – UK professional body for personal tutoring in FE and HE in the UK.
 - c. HE providers (Appendix 2) - targeting institutions who have recently reviewed, or identified a need to review their personal tutor provision, or those identified as competitor institutions or leaders in the field of academic support provision.
- (iii) Consideration of sector benchmarks.
- (iv) A review of UK NSS 2016 data relating to academic support (sorting institutions by % of positive responses in relation to the three ‘academic support’ questions) to identify top-performing institutions for more detailed analysis.

3.2 Sector Influences – Policy and Regulatory Framework

The HE context is dynamic and has been rapidly transforming in the six years since PTR 2011. Key changes affecting the student support environment include a sizeable shift in the way higher education providers (HEPs) are funded, with students becoming a prime funder. This has sharpened focus on improving all aspects of the student experience, including wellbeing, with an associated keen focus on student satisfaction surveys, such as the NSS. Recent changes (2016/17) to the Disabled Students’ Allowance creates a greater role for HEPs in their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and support students via inclusive learning environments and practice¹. Significant growth in student numbers, increasing levels of student debt; the introduction of TEF; and an opening up of access routes into HE creating a more diverse and

¹ Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence, January 2017 – www.gov.uk/government/publications.

inclusive student body all raise challenges for student support provision. Ongoing changes to the regulatory architecture of HE also place a primary emphasis on promoting the interest of students, reflected in the creation of a new public body, the Office for Students² (OfS). The recently launched consultation³ on the OfS Regulatory Framework sets out the intention to use ‘a bold, *student-focused* and risk-based’ regulatory approach. Specifically Objective 2 identifies a need to deliver a high quality learning experience to all students and underpinning that: “The provider must support students, including through admissions systems, to successfully complete and benefit from a high quality academic experience.”⁴ It is perhaps unsurprising that within this changing climate, students are actively seeking (and expecting) more effective academic and pastoral support⁵.

Perhaps the most significant change in recent times has been the 2012 HEI fees changes, which have catalysed transformation across the sector. One main consequence of this has been the consumerist positioning of students with a heightening of students’ (and parents’) expectations about evidenced quality and value-for-money within all aspects of their university experience. This heavy investment in their studies challenges HEIs to reflect on how the curriculum, learning and teaching approaches and support mechanisms drive students’ engagement and sense of belonging within their learning communities. Further emphasis on students as consumers is reflected in the renewed guidance from the CMA and their monitoring of HEI’s progress to compliance. These changes are driving students’ expectations around the quality of personal tutoring ‘service’ in terms of a desire for increased contact, timely meetings, higher levels of personal attention, and ready access to responsive and informed personal tutors.

The RG noted evidence arising from the UKAT Annual Conference (April, 2017; University of Leeds) - comprising 126 delegates from UK HEPs including 12 Russell Group institutions – where HEPs across the sector reported experiencing extensions to their support remits, noting the influence of changing external requirements in this regard. ‘Wellbeing’ and ‘Safeguarding’ for example were identified as agendas that are more prominent in recent times. The need to consider carefully legislative requirements such as the Prevent Duty⁶ and CMA⁷ within the student support frame were also shared.

Against this background, personal tutoring is seen to play an important role across a broad range of strategically significant agendas, including student induction and transition, student experience, widening participation, access and student safeguarding and wellbeing.

Finding 1: Policy and regulatory changes are increasing expectations around both the scope and quality of what we understand to be within the remit of personal tutoring.

² Higher Education and Research Act, 2017.

³ ‘*Securing student success: risk-based regulation for teaching excellence, social mobility and informed choice in higher education.*’ Government (Department for Education) consultation on behalf of OfS, October 2017. https://consult.education.gov.uk/higher-education/higher-education-regulatory-framework/supporting_documents/B%20Regulatory%20Framework%20consultation%20guidance%20FINAL%2018%20October.pdf

⁴ Guidance on registration conditions – Registration Condition B2 – page 25.

⁵ A 2016 HEPI report highlights a 68% rise in counselling service users at Russell Group universities since 2011. [Brown, P, 2016 *The Invisible Problem? Improving students’ mental health.* Higher Education Policy Institute: Oxford]

⁶ Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (July 2015) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445916/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_For_Higher_Education_England_Wales_.pdf

⁷ CMA33, UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law (March 2015) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/550bf3c740f0b61404000001/Policy_paper_on_higher_education.pdf

3.3 Sector Understanding - Purpose, Models of Provision, and Benchmarks

3.3.1 Purpose

Stork and Walker (2015) define the personal tutor role as one that improves the intellectual and academic ability, and nurtures the emotional well-being of learners through individualised, holistic support. The literature identifies the personal tutor as a 'frequently hidden yet potentially significant figure in many students' experience of higher education' (Watts, 2011:214), acting as the university's 'representative' to students (Neville, 2007:9), engaged in 'emotional labour' (Gardner and Lane 2010: 343) or relationship-building with students. Further studies support the significance of the personal tutor in:

- playing an important role in enhancing students' learning experiences and academic development (Thomas, 2006);
- facilitating students' ability to synthesise the different components of their learning experience (Stevenson, 2009);
- building relationships with academics that help to embed students within their course of study (Hixenbaugh et al., 2006);
- providing a conduit between the student their studies and the wider university support framework (Wootton, 2006);
- and cultivating a sense of belonging that is a crucial underpinning to students' sense of learner identity and engagement (Evans, 2013; Yorke & Longden, 2004; Tinto, 1987).

Put simply, the purpose of personal tutoring is 'to support students' learning in the broadest sense' (Race, 2010:7).

From the student perspective, a QAA (2013: 9) report analysing the views of students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland concerning the quality of their higher education learning experiences found that: 'A positive and supportive relationship with a personal tutor was essential to successful learning.' This resonates with an earlier finding of Race (2010:2) that one of the things students most desire from higher education are opportunities to build relationships with academic staff. Within mass HE, where students risk being anonymised and depersonalised, the personal tutoring relationship offers a genuine opportunity for students to be accepted, valued, included and encouraged within a broader supportive and developmental frame.

3.3.2 Models of Provision

Three main models of personal tutoring provision are described in the literature (Thomas, 2006b; Myers, 2008) elaborated here and compared in Table 1 below:

Model 1 – Pastoral Model

Typically, each student is allocated a named personal tutor who is usually an academic member of staff providing academic and pastoral support. Academic staff undertake personal tutoring as a small part of their overall workload, for which workload credit may, or may not, be specifically allocated. The focus is on students' broader academic development and pastoral support through individual and group appointments being scheduled independently of students' curricular timetable. There is little prescribed content to cover in meetings and referral is made to specialist support and development staff as required. Students have some level of autonomy as to whether to engage with

personal tutoring or not. There is variability of practice and experience largely dependent on the approach taken by individual tutors.

Model 2 – Professional Model

This approach uses a smaller team of trained support staff who are not usually members of academic staff. This support role makes up the majority or the full-time workload of these staff, with student support being the primary focus of their work. The focus is on personal/pastoral support and general learning development. Referral is made to both specialist support and development staff (e.g. medical staff) and academic staff for academic, specific course/module or curriculum issues. Normally relies on a mix of scheduled and compulsory information and developmental sessions and bookable individual appointments. There is a good degree of standardisation of approach across tutors.

Model 3 – Integrated (Curriculum) Model

Each student is allocated a named tutor who is an academic member of staff. The primary focus is on students' academic development within the particular subject discipline they are studying. Meetings are scheduled within the timetables of staff and students – hence, attendance is compulsory – and usually involve small groups of students in a tutorial environment, with a smaller number of individual appointments taking place. The focus is on predetermined academic content within each session (although relationship building also takes place over time). Academic staff undertake tutoring as part of their overall workload with workload credit allocation. There is reduced variability of practice and experience as each tutor is covering identical or similar material within each session.

Table 1: Comparison of Personal Tutoring Models

Feature	Pastoral	Professional	Integrated
Allocated a named personal tutor	Yes	No	Yes
Personal tutor is an academic staff member	Yes	No	Yes
Academic support provided	Yes	Some	Yes
Pastoral support provided	Yes	Yes	Some
Students required to meet tutor	Some	No	Yes
Formally timetabled sessions for tutoring	No	Some	Yes
Embedded in the curriculum	No	No	Yes
Variability of practice	Yes	Some	Some
Main focus of tutor's workload	No	Yes	No
Meetings typically with individual students	Yes	Yes	No

Discussions with colleagues across the sector reveal that the pastoral model is the most commonly used approach to personal tutoring, with a smaller number reporting the use of an integrated model. The least used is the professional model, the most developed example of which was the Personal Tutor Unit introduced into Cardiff School of Management in 2007, which separated out the personal tutor role into a separate unit staffed by specialist support staff. It is a development, which has been watched with interest by those with responsibility for personal tutoring across the sector. However, despite reporting positive feedback from students, the unit recently closed (June 2017) due to resourcing constraints, with personal tutoring responsibilities passing back to academic staff under a more conventional pastoral model.

Reflecting on the widespread use of the pastoral model, a number of studies have criticised the potential for this to give rise to a reactive (available to meet) approach that puts the onus of meeting on the student and leans towards a deficit model of support (Thomas, 2012). Laycock (2009) suggests integrating timetabled group tutorials, embedded within the curricular content to reshape the pastoral model tutoring towards a more proactive (formally scheduled meetings) and development focus. Within this, the impetus to meet is removed from students – since not all students have the social or cultural capital needed to engage readily or ask for support. Hence, many students in need of support may not come forward to successfully seek this out.

Other writers support the move towards embedding group tutorials within a reshaped pastoral model of tutoring, citing its ability to assist with students' academic preparedness, academic and social integration, relationship building with academics, and connecting students to their institutions and each other – i.e. develop peer support (Thomas; 2012, Levy *et al*; 2009). Focusing this approach within the first year student experience seems particularly beneficial (Yorke and Longden; 2008), with the first six weeks of students' study being identified as a particularly critical tutoring window (Gutteridge; 2001). In a resource constrained environment, being smarter about the focus of tutoring effort may enable improvements in its effectiveness.

Although different in their approach, these three general models of personal tutoring provision all broadly encompass a mix of academic and pastoral support using guidance and referral processes. Another common feature across all models is variable quality of provision (Luck, 2010; Stephen *et al.*, 2008; McFarlane, 2016) largely linked to what could be regarded as individual tutor factors including tutors' attitude, approach and availability in their personal tutoring role. The personal tutor relationship is a human interaction in all its complexity and the issue of personal tutor skills and attitude is therefore complex and like other issues of evolving academic identity it cannot be considered in isolation from the material and cultural nature of the HE work environment (e.g. Barnett, 2014; Rowland, 2006).

Given the breadth of the remit, personal tutors have to make decisions about the best action, development or support resource for particular students within each tutoring encounter. To succeed this requires a range of different skills and factual knowledge and an ability to deploy these as relevant to the circumstances. As well as focusing on the skills, attitude and abilities of members of staff in delivering personal tutoring, institutions also need to reflect on what is required in the work environment to enable tutors to act and engage in a manner where the student is valued. Such reflection (e.g. as derived through exercises such as the ITLR) facilitate institutional understanding of what permits (and prevents) tutors' management of personal tutoring and its boundaries, at the institutional level. The literature identifies a range of current pressures working against these aspects including increased workloads, research pressures, job security fears, gendered expectations around personal tutor work (which may cause unequal and invisible workloads for some) and changes in student positioning, needs and expectations.

The personal tutor has to be responsive and flexible to what students present and this makes it difficult to be overly prescriptive about how these encounters are undertaken. Providing adequate clarification around role boundaries is one way of handling burgeoning expectations.

Finding 2: Across the sector, the pastoral model of personal tutoring is most widely used. Variable quality of provision is a common feature across models, arising from tutor and institutional factors.

Finding 3: Reshaping the pastoral model of personal tutoring to reflect a more proactive and developmental focus may improve tutoring effectiveness, peer-support and student engagement.

3.3.3 Sector Benchmarks - Shared Principles of Good Practice

Clarity, Boundaries and Job-Related Stress

Benchmarks for personal tutoring provision across the sector are specified within the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education⁸, Chapter B4. Specifically, these stipulate the use of clearly defined roles, responsibilities and role boundaries and the monitoring of provision. Good practice within the sector embodies these principles within personal tutoring Codes of Practice (CoP), supporting dissemination through clear guidance and core training and the use of mechanisms to ensure compliance with agreed practice.

Despite QAA regulatory requirements a lack of clarity persists across the sector around the personal tutor role itself and its boundary with different facets of the broader academic role (McFarlane, 2016). This is heightened for staff new to the academic or personal tutoring role, or those experiencing high workloads. Studies report how the changing and conflicting concepts of academic identities (Harris, 2006) and the diverse, shifting and complex support needs of students (Stephen *et al*, 2008) exacerbate the already contested nature of personal tutoring. This can lead to variable provision of support and to differential staff workloads and stress. Research findings report the impacts of this uncertainty and conflict, particularly in relation to role expansion and diffusion and the indistinct and fuzzy boundary around the personal tutor role, on academic staff including:

- rising tensions and feelings of being overwhelmed as academics attempt to balance the competing demands of personal tutoring with those of teaching, research and other administrative activities (Barlow and Antoniou, 2007; Myers, 2008).
- tutors feeling exposed and out of their depth when confronted by distressing student revelations (Gardner and Lane, 2010) and of feeling 'exhausted, paralysed and unable to function' (Luck, 2010:282) in response to distressing student revelations.
- workload allocation for personal tutoring being based on numbers of tutees, which ignores the impact of 'high maintenance' students on workload as, the 'numbers of personal tutees do not always reflect the time needed to provide adequate support' (MacFarlane, 2016: 86).
- lack of time allocation for undertaking the role (Owen, 2002).

Luck reports the impact on staff of increasing student demand for personal tutor support (as a consequence of students' positioning as consumers), that leaves personal tutors vulnerable to 'becoming depressed and defensive and reacting inappropriately to student demands' (Luck, 2010:283). Given these potential negative consequences, and to safeguard against them, providing clear guidance and training about the roles, responsibilities and boundaries of personal tutoring is essential for those managing and resourcing personal tutoring as well as those undertaking personal tutoring work. Such awareness raising permits not only shared good practice but also an institutional opportunity to begin to recognise the skill required in doing this well and the resource and reward that could/should be attached to it.

Finding 4: Sector benchmarks identify a need for clear guidance, role and boundary clarity, training, and compliance monitoring and review as underpinning the quality of personal tutoring provision, which best practice embeds within institutional Codes of Practice for personal tutoring.

Finding 5: Widespread accounts of the negative impacts on tutors caused by role expansion, insufficient workload/time allocation and the complexity of students' issues are reported across the sector.

⁸ QAA (2012) UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality. Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement.

Academic Value-Added

In 2015, the National Union of Students (NUS) produced an [Academic Support Benchmarking Tool](#) that sets out ten principles for effective academic support against which HEP's could benchmark practice. Drafted by elected student officers from across the UK, these principles represent a view of what constitutes robust academic support, from the student perspective. Ideas from the recent literature on academic support and learning to learn, and expert insights from colleagues at AMOSSHE⁹ were incorporated into the final tool. Although the tool specifically defines academic support more broadly than just focused on personal tutoring, aspects of it nonetheless have relevance to personal tutoring provision, specifically the need for:

- personalised academic and pastoral support for all students
- integrated support across academic, support and development services
- coherent institutional policies, which are applied consistently and regularly reviewed
- staff support, reward and recognition
- trust, respect and effective working relationships between tutors and tutees

The tutor's role in fostering students' engagement and sense of belonging is a further principle of effective academic support identified within the '*What Works? Student Retention and Success*' project (2012). The latter looks at developments within twenty-two HEI's across seven distinct projects, finding that a strong sense of belonging in HE is central to students' engagement and academic success. It also raises the moral as well as pedagogic responsibility HEI's have in supporting students as the cost of university education shifts steadily towards students. Students' belonging is not a new concept, Goodenow (1993, 25) described it much earlier as a 'sense of being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by others (teachers and peers)...More than simple perceived liking or warmth, it also involves support and respect for personal autonomy and for the student as an individual.'

The *What Works?* Project moves on to suggest that encounters situated in the academic sphere (such as those with personal tutors) where students can create links with academics are particularly effective at engendering student belonging and supporting students. Students' preference for academics providing support (Thomas, 2012) and the beneficial influence of positive staff-student relationships on study outcomes (Cousin and Cuerton, 2012) are well established in the literature. Personal tutoring interactions also create opportunities for academics to be role models for students, seen as key to supporting the development of students' disciplinary identity and HE socialisation (Felstead 2013). These studies position personal tutoring, delivered by academics, as a key support strategy in nurturing students' belonging and academic identity and supporting their academic success.

Finding 6: Students prefer academic support to be provided by academic staff.

3.3.4 Sector Practice

A Warwick TEF Strategy Group (TEFSG) report (7/16-17)¹⁰ undertook a competitor analysis in March 2017 as part of Warwick's TEF strategy development. A shortlist of 10 competitor institutions was extracted based on an initial assessment of high performance levels for TEF core metrics – one of which was academic support (AS). Their analysis revealed that institutions with a higher proportion

⁹ Association of Managers of Student Support Services in Higher Education. It informs and supports leaders of Student Services in the UK and represents, advocates and promotes the student experience worldwide.

¹⁰ TEFSG 6/16-17 *Teaching Excellence Framework: Competitor Analysis Summary Report* - March 2017.

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of academics on teaching-only contracts tended to score more highly in the NSS AS category. However, despite Warwick placing 2nd (26.3%) for staff on teaching-only contracts in the shortlisted group (Surrey was 1st at 35%), Warwick ranked 9th (out of 10) in the NSS AS category within the same shortlist of competitor institutions. In comparison, Surrey have made enhancing the student experience a strategic priority and achieved the second-highest NSS AS score amongst the shortlisted institutions. Within its analysis, TEFSG noted the obvious tension between the pull towards teaching and the imperative of research outputs, citing Bristol as acutely experiencing this. As Bristol has deployed greater resources towards achieving research objectives, it has fallen behind in the NSS AS category – placing bottom in the competitor shortlist. The conclusion drawn by TEFSG was that: ‘For Warwick the issue is not one of insufficient resources. Rather, the issue is how to deploy (academic staff) resources in a more efficient manner. Specifically, this is a question of how academic time is allocated within the context of academic support provision as well as the student experience more generally’. Through its analysis (and recommendations made – particularly recommendation 2) the RG understands the issue of resources as somewhat more nuanced than this conclusion implies.

PTR 2017 developed this sector analysis, undertaking a review of Personal Tutoring provision across the same 10 competitor institutions identified by TEFSG. (Note that PTR 2017 also undertakes a detailed analysis of NSS AS scores across Warwick departments within Section 4.2.3 of this report). A number of other HEPs were also included in this sector-level analysis such as Leeds (recognised for their student support services); Kings and Greenwich (both recently undertaking a wide scale review of their personal tutoring operations); and Cardiff School of Management (who devolved personal tutoring away from academic staff into a Personal Tutoring Unit). Appendix 3 provides a summary of personal tutoring features across HEPs consulted.

There is much variety of provision across the sector, which to some extent reflects the diversity of the institutions themselves. In most cases, personal tutors are member of academic staff who deliver both academic and pastoral support to students using a pastoral model of provision. Within this, some HEPs (e.g. Birmingham) are attempting to shift the focus of personal tutoring more clearly onto academic issues with students being more strongly signposted to professional support workers for their wellbeing support needs. Some devolve the development and delivery of personal tutoring to individual departments (subject to meeting centrally agreed minimum requirements) usually within a College system – e.g. Durham and York – but also outside of this e.g. Loughborough. Others have attempted a more wholesale professionalization of personal tutoring moving it away from academic staff creating a Personal Tutor Unit e.g. Cardiff School of Management – although as previously mentioned, this is now closed due to resourcing constraints. Many have established physical, online, or commonly both, Student Support Hubs that physically integrate student support and development services – e.g. Coventry, Surrey, Greenwich, and Leeds. The latter has the ‘Leeds for Life’ initiative, which is built around the personal tutoring system as its central pillar. Sheffield offers a similarly high quality initiative, which it calls its Toolkit for Learning and Teaching that is underpinned by its personal tutoring system. These developments indicate something of a repositioning of personal tutoring work back into the teaching and learning space as part of institution’s broader education strategies. Most HEPs have developed a Code of Practice (CoP) which not only sets out policy and practice around personal tutoring, but also serves to embed personal tutoring as a mainstream academic activity within the teaching and learning space. Other common features within institutional CoPs are the provision of guidance to students on personal tutoring, the allocation of workload credit to tutors, and access to training. Less well-embedded aspects include the linkage of personal tutoring to reward and recognition frameworks (e.g. supporting promotion, merit pay, clearing probation) and the annual review of tutoring as part of an ongoing commitment to its development.

Amongst those institutions who had recently undertaken a review of personal tutoring, motivations for the review process included a desire to improve student welfare; to increase consistency of provision across departments; as part of a strategic focus on the student experience; and the management of student expectations of personal tutoring. Engagement with other HEPs at the recent 2017 UKAT conference indicates that although personal tutoring is positively valued by staff across HEPs, most are facing similar challenges to those experienced at Warwick. All institutions consulted shared a recognition of an increase in demand from the student body for academic support generally, but also for wellbeing support services, in particular mental health services. Bristol is investing heavily in this area recently appointing 24 Wellbeing Advisors to work across the university. Common challenges or aspects identified for future development by a number of HEPs included, provision of student guidance and a stronger articulation of expectations around personal tutoring; a strengthening of Personal Tutor training resources; and inclusion of personal tutoring in institutional workload models.

A number of HEPs we spoke to are currently embarking on reviews of institutional personal tutoring, mostly in response to shifts in institutional priorities arising from the TEF driver and were keen to draw on the work being undertaken at Warwick. Kings are ahead having recently completed the initial phases of a review of their personal tutoring practice and, in line with QAA requirements, revised their Code of Practice, developed a range of training and support resources and introduced compliance monitoring as a means of improving provision. This is part of a three-year strategy to enhance personal tutoring across the institution, linked to the Education Strategy and positioning personal tutors as an extension of the teaching role. The final phase of that review will consider the development of enhanced technology (data analytics) to support personal tutoring, the impact of implemented changes on personal tutoring culture and practice at Kings, the identification of suitable KPIs and next steps to effect ongoing improvements.

Finding 7: Many HEPs use a Code of Practice to set out policy and practice around personal tutoring, embedding it within the teaching and learning space. Within this, compliance monitoring has begun to be viewed as a source of data analytics to inform further improvements.

Further support for Findings 2, 4 and 5 are also evident here.

4 Internal Analysis - Personal Tutoring at the University of Warwick

4.1 Approach

The RG explored personal tutoring across the University through a number of strands of engagement including:

- (i) Consideration of available size and shape data.
- (ii) Analysis of available NSS (quantitative and qualitative), PRES/PTES, size and shape data and ITLR insights as relevant to personal tutoring.
- (iii) Chairs of all SSLCs (undergraduate and postgraduate) registered on the SU website were invited to discuss personal tutoring at a forthcoming meeting. A feedback form that used a Stop, Start, Continue framework was suggested to encourage critical and balanced consideration.
- (iv) A web form was designed and uploaded to the Dean of Students' Office website (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/personal_tutoringreview/feedback/) inviting staff and student feedback and views, on current personal tutoring provision and its development. The form was signposted via Insite communications, an email to

students from the SU, and a memorandum to all Heads of Departments and Departmental Administrators. Comments were collected Mar-Jul 2017.

- (v) Interviews with Heads of Department (or designated representative for personal tutoring) and Senior Tutors to gather managerial/strategic views and operational/day-to-day insights respectively.
- (vi) Training and support offered to Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors, and all materials on the Dean of Students' website were reviewed.

4.2 Personal Tutoring at Warwick

4.2.1 *Size and Shape*

Key data¹¹ relevant to personal tutoring for the period 2012/13 - 2016/17 were considered:

- (i) The total undergraduate population (Home/EU and Overseas) has grown by 14% across the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, with the most significant periods of annual growth being the last two academic years; 6.0% in 2015/16 and 5.8% in 2016/17. It currently stands at 14,465 students.
- (ii) The number of undergraduate students registered on joint degrees (excluding GSD which ran for the first time in 2016/17) has grown by 22% across the period 2012/13 – 2016/17. This marked increase is likely to be sustained as part of an institutional focus on interdisciplinarity – reflected in key strategic documents such as the (draft) Education Strategy. Joint degree students form a significant sub-set of the undergraduate population, with their number standing at 5,511 in the 2016/17 academic year.
- (iii) The number of undergraduate students registered for part time study has increased by 17% since 2012/13, the bulk of which are located within CLL and Warwick Manufacturing Group. However, the number of part-time undergraduate students is relatively small, currently standing at 705 in the 2016/17 academic year.
- (iv) The total number of PGT (full time and part time) students has decreased by 12% since 2012/13, although in recent years the annual movement has been a 1.8% increase in 2015/16 and a 2.6% decline in 2016/17. Current PGT numbers stand at 7,165 students.

PGR student numbers (full and part time) have increased by 31% since 2012/13. The annual increase in 2015/16 and 2016/17 were 22.4% and 2.3% respectively.

- (v) The number of students studying by distance learning has reduced by 32% over the period 2012/13 to 2016/17 with current numbers standing at 1,434. These students are largely DLMBA students within WBS, whose support needs are somewhat different to mainstream UG and PGT/R students – mostly being mature (average age at entry is 37) individuals holding middle management or other executive positions.

- (vi) There is an even and fairly static overall gender balance of students over the period and the proportion of students within different ethnic classifications has also remained largely static over the time period.

¹¹ Drawn from SPA Education Analytics Dashboard and AQSC 13/16-17

(vii) The proportion of students who originate from 'low' socio-economic groups has increased by 30% over the period, but this represents an increase of only 157 students since 2012.

(viii) Non-completion rates have reduced from 7% in 2012/13 to 4.6% in 2015/16. Although relatively low, and improved by 2.4% over the period, the RG noted the importance of this measure as a TEF metric.

Reflecting on the implications of the above analysis from a personal tutoring perspective, ongoing increases in UG and total PG numbers are increasing the level and demand for personal tutoring provision. This is particularly noted in relation to the increase in UG joint degree students, who tend to record lower NSS scores for student satisfaction, including academic support. Joint students' concerns around communication and support were explicitly raised in both the ITLR Arts Faculty Engagement Event and in students' NSS2016 comments:

"I feel that as a Joint Honours student, instead of being at an advantage of having help from two departments, it has actually been the opposite, and neither department has really given me any guidance, e.g., on dissertations, module selection process, with insufficient personal tutoring."

This comment exposes a failure within the current tutoring system to support some joint students. Given the commitment to developing interdisciplinarity further, e.g. within the emerging Education Strategy, the number of joint students is likely to continue to rise, further increasing pressure on the delivery of personal tutoring. The student population is also more diverse today, in international terms, with different populations having different needs and expectations, adding to the complexity of the institutional landscape of personal tutoring. The University's recent commitment to the further development of Degree Apprenticeships raises other challenges for support provision with students based largely off campus, and in ways that integrate with employers.

Finding 8: Significant increases in UG (including joint degrees) and total PG student numbers, and ongoing increases in student diversity and the intricacy of their needs intensify personal tutoring demand and complexity.

4.2.2 Models of Practice

Personal tutoring is part of the University's broader provision of student support. During 2016/17, the University Senior Tutor role was replaced by the Dean of Students, with the setup of the Dean of Students' Office and appointment of three Faculty Senior Tutors following in early 2017. The [Dean of Students' Office](#) leads on the strategic development of personal tutoring, undertakes complex student casework, delivers personal tutor induction training and administers the Senior Tutor Hardship Fund. It works closely with Departmental Senior Tutors who are positioned as local experts on personal tutoring within departments. There is a complex interchange of academic and wider support services underpinning personal tutoring, however, academic departments and in particular personal and senior tutors, are at the frontline of its provision.

At Warwick, models of personal tutoring provision differ between Faculties and often between departments within Faculties. Practice is diverse and complex with the majority of departments deploying versions of the pastoral model of support, with a few (mostly within the Faculty of Science) using an integrated (curriculum) model of support. The latter involves personal tutors in the delivery of basic curriculum content (with or without assessment components and CATS credits) and/or key skills relevant to course content. Watts argues that the structured curriculum model

provides a 'more organised, coherent and proactive support system' (2011:214). This could be of significant value for areas where student 'belonging' or 'engagement' are problematic, as might be the case for joint students. However, a shift to this model may be potentially more resource intensive, make more demands on academics' time, with likely higher costs of provision. Watts (2011) suggests that this shapes personal tutoring into a more narrowly defined academic space and this arrangement would therefore affect the broader welfare aspects of student support. Although models of provision differ across the University, commonality exists in that personal tutors are members of academic staff and senior tutor roles are embedded within each department.

A number of departments, but not all, have also introduced Directors of Student Experience (DSE) or Directors of Student Experience and Progression (DSEP). These roles commonly include the provision of academic and employability support and guidance for students, but there is some lack of consistent operation across departments. They also interact differently with the departmental senior tutor role, e.g. some overlap and some encompass it. Given the significance of departmental Senior Tutors within Warwick's operational model of personal tutoring, the proliferation of these other support roles - undertaken by academics in departments - risks a loss of role clarity for both staff and students about the key Senior Tutor role.

Whilst each department has a Senior Tutor, there is some variability in terms of the student body the Senior Tutor has responsibility for. In some departments, this is more of an UG focused role with PGT/PGR pastoral support being allocated to other staff. A number of those interviewed also pointed out the importance that frontline administrative staff play in handling student queries and in supporting distressed students. This means that the location of support work in departments is quite dispersed across a variety of roles/people. This brings with it managerial challenges in respect of a co-ordinated strategy of making sure all those staff are adequately resourced, informed and supported in delivering this work including knowing what their support obligations are and what the boundaries/limits to that support are. In terms of the perceived accountability personal tutors have for their work, there is no clear hierarchical chain of accountability for this work given personal tutoring work does not necessarily feature clearly in departmental cultures of what Heads of Department will look to monitor, reward and punish.

The current job description for the Senior Tutor states that that person is: "To be responsible, together with the Head of Department, for the effective operation of the personal tutor system in their department" yet what this means is limited. For some departments with a strong teaching-focused culture, issues relating to personal tutoring are discussed in departmental meetings but for others they are not given such salience. For most Senior Tutors the practical enactment of their responsibility for this system means that they know they must pick up cases and aspects of the work that are missed or neglected by others.

The University's [minimum requirements](#) of the personal tutoring role (as agreed by Senate in 2012) are set out on the Dean of Students' website. As a first step in improving provision in 2012, this *de minimis* approach was sensible but may now be contributing to the framing of personal tutoring as low value work, with staff encouraged to deliver minimum provision. At the same time, this approach does allow innovations in personal tutoring arrangements and practices to occur at the local departmental level. However, with little institutional oversight of practice, routine sharing of good ideas and innovations across the institution does not take place leading to a missed opportunity to share good practice and / or duplication of innovation effort.

Although personal tutoring responsibilities and practices may vary across departments most encompass meeting and supporting students' transition to University and between levels of study; discussions about academic progress; monitoring attendance; reviewing feedback; being the first point of contact for academic difficulties, and signposting to appropriate support services.

Despite some level of awareness and agreement as to the scope of the role (in theory, if not in practice) concerns were raised about the variability of practice across tutors where different attitudes towards tutoring led to different styles of tutoring being adopted by staff within departments. This variability was seen to arise in part from:

“the potential ambiguity between supporting students on the one hand but encouraging them to develop their own resilience and independence on the other. Put another way, this can lead to essentially a proactive stance on the part of tutors or a responsive one. I think some colleagues might feel that they shouldn't be too proactive in discovering whether students have problems.” (Head of Department – Faculty of Arts)

This flags a genuine debate in academic circles around managing the balance between providing student support and encouraging student resilience and independence. This is considered further within section 5 of this report.

Finding 9: Warwick largely operates a pastoral model of tutoring using a ‘minimum requirements’ approach, with no framework for regular compliance monitoring or regular review. The ‘Minimum Requirements’ are inconsistently applied and adhered to with local innovations giving rise to variable practices across departments.

Finding 10: The proliferation of departmental support roles undertaken by academics e.g. DSEP, Director of Wellbeing, Director of Student Experience, risks a loss of clarity around the role and operation of the Senior Tutor role for both staff and students.

4.2.3 Current Performance – Quantitative Analysis

There is no reported sector benchmark data against which to consider the relative performance of personal tutoring provision across HEPs. Although, in terms of how students experience personal tutoring, there is overlap with the TEF concept of ‘learning environment’ which looks at academic support more broadly as measured through the NSS and non-continuation rates.

The NSS does not ask any questions specifically about personal tutors or personal tutoring, instead asking three questions relating to ‘academic support’ more broadly. In terms of providing insight into personal tutoring, the NSS quantitative data is partial and tangential at best – capturing only the views of finalist UG students about the broader experience of academic support that extends well beyond views about personal tutoring. Also, and on the PG side of things, PTES and PRES questions are not sufficiently focused on personal tutoring to provide any relevant data for consideration. Hence, in the absence of more direct data, a rank analysis of NSS satisfaction scores for Warwick (using the three questions relating to ‘Academic Support’ most relevant to PTR 2017) by subject, based on 2014-16 (three year) averages was undertaken (Appendix 4). Analysis reveals something of a Faculty pattern, with Social Science subjects largely clustered towards the bottom of the performance ranking. This pattern needs to be considered in light of changes in student numbers across Faculties. An ITLR Combined Student Number Report (2011/12 to 2015/16) indicates that,

the Social Science Faculty have experienced proportionally more rapid growth in recent years than others have¹².

Departmental student to staff ratios and personal tutee to tutor ratios were sought to investigate this finding further. However, accurate departmental student and staff numbers proved difficult to extract, with the RG eventually drawing on data from the UG Guardian Rankings. The latter uses HESA data and includes staff on 'teaching only' and 'teaching and research' contracts (excluding staff on 'research only' contracts) and students using FTE measures, which may not accurately reflect student 'location' with respect to joint degrees. A ranked analysis of student to staff ratios – using three-year averages (2014-16) was undertaken (Appendix 5). This provides a baseline and comparative picture of the overall composition of departments. Again, there are some Faculty patterns within this ranking, with Social Science departments noticeably clustered towards the bottom of the table, i.e. having the highest (and most unfavourable) student to staff ratios – ranging from 14.0 to 35.0. Science Faculty departments are largely clustered in the top half of the table with more favourable student to staff ratios ranging from 11.0 to 20.0. There is no noticeable clustering of Arts Faculty departments, instead departments show more variability in their distribution, being scattered throughout the table and ranging from (ignoring Liberal Arts/GSD – single year data) 10.9 to 17.8.

In response to these noticeable patterns, information on staff and student numbers was compared against NSS 'academic support' scores – i.e. the % NSS not satisfied score (averaged across three questions on academic support) was plotted against student to staff ratios for departments (Appendix 6). Although the resultant pattern is mixed and far from clear, there does appear to be something of a weak correlation, with levels of student dissatisfaction with academic support rising as student to staff ratio increased, for many departments.

However, this data does not provide any focused exploration of personal tutoring within departments and in particular personal tutor loadings - the average total number (UG and PG) of personal tutees being supported per tutor within departments. Accurate personal tutor loadings proved equally elusive, with no centrally held record of this information proving reliable. Within departments there is also considerable variability of allocation between tutors, depending on amongst other things, the nature of the tutor contract (e.g. teaching only, or teaching and research), the hours worked (e.g. full-time or part-time), periods of study leave and the allocation of other workload activities, including administrative tasks and research projects between individuals. Hence, within some departments there is wide variability across the individual loadings of particular tutors, which is lost within the average figure. In the absence of centrally held information, the RG approached each departmental Senior Tutor – as the local personal tutoring 'expert' – to provide an average personal tutor loading for their department (Appendix 7).

Given the importance of the accuracy of this data in underpinning the reliance of any conclusions drawn in the above analysis, the RG approached all departments to confirm or otherwise the accuracy of the Senior Tutor reported data. This proved to be a difficult and lengthy task. Most departments articulated some level of difficulty in providing this data arising from a lack of defined recording of this data; the fluidity of tutoring allocations arising from staffing changes and tutor availability; fluctuations in student numbers, and the requirement to have accurate figures across all tutors and programmes in order to provide an accurate average figure. However all responding departments (15 in total), with the exception of English, confirmed the accuracy of Senior Tutor reported figures in the analysis that follows.

¹² Over the last 5 years and at a Faculty level, Science numbers have increased by c.7.6% (387 heads), Arts by c.10% (246 heads) Social Sciences by c.26% (1137 heads) and Medicine a slight decrease (c.-3.3%) for the MBChB programme only.

There are a number of instances where the average personal tutor loading reported is significantly higher than the student to staff ratio. For instance, English has one of the most favourable student to staff ratios (10.8), yet an average personal tutee allocation of 30 is reported. These differences may be caused by staff members being unavailable for personal tutoring due to study leave, absence, or undertaking significant administrative roles or research projects. In addition, departments may have high numbers of joint students whose personal tutoring is undertaken, partially or completely by staff in other departments. Alternatively, these large disparities might reflect an active departmental decision to draw on a relatively small pool of tutors to undertake the personal tutoring workload. Regardless of the causes, these complexities illustrate something of the challenge Heads of Department face in managing personal tutoring.

Exploring this data a little further, and focusing more on personal tutoring, the NSS % not satisfied score for academic support (derived as above) was considered against the personal tutee to tutor ratio (Appendix 8). However, it was not possible to draw any clear conclusions from this. Hence, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the influence of personal tutoring loadings on student satisfaction with academic support – as measured by the NSS. This is not to say the current ratios are optimum for providing best practice and reliable support. The RG tended to be of the opinion that this data reflected the fact that good personal tutors will make the system work regardless of load and how hard it is to do so. It is also important to re-emphasise here that the quantitative NSS data is quite limited as a reliable proxy for students' satisfaction with personal tutoring.

The NSS % not satisfied score for academic support was also plotted against concentration of tutor load (Appendix 9). Concentration of tutor load (derived by dividing the number of total staff by the total number of personal tutors) offers insight more focused on the staff perspective. The plot explores whether it makes a difference to concentrate personal tutor load onto a smaller number of staff – who as a result may be or become more specialised in this work. The graph suggests that concentration may be associated with increased student satisfaction with academic support more broadly, but some departmental outliers were noted. A further caution with this data was noted, that concentration may reflect research funding intensity and staff buy-out resulting in personal tutoring being concentrated on the fewer remaining staff within departments, rather than an active departmental policy of personal tutoring specialisation amongst particular groups of staff who have an affinity for this work.

Finally, a different potential aspect of academic support - student non-continuation – was considered via a comparison of Dashboard non-completion rates (2012-16) with the % NSS not satisfied score for academic support (Appendix 10). Strikingly the correlation, if anything, is negative here with higher non-completion associated with lower dissatisfaction with academic support. However, it was noted that those students who had withdrawn, and would perhaps have been most critical of academic support, would not have been included in the NSS survey. Institutional data held about students who have either permanently or temporarily withdrawn from their studies does not include information about the impact of personal tutoring experiences and provision on these decisions. Although mindful of the importance of non-continuation, not least in terms of the risk of a TEF flag, the RG considered that a more detailed exploration of non-continuation was beyond the scope of PTR 2017.

Finding 11: Overall insights provided by the quantitative analysis are mixed, making it difficult to draw any clear and definitive conclusions about levels of satisfaction and optimum ratios for personal tutoring.

Finding 12: There is a lack of centrally held quantitative data, or sector data specific to key aspects of personal tutoring - including tutor loading – which hamper evaluation of its provision and effectiveness.

The next section of the report moves on to the student perspective in more detail and as part of this considers patterns or trends within the NSS *qualitative* data that relates more specifically to personal tutoring.

4.2.4 Current Performance – The Student Perspective

a) NSS comments

Despite the NSS not focusing directly on personal tutoring, 124 UG Warwick students entered narrative comments about personal tutors and personal tutoring¹³ within their NSS2016 submissions. All comments (positive and negative) received in the NSS2016 were extracted for analysis¹⁴. Approximately 58% (72) of these comments were classified as positive comments with the remaining 42% (52) being negative in their focus. The departments receiving the most positive comments were Psychology (7), Law (6), SMLC (6) and Film & TV (6). The departments receiving the most negative comments were English (10), WBS (8) and History (6) – see Appendix 11 for complete departmental breakdown of comments.

Most departments received a mixture of positive and negative comments. This resonates with earlier understandings from the literature that variability in personal tutoring quality is in part determined by the individuals concerned, rather than purely emerging from underlying personal tutoring systems and processes. Given this - and acknowledging the earlier point about differences in tutor approaches arising from differently held beliefs about how forms of support may encourage or hinder students' self-reliance and resilience - the importance of institutionally codified practices and embedded training in supporting the quality of personal tutor provision emerges.

The number of NSS comments classified as unfavourable were considered against the NSS % not satisfied scores for academic support for each department (see Appendix 12). Some correlation was noted, but with several outlier departments. A more detailed analysis of the NSS 2016 qualitative student comments on personal tutoring was subsequently undertaken and summarised in the table below:

¹³ Around 3,100 students in total completed the questions on academic support within NSS2016.

¹⁴ Analysis of qualitative data drew on an interpretive phenomenological approach – exploring lived experiences and meanings these hold for participants to understand the 'insider perspective' (Lyons and Cole, 2007). Individual transcripts were analysed and key themes and sub-themes were extracted and collated.

Table 2: Analysis of Key Themes within NSS 2016 Personal Tutoring Comments

Positive Comments: Key Themes	Frequency
Tutor is helpful and provides good academic support, advice and guidance	37
Tutor provides excellent pastoral care	23
Tutor provides good general support	16
Tutor is friendly, encouraging and approachable; building a relationship with the same tutor over time; feeling known by tutor	16
Tutor is available and a responsive point of contact	8
Negative Comments: Key Themes	Frequency
Tutor is unsupportive/unhelpful/disinterested/disengaged/unresponsive/uncaring	28
A lack of accessibility/availability/approachability with little or no contact	23
Impersonal/no relationship with tutor who feels 'unknown' to the student	13
Tutor lacks knowledge, uninformed, ineffective and/or requires training	9
Changes to tutor during the year or between years of study	9
Poor pastoral care provided by tutor	4
Lack of academic focus within meetings	3
Insufficient time allocated to meetings	3

The most frequently identified positive aspects of personal tutoring for students were the helpfulness and ability of tutors to provide robust academic support, advice and guidance. This dominant valuing of academic support by students mirrors the key positioning of personal tutoring – across all models of provision, but particularly within the integrated model that is most commonly used in departments across the Faculty of Science. Embedding personal tutoring firmly in the academic space also enables beneficial pastoral relationships to develop between tutors and tutees:

'The personal tutorial system in first/second year really helped make sure I was understanding material and allowed us to form a good relationship with our personal tutor so we could feel confident going to them with problems.'

'I feel my personal tutor has given me excellent academic support, and it's also reassuring to know there is a member of a faculty who knows who you are.'

Students also clearly recognise and value the pastoral support that is provided by personal tutors:

'When informing my personal tutor of a health condition that I live with that can affect my ability to attend lectures, I was met with understanding and support. I'm really grateful for this.'

'Pastoral support from personal tutor is A1 - I couldn't rave enough about it!'

The pattern of comments suggest that students' frame personal tutoring largely as a supportive role, with most of the positive comments (76%) relating to aspects of support provided by tutors. The importance to students of being able to develop a relationship and be known by the personal tutor is also highlighted in their comments – availability, friendliness and responsiveness appear to be particularly valued qualities:

'One of the best things has been my supportive personal tutor who can help both with personal and academic problems.'

'My personal tutor has helped me through many problems, responding quickly to e-mails and setting up confidential meetings within two days of problems arising.'

When it works well, students' comments clearly articulate the value this adds to their student experience at Warwick:

'I had the chance to have a wonderful personal tutor, who has been there for me every step of the way, during my time at university and helped me with career and academic projects or other issues.'

'My personal tutor has been unbelievably supportive. I have enjoyed interacting in depth with my personal tutor who clearly cares about me as a person, not just as a student of the department.'

The most frequently identified negative aspects of personal tutoring focused on students' criticisms of the attitude or approach of individual tutors – in particular being unsupportive, unhelpful, disengaged and disinterested in tutees:

'Personal tutors have been disinterested, bordering on the rude when students approach them with pastoral issues.'

'Personal tutors are terrible, not seeing students or not trying to build a relationship most of the time. Then, when a problem arises the tutor is the last person a student would go to.'

'Clinical personal tutor is essentially an empty dress - she barely knows my name, and shows very little interest in my achievement/development, inflexible in meetings and meets the bare minimum requirements of her role.'

The impact of this, particularly in terms of the impersonal relationships that arise, are evident within their accounts:

'Too often I have felt like just a number without someone knowing my name or taking an active interest in my progression.'

'My personal tutor is unapproachable and would often do very well at making me feel stupid.'

This was closely followed by tutors not being contactable – i.e. inaccessible, unavailable and unapproachable which led to little or no contact between tutor and tutee:

'Some students get really good personal tutors who are obviously very interested in what the student is doing and willing to help, but many personal tutors don't seem very interested and have minimum contact with students.'

'Most personal tutors don't care. As a result, there is very little actual contact in the first two years. By the time we get to the third year, it's a bit too late.'

A different and final area of concern was tutors lacking the knowledge to be able to assist students, which again links to the role of personal tutor training in this regard:

'Tutors need to be more aware or have some kind of training about the fact that students face all kinds of problems of their own, in particular with regards to mental health and personal difficulties.'

'I have a fairly uninformed personal tutor who knows little more than I do when questioned on the running of the department.'

'Personal tutors need some specific training!'

The variable overall findings of the quantitative data analysis echoed the similar mixed and variable findings of the analysis of these qualitative comments on personal tutoring in the NSS survey across each department. This reinforces the conclusion that students' experiences of personal tutoring are dependent on the individual tutor, and their approach and attitudes towards personal tutoring rather than local models and structures. That is not to overlook that some tutors may persist in delivering good quality personal tutoring provision *despite* local models and structures:

'The personal tutor you get assigned is very hit and miss – some good and some not so good. The first one I had was a lecturer for first years and yet knew very little about the course outside of his/her area and wasn't the most approachable person'.

'The system of personal tutors is completely variable for every student depending on the tutor to whom they are assigned. Some people receive wonderful support whereas I feel like my personal tutor for the first three years of my degree wasn't even certain of my name'.

The need for clearer guidance that sets out for tutors and tutees what the role encompasses and what is expected of both parties in order to build and maintain a supportive relationship is identified within independent NSS2016 analysis¹⁵. The introduction of some level of monitoring of personal provision is also highlighted in this regard.

Finding 13: The bulk of students' dissatisfaction with personal tutoring relates to failings of its management and/or delivery rather than with the nature of the role itself. Many students report tutors' failure to deliver the personal tutoring service currently mandated by the University. Poor tutoring experiences adversely affect students' learning experiences and in some cases their sense of self.

b) Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) feedback

Each SSLC, both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG), was asked to discuss personal tutoring at one of their meetings in the academic year 2016-17; most of these meetings took place in the spring and summer terms of 2017.

SSLCs were asked to consider personal tutoring in three ways using a Stop, Start and Continue framework. 'Stop' items were those that students felt should be removed or were not working as well as could be expected within personal tutoring; 'Start' items were those students identified as useful aspects that could be introduced; and 'Continue' items were those working well within existing personal tutoring.

Not all of the SSLCs provided responses to the RG, with the Science and Arts Faculties dominating the response. A total of nineteen SSLCs responded, a breakdown of which is provided below:

¹⁵ University of Warwick - Analysis of the 2016 NSS Free Text Responses – Seymour Research (Nov 2016)

Table 3: Classification of SSLC Respondents

Faculty	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
Science	5	4	9
Arts	3	4	7
Social Sciences	1	1	2
Medicine	0	1	1
Total	9	10	19

All SSLCs who responded were in favour of having a personal tutor system. They all thought it important that there was a named member of academic staff to whom they could go to seek advice and support. Some UG students also felt that the regular weekly discipline specific meetings were very helpful in building a relationship with the personal tutor. This varied depending on which personal tutor the student was allocated, as some were considered better than others at building relationships. Keeping the same tutor, where possible, throughout students' whole time at university was also identified as helpful in building that relationship.

PG students were similarly in favour of having a personal tutor. However, in a number of departments, personal tutors were also project supervisors and students (PGTs) saw this as an issue, with a preference for separation of personal tutors and project supervisors. A smaller group of students who all had the same personal tutor praised the system as working very well.

The main concern raised by the SSLCs in relation to their personal tutors was the lack of consistency between one tutor and another - an issue raised by both UG and PG SSLCs – raising issues around the now familiar themes of staff attitude, approachability and availability. Variable provision caused frustration across the cohort and perceptions of inequality of opportunity in terms of access to a productive and personalised learning environment. Many students felt that the tutor meeting was just a tick-box exercise to complete the attendance-monitoring requirement, with the member of staff not having any other input into the session.

Many departments have seen linking personal tutoring with formal attendance monitoring as leading to a more perfunctory engagement between tutors and tutees, undermining its more fundamental developmental, relationship-building and supportive purposes:

'At the moment it feels largely like a tick-box exercise...It seems to be just about measuring attendance...neither side cares about the other.'

Some UG students felt forgotten and ignored by their personal tutors, especially if there was nothing formally to discuss at the meetings apart from the monitoring point tick-box. The quality of the relationship and interaction with the student is critical – moving beyond instrumental engagement. The RG noted that the use of monitoring points and the current minimum requirements framing of the role might be contributing to a lack of tutor engagement in some cases – although institutional issues around tutor workload and role expansion are also likely to be relevant here.

Both UG and PG students felt that personal tutoring sessions worked better where the session was a one-to-one session between the student and personal tutor. However, students' felt that the session needed to be planned out prior to the meeting so that it was a structured discussion. Some PG students felt that it would be more useful to have postdoctoral or PhD students as their personal tutor, feeling that this group were more interested in them than 'someone who was more senior but ambivalent'. For many PG students there was more of an issue with not knowing who their personal tutor was, why they had been allocated a tutor, or what they could expect from them.

Virtually all SSLC respondents felt a need for more wellbeing support and better training of personal tutors. They found many personal tutors were either unprepared for the meetings that were held, did not know the answers to questions raised, or even worse, did not know where to find the answers to the questions or make efforts to find out. This included departmental questions and matters related to the wider University.

Many UG and PG students felt that there were not enough meetings throughout the year and students felt lost and abandoned during the term with little (at times no) contact made between student and personal tutor. More meetings were thought a possibility, but more interaction from staff via email was also raised as an alternative means of building contact. Students felt that staff could be encouraged to check up on their progress as the term progressed both academically and personally and that this could be done via email. This was not an issue in the Sciences where many departments use structured personal tutoring time to engage in academic work as well as pastoral support usually within weekly timetabled meetings.

Finding 14: Widespread student support for personal tutoring, particularly retaining the same tutor over time. More contact, structured discussions and training to assist tutors in handling routine and referral matters were common improvement suggestions. PG students highlighted a need for separation of the supervisory and personal tutor roles.

Finding 15: Attaching monitoring points to meetings may cause a more instrumental engagement in some cases.

c) *Web Form Student Comments* (received Mar-Jul 2017)

The web form captured views and feedback on the main purpose of personal tutoring, its current provision and suggestions for its improvement and development from 224 respondents - the bulk of whom were students (71%). An overall breakdown of respondents is provided below:

Table 4: Classification of Web Form Respondents

Category	Responses	% Total Responses
Member of Staff	66	29%
Undergraduate Student	136	61%
Postgraduate Student	22	10%
TOTAL RESPONSES	224	100%

In common with earlier NSS student views most respondents (70%) understood personal tutoring to be principally concerned with providing academic, pastoral or general support and advice to students. Acting as a first point of contact, building rapport and connecting students to departments was also highlighted (22%). Overall, the identified themes (both positive and negative) within students' comments about personal tutoring were strikingly similar to those with the students' NSS comments. The main positive themes focused on the experiences of (and benefits derived from) receiving good quality support (academic and pastoral) and tutors' ready availability and accessibility as a first point of contact for students:

'My personal tutor massively supported me in my temporary withdrawal and had a Skype call with me recently to discuss my return. Small things like this make returning so much easier.'

'Having a personal tutor that you can reach out to for help when you're not really sure what you need/who you need to talk to is invaluable. It makes you feel like there is someone looking out for you.'

'The personal tutor is really important in establishing an effective communication point with one member of staff - It is the only direct contact I get with a member of staff.'

Many other students reported less favourable encounters:

'My personal tutor does not communicate with me and once I went to them with an academic problem and they didn't seem to care. I feel they agree to meet up with me because the university tells them to, rather than because they want to help me.'

'My personal tutor has never once made contact with me, ignored my emails and at our one meeting I arranged was clearly just ticking boxes.'

'To be honest, I am pretty sure my personal tutor didn't know she was a personal tutor.'

'A typical meeting with my personal tutor:

Tutor: Hello, please remind me of your name and sign the sheet. Do you have any questions?

Me: When might we get our exam timetables?

Tutor: I don't know – probably the start of next term. Any other questions?

Me: No, not really.

Tutor: OK then, have a good holiday.'

Student respondents conclude that personal tutoring quality is largely reliant on the attitude and approach of individual personal tutors:

'The success of personal tutoring is largely down to the involvement of the tutor. I only met my personal tutor once at the beginning of the year. Meeting didn't last more than three minutes. I asked for a meeting in term two but never got a reply.'

Familiar negative themes emerge (to those within NSS comments) including tutors' being unsupportive, unhelpful, unavailable, inaccessible or unapproachable which resulted in little or no contact with tutors in some cases and causing students to feel 'unknown'. In addition, students identified a lack of tutors' awareness of support services as problematic:

'Personal tutors generally have very little awareness of the available mental health services on our campus and what each one does and do not seem to care about students' wellbeing.'

Changes to personal tutors also emerged as an area of concern for students:

'My personal tutor has changed every year making it difficult to build up a relationship...it is annoying because they do not even know who you are or really care about well-being!'

A number of PG students highlighted the particular importance of personal tutoring to PG students:

'I think it is important for postgraduate students to be allocated personal tutors as we might need to talk to someone other than our supervisor.'

‘Personal tutoring is particularly pertinent for PGT students who are generally studying alongside full time work and family commitments.’

A related concern around the potential conflict of interest caused by PG supervisors or Directors of Graduate Study providing personal tutoring support for PGT students was noted within staff web form comments.

Finding 16: Personal tutors provide an important first and ongoing point of contact for students, which connects students to their departments and enhances their learning experience.

Further support for Finding 13 also evidenced here.

These accounts of experiences consider personal tutoring from *students’* perspectives. Staff perspectives are required to balance and build a more comprehensive picture of personal tutoring. The next section of this report turns attention to that aspect.

4.2.5 Current Performance – Staff Perspectives

a) ITLR insights

Warwick’s ITLR 2017 Self-Evaluation Documents and Review Panel Reports (2016/17) offer insights into personal tutoring both at the operational and strategic levels. Faculty Senior Tutors also attended their respective Faculty Engagement Events in March 2017, with the Dean of Students attending the relevant sections of each Engagement Event. The documents were a useful source of information and evaluation, with the Engagement Events bringing to life some significant personal tutoring challenges.

A number of departments across each Faculty received commendations for personal tutoring. Commendations related to personal tutoring’s integration into the curriculum; the use of tailored Personal Development Planning; intensive and personalised feedback initiatives; and the significant care and support given to students, sensitive to the international composition of the student body. Yet, even in departments with a clear culture of general learning and pastoral support for students, at Engagement Events pressures on staff and space were strongly articulated and seen as a potential threat to the ability to keep delivering support/personal tutoring at this level. A need for greater clarity with respect to the role and remit of personal and senior tutors, defined at the institutional level to facilitate consistency within and across departments emerged at the Engagement Events.

‘Where personal tutoring fails is in a lack of clarity of the scope and limitations of what it is possible to provide...Students are repeatedly told that for all or many of issues they may encounter, they should consult their personal tutor in the first instance. This leads to a great broadening of the role as it is practiced.’

In particular, both the Arts and Social Science Faculty Engagement Events identified enhanced central WSS provision as critical to the successful review and refocusing of the personal tutoring system towards provision of more effective academic support. A consequent desire for additional WSS support and closer working relations with Wellbeing (particularly Mental Health) Advisors, embedded or linked more strongly to departments was recorded. A number of Review Panels also highlighted concerns around the personal tutor workload (e.g. difficulties managing the volume of mitigating circumstances and specific learning adjustments; ‘holding’ students awaiting WSS

appointments; increasing complexity of student support needs), highlighting the role of clearer boundaries to assist in managing workload difficulties.

In total, twelve recommendations pertaining to personal tutoring across the Faculties¹⁶ were made. Recommendations reflected the concerns of departments regarding the role and remit of staff in dealing with wellbeing issues – particularly in relation to mental health concerns. These resulted in requests for clarity around the boundaries of the personal tutor role especially in relation to WSS provision. The development of personal tutor training, including the suggestion of an annual personal tutor briefing update to covers key changes to University and departmental regulations and practices were identified as potentially beneficial developments for consideration.

The value of personal tutoring to PGR students and emphasising the benefits of personal tutoring to all students was also identified. The Graduate School requires Departments to nominate a staff member as ‘an advisor/mentor/personal tutor’ for each research student¹⁷. Currently, practice is variable around the allocation of personal tutors to PGR students across the University. For most departments the personal tutor role is largely undertaken by the student’s supervisor. Some departments assign a separate personal tutor to PGR students (e.g. English, CES, CE and History of Art), others do not instead relying on the Director of Graduate Studies or departmental senior tutor as the primary support and development contact, for issues outside of the supervisory role, for PGR students (e.g. Chemistry, Computer Science and WBS). A number of departments identified restrictive resource implications attached to providing personal tutors to PGR students.

Individual departmental recommendations related to increasing the number and regularity of meetings, especially in students’ first year; linking personal tutoring work more explicitly to learning activities and feedback.

Finding 17: ITLR commendations for personal tutoring and a clear culture of support for students was evidenced across Faculties. Numerous pressures and potential threats to personal tutoring delivery were identified including issues around role boundaries, referral, workload, space, training, sufficiency of WSS provision (especially Mental Health provision) and PGR tutor provision.

ITLR findings correspond largely to those arising from Senior Tutors and Heads of Departments interviews, which are explored below.

b) Senior Tutor and Heads of Department interviews

All Senior Tutors¹⁸ and Heads of Department (or delegated other) were invited to a semi-structured interview (with the Dean of Students or Faculty Senior Tutor) to discuss operational and strategic aspects of personal tutoring respectively. 43 Senior Tutor and 15 Head of Department interviews (from across all 4 Faculties) were undertaken during Spring Term 2017. Analysis of the interview data was undertaken revealing the following findings.

¹⁶ Distributed across Faculties as follows: 2 in Arts; 1 in Medicine; 2 in Science and 7 in Social Science.

¹⁷

https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/formslibrary/guidelines_on_supervision_and_monitoring.pdf

¹⁸ Each department has one or more Senior Tutors who provide the departmental lead on operational aspects of personal tutoring - supported by the relevant Faculty Senior Tutor from the Dean of Students’ Office. There are a total of 52 Senior Tutors across the institution.

Students seek personal tutor support for a broad range of issues ranging from straightforward academic queries to complex and deeply personal matters. The latter frequently spill over into the academic space and variously impact students' learning and/or progression. Although more complex welfare issues trigger referral to specialist support within the University, nonetheless, Senior Tutors report finding themselves exposed to students' distressing revelations (e.g. sexual assault, bereavement) and requiring more support in managing the impacts of such exposure.

The potential value of personal tutoring to students and their learning experiences and development is recognised across all departments. There is a strong sense that it should be a shared responsibility across all members of academic staff as much as possible, given the complexities of study leave and additional administrative burdens. The belief in the value of personal tutoring work being undertaken by academics is consistent with students' desire to engage with academics as personal tutors (rather than trained support workers) reflected both the literature ('What Works?' Report; HEA: 2012) and students' comments above.

Finding 18: Personal tutoring recognised as of value across departments with a strong sense that it should be a shared academic responsibility.

Most interviewees whilst individually recognising the value of the work, reported that personal tutoring was generally regarded amongst academics as low status work not contributing directly to career development and promotion – and hence reflecting a broader institutional positioning of personal tutoring as academically peripheral with little consequence to the individual tutor if performed badly.

'It is a minor part of my activity and one that will never have more than a tiny impact on probation decision so there is no incentive for me to invest much effort into it.'

This raises the issue of how personal tutoring is positioned within the institution – as an embedded and valued part of academic work, arising from shared institutional beliefs that value student experience and development, or as something additional and peripheral to the core academic role, reliant on individual practice?

'As well as not being encouraged to, personal tutors simply cannot afford to give more than the minimum time to their students because they are under so much time pressure in other areas.'

Given this concerning finding, PTR 2017 undertook some further investigation into the institutional framing of the personal/senior tutor roles by reviewing information contained in appointment (job description), clearing probation, promotion and PDR documentation. Key appointment documents include the job and person descriptions that vary in detail from post to post. Examining a number of examples for academic roles, revealed that only two job descriptions mentioned academic duties (setting examinations, marking, invigilation and pastoral support of students) required to sustain the delivery of high quality teaching. This was not followed through in the same way in the person specification. Here there is mention of teaching and research supervision experience, interpersonal skills, ability to inspire and enthuse students and the potential to contribute to the collegial life of a department, but no specific mention of academic or pastoral support or the personal tutoring role.

Within promotion documentation, personal tutoring is not mentioned specifically, although leadership in personal tutoring such as might be evidenced through undertaking the Senior Tutor role, could likely be considered as part of an individual's contribution to the department. Promotion for teaching fellows (Senior, Principal and Professorial) does mention the need to evidence student

experience activities, one of which is 'developing effective learning environments and approaches to student/prospective student support and guidance'. However, there is little development of this to specifically link to the personal tutor role or leadership in this area through the Senior Tutor role. Similarly, within PDR documentation, personal tutoring is not identified specifically, although again leadership within a department such as might occur in undertaking the Senior Tutor role could be relevant.

Considering probation documentation, performance in the personal tutor role is not identified specifically as relevant here. There is mention of teaching and collegiality and compulsory completion of 'Role of Personal Tutor' training induction workshop that is mandated for all probationary staff. However, there is no clear mention of pastoral care or competence in fulfilling the personal tutor role or explicit monitoring or review of this as a routine part of all probationers' progress.

Bringing these aspects together, there is very little, if any explicit mention of the Personal and Senior Tutor roles as key strands of academic activity within recruitment, probation, promotion and PDR documentation. This contributes to an institutional invisibility of tutoring work and the widespread perception amongst academic staff as it being of low status (although not necessarily low value) work. Those who have a Senior Tutor role may be able to position this as evidence of a major contribution to departmental activities in PDR and promotion applications, alongside other activities. Nevertheless, for the majority of other staff, tutoring work is at best covered by general and generic terms such as other academic activities or duties. Pastoral support or student support and guidance is sometimes but not always mentioned as part of this. The personal tutor role as such, using this terminology, very rarely appears directly.

At a recent Senior Tutor Networking Event (September 2017), Senior Tutors from across the University met to explore the issue of personal tutoring workload credit, sharing methods of allocation and considering how we might, as an institution, move towards an agreed approach to personal tutoring workload credit. Real credit diversity was reported stretching from zero in many cases, to an exceptional 50% of workload. Most commonly, credit ranged from zero to 2/15's of workload, with a consensus that the latter was most realistic.

Finding 19: Perception of personal tutoring being regarded as low status work at the institutional and sometimes department level – as academically peripheral - attracting variable (sometimes no) workload recognition, and not directly contributing to career development, progression, promotion or other reward.

There was also a shared sense that there was little review and monitoring of personal tutoring at either the departmental or faculty level. Some also expressed difficulty in addressing the poor performance of staff in this area – linked to a lack of institutionally agreed performance standards, consequent difficulties in monitoring delivery and/or an institutional framing of it as low value and hence low priority work whose explicit presence is largely absent from recognition and reward (including promotion criteria) across the University.

The ability to deliver and manage personal tutoring is compromised by a lack of data recording and review around key aspects of departmental tutoring. This is exacerbated by the absence of any University annual monitoring or review framework that makes understanding tutoring delivery and development problematic.

There is some evidence of a failure to deliver personal tutoring amongst some staff. However, there are no formalised and routine processes in place around overseeing and monitoring personal

tutoring provision, so there is no way to systematically interpret or respond to these failings. The absence of reported sector performance indicators and institutional compliance measures for personal tutoring exacerbate these difficulties.

'Tutors need training and accountability.'

In terms of the practical provision of personal tutoring, some departments (largely within the Faculty of Science and smaller departments within the Faculty of Arts) report that personal tutoring operates reasonably effectively, embedding student development and support into departmental provision and creating opportunities for meaningful relationships to develop between fellow students and with academics that reinforce learner identity and engagement. In stark contrast, other departments report personal tutoring as at a 'breaking point', struggling to find sufficient academic resource to fulfil the workload, and with tutors feeling overwhelmed by the volume and nature of students' support needs.

'There are too many personal tutees per faculty member for this to make sense and this load is unaccounted for in the workload matrix...tutors can feel overwhelmed.'

'Personal tutoring plays a very important role in the student experience, but the role has expanded without this being taken into account in the academic workload.'

Insufficient time allocation to personal tutoring within academic workload models is a common feature across the sector (Lea and Farbus: 2000). At Warwick, this position is being exacerbated by the growth in mental health issues amongst students (linked to perceived under-resourcing of Wellbeing Support Services) and managing increases in mitigating circumstances and specific learning adjustments were especially challenging.

'Personal tutoring is undermined by...the severity of some student problems and the amount of time it takes to support students...it is increasingly about fire-fighting mental health issues.'

The high expectations of students with respect to the level and nature of personal tutoring support they receive, coupled with a lack of engagement or understanding of its value and relevance by some students were also identified as problematic. This is compounded by the lack of any of institutional student guidance about personal tutoring (although departments do provide information locally to their students) to inform their expectations and engagement:

'Students are told to expect all sorts of things from their tutors (welfare support, guidance, references, a point of contact)...students think we are there for unconditional and psychological support – which we are not trained for and is not the function of the personal tutor.'

The current structuring of personal tutoring (using a minimum requirement framework) also allows departments to develop personal tutoring in ways that best fit their students' needs – innovations can and do occur locally to support students' situated learning experiences. Some 'successful' innovations appear to lean towards the use of integrated models of personal tutoring delivery that enmesh curricular content with learner support. Others innovations focus on the use of basic learner analytics (attendance, non-submission of assessments, failed assessments) to identify 'at risk' students towards whom support and development opportunities can be focused, e.g. WBS, Law School. Several departments were also using peer-mentoring initiatives (most focused in the PG space) to support students. As highlighted previously a lack of formalised institutional oversight of

personal tutoring across departments means that these developments are not captured centrally and shared across departments.

Finding 20: Increases in Specific Learning Adjustments and Mitigating Circumstances, resulting in sharp increases in personal tutoring workload.

Finding 21: Current referral mechanisms to WSS (especially Mental Health) are not working effectively with some long wait times for students. This increases pressures on personal tutors left to manage students' difficulties within departments - exacerbating workload and stress particularly for Senior Tutors.

Finding 22: Departments have resourcing issues, which compromises their ability to deliver effective personal tutoring.

Finding 23: An absence of formalised and routine monitoring and review mechanisms leading to a lack of clear authority and responsibility for addressing performance.

Finding 24: Overall staff dissatisfaction arises from the sense that they are called on to provide too much pastoral support at a level for which they are not qualified and that there are workload and workload recognition issues.

c) Webform Staff Comments

Although concerns were raised about the lack of clarity around the personal tutor role within ITLR engagements (see section 4.2.5a), only one staff webform respondent felt that there was no clear purpose to personal tutoring. Generally, there was broad consensus around the purpose of personal tutoring within the staff webform comments:

'Personal Tutoring is very important and a great way of connecting students to their department...a first port of call if students need guidance, advice or have a problem and don't know where to find help...someone who can see their transition and growth across the years, and to spur them on to continue to improve. Personal tutorials give students a time and space, which isn't necessarily set with a firm agenda, thus freeing up possibilities to explore, discuss and review their learning and skills development.'

'The role has a holistic purpose, one that is central to the overall journey and university experience of the tutee.'

'Personal tutoring...aims to humanize what can be an impersonal and impenetrable organization.'

Staff respondents also highlighted the value that personal tutoring brings to students (and staff):

'I understand my role as personal tutor first of all to provide a human face of the programme of study to my students...and generally make students feel perceived as full persons at the university.'

'Personal tutoring is an incredibly important part of the pastoral care system for students. To abolish it would be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of students.'

'There are benefits to staff of personal tutoring because everyone is equally involved as a tutor, it creates a point of shared involvement, experience and team-building amongst the staff.'

'Personal tutoring aids in providing secure learning environment for our students and prevents academic from becoming too far removed from those they teach. Any reduction of interaction between academic and our students is to be resisted.'

However, this valuing of personal tutoring was far from universally shared, with a small number of tutors sharing an alternative view:

'I am not trained as a social worker, nor am I an administrator who knows all the rules. I never know what to tell students who ask me about their duties/rights. I just send them to the Office. Why do they need to waste their time and my time seeing me, is unclear to me. And even worse when they have personal issues – I am really not trained to deal with that. So eventually it is just a contact point. I just record I saw them and pretend to be interested in what they have to say. I'm sure the university can employ someone professional that would do this work much better than I do it (and at a much lower cost).'

Linked to this, some recognised difficulties around the suitability of academics in fulfilling the demands of the role:

'The idea is excellent, but the practice does not bear that out. I am not sure that academic staff are the appropriate individuals to be providing pastoral care. Those soft skills are very different than the skills for which academics are chosen...academics often begrudge having to engage in so much administrative work and small talk.'

The issue of tutor attitude and approach in leading to variable provision across personal tutors and variable experience amongst personal tutees was identified:

'Unfortunately there are some academics who treat the job and the students for whom they are responsible as an imposition, thus generating the exact opposite of that intended. Arguably even worse are those tutors who intentionally cultivate an antagonistic attitude with their students, priding themselves upon 'toughening up' their students...this is completely counter in my view to our professional responsibilities, elementary pedagogical theory, and basic human decency. '

For a small number of staff, concerns that are more fundamental were expressed about current personal tutoring provision:

'The personal tutor system as it currently stands is not fit for purpose, if its objectives are to deal with pastoral care and broader educational development/feedback, whilst meeting the university's legal obligations and delivering a high-class student service. Within that context, the current system we operate is out-dated, inefficient, dysfunctional, too informal and casually organised and is failing to meet the standards staff and students should expect within this institution. Whilst the introduction of a Dean of Students is an excellent step forward, the personal tutor system remains one of the most urgent and critical areas in need of restructuring and modernisation throughout the university.'

'The system is completely broken. I have around 40 personal tutees – I can't know and help each of them personally, when that is just a tiny part of my job. Personal tutoring is being

undervalued and squeezed out, particularly for younger colleagues under enormous pressure to 'publish or perish'.

'There is an increasing trend of trying to over-protect tutees...this is a route to increased fragility and an unreasonable sense of entitlement and so it serves our students poorly by damaging their mental state and equipping them very badly for employment.'

The latter comment links into a broader point about institutional positioning and framing of student support. Accepting that a small number of students have a genuine need for ongoing or acute professional support, current support framings and referral approaches tend towards a deficit model of reactive support rather than a developmental model of proactive initiatives. The latter prioritise students' personal development and self-reliance in ways that might lead to a reduction in the need to access more formal support services and repositions support as an exceptional rather than routine service that students access. This is a much broader issue involving, in particular, WSS provision.

Finding 25: Some broad agreement about the role and value of personal tutoring in relation to humanising students' experience and supporting their academic development and wellbeing, with a smaller number questioning whether it should be part of the academic role.

Finding 26: Some fundamental concerns expressed about the current system's ability to cope with current demands and about the broader institutional framing of support tending towards a deficit rather than a developmental model.

5 Interplay of Personal Tutoring with Wellbeing Support Services

Although aspects of the work of personal tutoring intersects with a range of support and development services across the University – including the Library, Student Careers and Skills, Warwick Accommodation - perhaps the most significant interface is with Wellbeing Support Services. As made clear within ITLR findings, and interviews with departmental Senior Tutors and Heads of Departments, perceived underfunding of WSS provision has created knock-on effects for personal tutoring, with tutors describing the challenges faced when left to manage or hold students' difficulties within departments until professional support (e.g. an appointment with a Mental Health Advisor) becomes available for students.

In 2016, the Student Support Services, as was, Task and Finish Group (SSS, 2016) reported, 'a surge in students accessing Counselling and Mental Health services in Russell Group universities as widely reported in the national press (*Times Higher Education*, May 2016).' Between 2011/12 and 2014/15 many Russell Group universities reported increases, with some reporting staggering increases of up to 75%. The increase at Warwick over the period was 27%. A more detailed breakdown of the numbers of students¹⁹ accessing Wellbeing Support Services is provided in Table 5 below.

¹⁹ The Head of WSS reports no identifiable departmental patterns with respect to students seeking WSS support.

Table 5: Wellbeing Support Services – Numbers Accessing Services 2012/13 to 2016/17

	Numbers Accessing Services ²⁰				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
University Counselling Service	1604	1885	2109	2489	2996
Disability Services	1848	2174	2207	2323	2415
Mental Health and Wellbeing	382	608	854	1142	1527
Student Support ²¹	359	373	321	266	237
Total	4193	5040	5491	6220	7175
Year on Year Increase	-	20.2%	8.9%	13.3%	15.4%

Although not positioning Warwick as unique in the sector with respect to increasing referrals, SSS 2016 flagged the possible distinctiveness of some referrals, arising from what it described as a ‘perfectionist’ syndrome. Increases in students who had consulted a psychiatrist and in diagnoses of Asperger’s syndrome were also identified. A further subset of referrals were linked to students’ notion of self-identity and self-worth being strongly connected to achieving only the very highest levels of academic achievement and/or relative position against their peers. These growing demands for support, both in level and complexity exert significant pressure on WSS staff leading to increases in wait times for appointments, excessively so at peak periods. The linked nature of the work of WSS and the pastoral element of personal tutoring also causes increased pressures on personal and senior tutors who report struggling to manage the complex and rising support needs of students, particularly when referral times are longer than optimal.

Tutors have raised the issue of long referral waits as a particular tension. WSS report appointment waiting times for services as variable throughout the year. For Mental Health and Wellbeing, the range is from same day to a 7-week wait at peak demand periods. For Counselling, the range is 8 to 25 days with the average wait being 21 days. Both services have measures in place to mitigate these wait times – e.g. the email counselling service guarantees a response within the week, an early appointment opportunity list fills any cancellations and short consultation sessions are offered with a counsellor within 4 days of registration when the wait time exceeds 2 weeks. The Mental Health team has someone on duty every day to ensure any urgent responses are met and the Wellbeing team has ‘drop ins’ regularly each week to help manage more immediate, but less severe need. The Student Support Office is open during normal office hours and students are responded to according to need. Out of hours, the Senior Wardens and Campus Security manage need.

Returning to the broader point about institutional positioning and framing of student support raised earlier, SSS (2016) also identified the balance between proactive and reactive WSS provision as heavily weighted towards the latter. Growing demand is likely to solidify a largely reactive service model within which demand becomes self-generating – without proactive prevention, ‘minor issues can become major issues can become chronic issues’. It concluded that ‘stronger investment in preventative work was a necessary condition for a stable, long-term operating model: building resilience ‘from the bottom up’ to complement responsive services.’ A shift towards a more proactive, and hence preventative, model of WSS provision would be likely to ease significantly the

²⁰ Figures provided by WSS. Numbers include only those physically presenting to services except for Counselling, which includes email counselling.

²¹ WSS report that the slight decrease in the number of students accessing Student Support over recent years arises from wellbeing drop-ins picking up issues and the removal of parking permit allocation on welfare grounds from the jurisdiction of Student Support in 2014/15.

pressures that personal tutors are under. Although somewhat beyond the scope of this review, the RG strongly supports consideration of what a proactive operating model might look like at an institutional level, in terms of building resilience (both for staff and students) into the core approaches of the University - its work practices, support strategy, education strategy, curriculum, learning culture and environment.

Since SSS (2016), Wellbeing Support Services has received considerable investment during the last 18 months, appointing Heads of Service for Disability, Mental Health and Student Support with additional posts being appointed to meet frontline demand. Additionally, and to support Library wellbeing and study campaigns, a further appointment of two Wellbeing Advisors (Outreach) took place. The advisors operate as link workers between Wellbeing Support and the Library and include a proactive and psycho-educational remit as part of developing a more proactive resilience initiative. Linked to the latter, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team piloted a series of Wellbeing sessions and workshops for students throughout term 3 of 2016/17. Held in the Library the sessions sought to help students understand and address issues affecting wellbeing, such as anxiety and stress. Following an evaluation of this pilot a new wellbeing session - 'An Introduction to Living Well at Warwick' – will be offered to students within academic departments in 2017/18.

Within ITLR discussions, around the interface between WSS and personal tutoring, academic departments expressed ongoing need for this closer contact with WSS and more immediate response to issues students present with in departments. In response, three additional advisor outreach posts are planned for development. It is envisaged that these posts will operate in academic departments (within Faculties) with direct links and management from central WSS to maintain consistency and quality of standards. Further investment is also being made in relation to a new case management system for WSS to facilitate more efficient operational working.

These investments and developments are all welcomed. However, the RG concludes that without a referral system that can deal effectively with students' growing wellbeing and mental health demands, this will leave personal tutors exposed to being caught up in matters beyond their expertise. Some tutors may adopt protective measures (e.g. limiting contact) to safeguard against this, which risks perpetuating current engagement problems. Therefore ongoing review of the sufficiency (e.g. via consideration of the development of a Student Support Hub) and of the operating model of WSS is needed to ensure its ability to provide a comprehensive integrated service to all students. This chimes with recent calls to place the curriculum at the centre of current debates within the sector about wellbeing issues (HEA, 2017). Similarly, the findings of a recent IPPR²² report (linked to the UUK StepChange Framework²³) recommend university leaders make mental health and wellbeing of students and staff:

'...a strategic priority and adopt a 'whole-university' approach based on prevention and promotion, early intervention and low-level support...subject to audit and quality assurance, and...increase the amount of funding dedicated to services which promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of students...in line with an open and robust analysis of current student need and reasonable future projections'.

The sufficiency of WSS provision at the institutional level has been questioned in light of the increasing numbers of students seeking support and the increasing complexity of their support needs. The experience of staff leads to the conclusion that Wellbeing Support Services (WSS) are under-resourced and long referral wait times mean that departments have to manage the needs of students in the short-term. Referral to WSS is not a straightforward matter – reluctant students and

²² [Thorley C \(2017\) Not By Degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's Universities, IPPR.](#)

²³ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/stepchange/Pages/default.aspx>

sometimes long wait times leads to personal tutors needing to manage the greater number of complex cases within the department (at least in the short-term) than they have needed to do historically. This contributes to an expansion in the personal tutoring role that contributes to tutors feeling 'out of their depth'. A linked desire for WSS to be more embedded within departments and Faculties was identified:

'The services to which we are supposed to signpost are often inadequately resourced.'

Institutional consideration of these matters are vital to safeguarding the efficient and effective delivery of personal tutoring in the longer term.

Further support for finding 20 evidenced here, around current referral mechanisms not working effectively.

Finding 27: Ongoing review of the sufficiency, institutional approach to and model of student support and wellbeing within WSS may be timely.

6 Personal Tutor Training and Support

6.1 Academic Literature Insights and Quality Framing

The literature emphasises the role of training, as a crucial underpinning to effective personal tutoring practice (Owen, 2002). The literature flags the importance of training particularly when the pastoral model of personal tutoring is used (McFarlane, 2016) – as is the predominant case across Warwick departments. Luck (2010) identifies boundary setting and management as important themes within tutor training. There is also recognition of the importance of ongoing training that focuses on 'continuous updating and development' (McFarlane, 2016: 85) which provides a developmental, ethical underpinning and restorative support (Hawkins and Shoet, 2012).

Beyond academic studies, the QAA (2013) identifies personal tutor training and support, as critical to successful personal tutoring provision. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education²⁴ requires HEPs to ensure staff have access to training and ongoing support that equips them to fulfil their tutoring roles, especially around gaining familiarity with issues commonly affecting students and responding appropriately. Adequate personal tutor training and support is also critical in ensuring both tutors and students' wellbeing and enabling appropriate discharge of the Duty of Care owed to both staff and students. Adequate training is likely to extend beyond initial basic induction training to include some form of ongoing refresher training. Indeed, SSS Task and Finish Group (2016) identified a need for periodic 'refresher' training, as a minimum for departmental Senior Tutors and highlighted the benefit of providing updated and concise information on the range of WSS provision, particularly as available services have developed significantly in recent years.

6.2 Current Personal Tutor Training Provision at Warwick

Personal tutor training is one of the key ways that institutions' provide support to tutors. Warwick provision is currently limited to a single face-to-face Induction Briefing (90 minutes) for new staff undertaking the APP TE programme – organised via LDC – delivered by the Dean of Students with

²⁴ QAA (2012) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Quality, Chapter B5: Student Engagement.

representation from WSS staff. The Dean of Students revamped it in 2016/17, including the development of a number of case study scenarios to stimulate more engaged and applied discussion of issues by participants. Induction training covers the purpose (linked to the University Strategy), framing, role and responsibilities (including limits and boundaries) of personal tutoring; the when, how and to whom aspects of signposting and referral; tips on how to develop a relationship with tutees and sources of advice and support for personal tutors. During 2016/17, the induction briefing was delivered to 96 members of academic staff across six separate sessions. However, it is limited both in terms of its scope (a 90 minute session is insufficient in delivering basic personal tutoring training²⁵) and in its reach, capturing only new academic starters on probationary contracts undertaking APP TE – which is only a small sub-set of overall new starters and an even smaller sub-set of personal tutors as a whole. There is currently no additional or ongoing personal tutor training beyond this Induction Briefing. What this means in practice is that there are many academics delivering personal tutoring to our students who have not received any form of training about personal tutoring at Warwick.

6.3 Current Senior Tutor Training

There is no dedicated training currently provided to Senior Tutors. However, developmental information and support is provided to Senior Tutors by the Dean of Students' Office in the form of:

- Basic information and guidance on the [Senior Tutor role](#) – together with more detailed guidance on personal tutoring available on the Dean of Students website.
- Email distribution of a regular (every 2 months) [Senior Tutor Briefing](#), produced by the Dean of Students' Office which updates Senior Tutors on key changes/issues relevant to personal tutoring. (New initiative introduced by the Dean of Students' Office in 2016/17).
- Regular (biannual) face-to-face Senior Tutor Networking Events which explore and consult with Senior Tutors on key issues affecting the work of personal tutors, build a network of practice across the University and facilitate the development and sharing of good practice. (New initiative developed by the Dean of Students in 2016/17).
- One-to-one support, information and guidance provided to Senior Tutors by the associated Faculty Senior Tutors. The three Faculty Senior Tutors (all 0.5 fractional posts) are relatively new positions - two of which came into post in January 2017 and the third in April 2017.

There is currently no bespoke induction training for staff new to the Senior Tutor role, nor any ongoing senior tutor training to refresh knowledge and awareness or update and develop skills. Again, in practice this means that some senior tutors have received no formal training to support them in their role. This is a particular concern, given that senior tutors are essentially the designated local expert on personal tutoring within their respective departments.

A lack of training, particularly in relation to referral processes, role clarity and role boundaries was widely recognised as an issue:

'The idea of each student having a personal tutor is excellent as students can form a relationship with someone who can provide advice and guidance on their progress through their course...The difficulty is that tutors are not trained in how to listen.'

²⁵ It has been agreed with LDC that from January 2018 the Personal Tutor Induction Training, delivered as part of APP TE, will be extended to a three-hour session.

‘Training and information for personal tutors is very inconsistent and often lacking. This can lead to an inconsistent student experience.’

Discussions with relevant stakeholders across the University – including departmental Senior Tutors (at the May 2017 Senior Tutor Networking Event), and colleagues within the SU Welfare Advice Centre, WSS, LDC and HR – were undertaken to explore the shape, content and design of any training developments. Such discussions reveal the need to include a focus on key academic regulations and processes including appeals, complaints, withdrawal, plagiarism, diversity and inclusion (e.g. LGBTUA+ at Warwick and associated network and supporters programme), Prevent Duty, Student Support Referral Pathway, WSS services (especially Mental Health awareness), other student support and development opportunities, and referral processes.

Finding 28: Many personal (and some senior) tutors are delivering personal tutoring without any tutoring training.

6.4 Personal Tutoring Support Resources

The Dean of Students’ website is the key source of information, guidance and support for personal tutors. Existing website content has largely been inherited from the former Office of the Senior Tutor. Some updating of text has taken place in 2016/17 to reflect the move to the Dean of Students’ Office and introduction of a Dean of Students and the Faculty Senior Tutors.

However, the existing presentation is text heavy, difficult to navigate with little segregation of information and materials between different aspects and some duplication of materials. The website does not currently enable quick and effective signposting or access to online development and support resources. In addition, material is principally staff facing with no information or guidance provided to students to help shape and inform their understanding, expectations and engagement with personal tutoring.

Finding 29: The Dean of Students website is a key support resource for tutors, requiring redesign and development.

7 Contextualised Recommendations

The final section of this report pulls together preceding findings, which inform a series of interconnected recommendations. The RG notes that PTR 2011 identified a number of concerns (see p.2 of this report) for consideration moving forward. The RG finds no evidence that these matters were subsequently considered and followed through to rejection or adoption. If progress in personal tutoring is to be made institutional support for, and action, is necessary especially since the findings of PTR 2017 continue to highlight some of the same issues within PTR 2011 – albeit now more centrally – and as developed recommendations for consideration.

Some brief discussion is provided to begin, offering a little context and insight into RG thinking in arriving at its recommendations – especially in relation to issues around the framing of personal tutoring, role identity and boundaries and its institutional context and resourcing.

7.1 *Framing Personal Tutoring*

Emerging from the review findings, we suggest that the fundamental purpose of personal tutoring continue to encompass academic support, basic pastoral support and signposting/referral as a

connective facet of the wider University learning experience for students. This links to Goal One of the University Strategy: *'Enable our students to succeed and Provide a life-changing education, an outstanding student experience'*. Its framing and resourcing could, and we argue should, link more explicitly to the wider values and goals of the University as well as presenting more clearly the potential academic benefit for the student more strongly than the current system appears to. Whilst some departments/staff do undertake formal and informal personal tutoring practices, which engage deeply with the learning of the student, others provide a more light-touch, reactive or even monitoring related encounter. This is both a source of inequity across the student body and a missed opportunity to enhance the learning experience and environment.

In forming our recommendations, we are mindful that the personal tutoring encounter needs to be pliable. It varies from discipline to discipline, between UG and PG students, and from person to person, as the personal tutoring interaction is in essence a human encounter, moulded by the participants at any point in time. The sense of personal tutoring as an ongoing human encounter comes through in the words of many students and staff quoted in this report. We also recognise the need to consider the cultural and resource implications surrounding personal tutoring. Some significant concerns were raised around how tutors are supported in discharging their role and managing its boundaries. Accounts of tutors providing students with their mobile phone numbers, feeling they had to be accessible at evenings and weekends by email for students in crisis situations, or on overseas placements where national disasters were occurring etc., were raised on numerous occasions. Indeed, it was noted by AQSC in relation to ITLR discussions in February 2017, "...while personal tutoring and wellbeing could be seen to be linked, it would also be necessary to define the boundaries between these themes" (AQSC minutes). Firmly positioning personal tutoring as about student learning, providing only basic wellbeing support and supported by more effective referral mechanisms would help manage some of the fluidity within this relationship and tutor and tutee expectations around the role. This is reliant, amongst other things, on adequately resourced support services across the range of student experience issues.

Whilst there is already support from some staff for such an approach, and enactment of such, we are aware that there are issues relating to academic identity and resourcing which could lead to a patchy implementation or even resistance to such a proposition.

7.2 *Academic Identity and Role Boundaries*

To position personal tutoring more strongly, and with a common goal across departments, may require, amongst other things, the agreement of staff that this more personalised learning support is what their role entails. This may not be what some staff currently believe. Academic identity has been challenged significantly over the last decade or so, as universities have evolved and the demands on staff to manage and deliver student experience goals at the wider institutional level have proliferated (e.g. Barnett, 2014).

Academics' perceptions of their role and of the roles of others may bring different understandings of accountability, and different interpretations of the opportunities and threats to self that go with that. In terms of pedagogic identity, academics may feel that their job is to teach their specialist subject areas well in class and it is for the student to pull together those experiences and have the insight to reflect on and critique their developing knowledge. In other words, anything academic beyond the module level could be regarded as inappropriate or even detrimental if seen as too much 'hand-holding'. Embedding personal tutoring within relevant strategic agendas of the University (including the Education Strategy) is important, but to achieve ownership and develop good practice will also require the formal impetus and resource for translation work at department level.

7.3 Institutional Context and Resourcing

Many departments identified the practical challenges (student numbers, space limitations) they face which pose a real threat to the potential for promoting a more engaged personal tutoring system. The nature and quality of staff working environments are a key factor in enabling good quality personal tutoring. With growing student numbers, modules and courses offered, teaching technologies, REF and TEF requirements, and metrication of the sector, the demands on staff to deliver more within an increasingly squeezed timeframe is rising. The 'squeezed' academic's ability to engage in welcoming and relationship-building tutee conversations may be compromised as they juggle the demands of teaching, research, assessment and administrative duties – some of which have real implications for job security and career progression. This expectation is reminiscent of the 'emotional labour' required of others in customer facing roles, and carries its own stresses (see e.g. Hochschild, 1983). There is also an issue of encounter overload, with some staff teaching hundreds of students – encountering 800 different students per term is possible for some staff teaching across multiple modules in large departments. The multimodal experience (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001 cited in Barnet, 2014 p.300) of vast numbers of encounters (both physical and virtual e.g. via email) in a day or a week can wear down even the most diligent tutor's ability to be organised and welcoming within what can feel like a barrage of encounters.

Whilst this review recognises that some departments already provide a full and engaged personal tutoring system we suggest that nevertheless there are still risks to that provision. We heard from some staff in departments with strong teaching identities and cultures about a growing presence of staff with research-focused perspectives who sometimes refuse to engage fully with personal tutoring. This leads to inconsistency and staff frustration as others pick up this work. Others reported possible gendered expectations relating to personal tutoring work whereby students expect more from female members of staff, which in turn can cause a cycle of largely invisible and unrewarded work affecting other aspects of career such as academic writing or teaching preparation.

The RG sees personal tutoring as of real value when done well but potentially damaging to the learning environment and student experience when not. Numerous knotty problems related to academic culture, identity and resourcing are identified, for which there is no single quick-fix recommendation. With this in mind, a number of linked recommendations that look to re-frame and invigorate the role, inform expectations, resourcing decisions and recognise personal tutoring in ways that improve the value-added for students and staff alike, are offered for consideration. The ambition is to support and develop personal tutoring characterised by formal institutional valuing, promoting and resourcing of a proactive, sincere, responsive and personalised system in a manner that makes clear that the role is achievable and connected to career development. Strands of discussion throughout the following section are cross-referenced to the corresponding numbered findings of PTR 2017 (e.g. F1 is Finding 1 and so on).

7.4 Recommendation 1: Develop and implement an Institutional Code of Practice (CoP) for Personal Tutoring at Warwick

This is the overarching and key recommendation of PTR 2017, emerging from sector best practice guidance, which identifies the underpinning role of an embedded institutional CoP and its value in supporting the quality of personal tutoring provision [F4, F7]. Focusing on setting out the broader institutional framing and Departmental responsibilities for personal tutoring the CoP would seek to work with rather than disrupt existing and effective personal tutoring provision and successful personal tutoring initiatives and developments at the departmental level.

The CoP would replace the existing institutional ‘Minimum Requirements’ framing [F9], setting out more positively and definitively the strategic and operational importance of personal tutoring to the University, linked to the values and goals of the University and contributing to the achievement of outcomes. Linked to recommendations 5 and 12 (p43 and p46 respectively) the CoP also seeks to position personal tutoring more clearly in the academic space, with improved referral resources to prevent drift into support work, beyond students’ everyday wellbeing concerns.

7.4.1 CoP – Strategic Framing and Purpose

The strategic framing of the CoP would make explicit that personal tutoring links directly to the University’s [values](#)²⁶ and goals. In particular, it contributes towards the development of learning communities; supporting students’ ambitions and drives; facilitating the accessibility of learning to our students; assisting students to develop academic independence; and contributing towards the quality of the learning environment and outstanding learning experience of our students. CoP framing would also more definitively set out that personal tutoring speaks directly to the theme of ‘partnership and collaboration between academics and students being right at the heart of a Warwick Education’ and the need to ‘listen to our students and fully engage with them as active partners’ within [Goal One](#) of the University Strategy.²⁷

The CoP strategic framing would also highlight the connection of personal tutoring to Warwick’s emerging Education Strategy - identified within that as a facilitator of the student experience theme. Additionally, CoP framing would articulate personal tutoring’s potential to contribute positively to the outcomes of a number of other important University agendas [F1] including the:

- ‘Learning Environment’ and ‘Student Outcomes and Learning Gain’ themes within the TEF – relating to the learning environment and aspects of learning gain especially around the affective and socio-communicative competencies²⁸.
- ‘Academic Support’ category of the NSS and any similar aspects developed within PTES and PRES.

The CoP framing of personal tutoring would also make clear the ways in which it feeds into and underpins a number of broad institutional foci including facilitating students’ transition and retention, supporting students’ employability, promoting students’ general wellbeing and discharging the University’s duties around the Prevent Strategy.

Capturing, within the CoP, this framing of personal tutoring, making explicit its contribution to key University goals and agendas would more strongly signal its strategic frame and institutional importance. In more definitively setting out its fundamental positioning within the education space it assists in sharpening its principal (though not exclusive) purpose as focused on the provision of academic support [F24]. This framing affirms the understanding that personal tutoring is an expected and routine part of the academic role [F25] and positively connects to students’ preference for academic support being provided by academic staff [F6].

²⁶ <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/strategy/values/>

²⁷ <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/strategy/goalone/> ‘To provide a life-changing education, an outstanding student experience, a global perspective’.

²⁸

https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/whatson/legacyprojectworkshop/legacy_project_workshop_presentations_12th_july_2017_uow.pdf

Subsequent recommendations (detailed below) underpin and feed into further key aspects of the CoP that comprise:

- Institutional Resourcing
- Institutional Positioning
- Operational Model
- Tutor Roles and Responsibilities
- Development and Support
- Monitoring and Review

7.4.2 CoP - Institutional Resourcing of Personal Tutoring

Recommendation 2: Institutional commitment to providing resources that enable Departments to deliver personal tutoring effectively, as set out in recommendations 3) workload credit allocation, 4) tutor ratios, 5) Wellbeing Support Advisors, and 6) office space.

Despite widespread understanding of the positive value of personal tutoring within the academic community and its effective operation within a few departments, a concerning disparity between the concept of personal tutoring and its operational reality from the departmental perspective was widely reported. Departments reported resourcing issues that compromise their ability to deliver effective personal tutoring [F22]. If personal tutoring is understood as contributing to the successful outcomes of key institutional priorities and goals (with potential revenue implications²⁹), sufficient resource is required to underpin its effective delivery. Without this, meaningful improvements are not achievable

These resourcing concerns manifest in issues around three main areas – workload credit, workload (tutee) allocation and referral.

a) Workload credit

Recommendation 3: Departments be required to review and report to the Dean of Students' Office on how the work undertaken by Personal and Senior Tutors is recognised in departmental workload credit allocation. The Dean of Students to subsequently consult and recommend to University Education Committee how explicit and representative workload credit be attached to personal tutoring more consistently across the University.

One of the key resource constraints identified at Warwick in relation to personal tutoring is academic staff time - the way in which academic staff resources are deployed across the range of academic activities affects the quality of tutoring provision [F7]. These are issues of workload modelling, and the RG noted that the absence of an institutional workload model³⁰ operating across departments was problematic in this regard.

²⁹ Effective personal tutoring can contribute to increased student retention, improvements in the learning environment and an enhanced student experience, which directly (via student fee income) or indirectly (via ratings and competitive rankings) feed into revenue income.

³⁰ Reported within Senior Tutor and Head of Department interviews undertaken as part of PTR2017, and within a report on Workload Modelling to ARC in 2015/16.

However, there is variable, and sometimes no, explicit workload credit given for personal tutoring activities across Departments. Even when credit is provided, there is a sense that it is somewhat arbitrary and not reflective of the actual time demands of the role. The detrimental effects of this position were evident within the shared accounts of tutors and tutees alike. Many tutors (particularly in the Social Science and Arts Faculties) reported feeling overworked and overloaded by the demands of personal tutoring [F24]. Similarly, students shared the detrimental impacts that time-poor tutoring encounters had on their learning experiences [F13].

Credit allocations, of course rely on a wide range of factors at the Departmental level including: the relative size of departments; staff: student ratios; staff balance between research focused and teaching focused staff; the operational model of tutoring used; aspects of student life-cycle, diversity and learning needs; the demands of particular courses of study; and the subsuming or overlap of tutoring work into other Departmental roles e.g. such as Directors of Student Experience and Progression.

Notwithstanding this complexity, there is a need to move towards a more transparent understanding of how the work of tutors is reflected within departmental workload modelling. This would support a move towards attaching explicit and representative workload credit, more consistently across Departments that recognises and institutionally signals the importance of this strand of academic work. This is especially the case given the increases in personal tutoring workload reported by tutors across Departments [F20, F8]. Presently, there is an absence of clear oversight and understanding of workload credit practices around personal tutoring across Departments, which hampers this endeavour.

b) Workload (tutee) allocation

Recommendation 4: Agree a limit of 25 tutees per tutor and to achieve this, departments be required to allocate personal tutoring workload across all available members of academic staff. Where this limit is exceeded departments be required to explain the reasons for this and how the quality of personal tutoring provision and wellbeing of tutors is ensured.

Issues around Personal Tutor loadings i.e. the average (and absolute) number of personal tutees that tutors are charged with supporting was also a key issue [F24]. Some Departments cited an average personal tutee allocation in the mid-thirties, with a number of individual tutors reporting allocations of more than forty personal tutees. The work of personal tutoring is somewhat open-ended, in that the level of support that individual students may require across their courses of study is unpredictable. Even with a sensitive workload model, the more tutees an individual tutor supports the greater the risk of their support workload becoming unmanageable – adversely affecting both tutors and tutees. Hence, there is a need to establish an upper allocation level, which will rely in part on ensuring that tutoring is shared, as evenly as possible across all members of academic staff within Departments. It is not clear that this is currently the case, given the disparities between student: staff and tutee: tutor ratios [Appendices 5 and 7] within some Departments. This sharing of responsibility is not only important from a workload position, but links to notions of developing beneficial and shared academic communities of practice around tutoring [F18], and to students' desire to be supported by academics, including senior academics [F6, F16].

In setting this expectation, and via regular monitoring and review of compliance with this (see Recommendation 18 for more details) the University will have access to information about Departmental resourcing constraints around personal tutoring, which can feed through into broader Departmental resourcing considerations as appropriate.

c) Referral

Recommendation 5: Increase the number of Faculty-embedded Wellbeing Support Advisors to facilitate more efficient student referral by Personal and Senior Tutors, with ongoing review of the sufficiency of WSS provision.

Across the University, the Pastoral Model of personal tutoring is used - although adapted in Science departments to include aspects of the Curriculum Model. This Pastoral Model relies on a referral approach (especially to Wellbeing Support Services) for all forms of student support and development beyond academic and basic wellbeing matters. As a result, effective referral is a key quality component of personal tutoring provision. Departmental accounts report that current referral mechanisms to Wellbeing Support Services are not working effectively, which increases workload pressures on tutors [F21]. With increasing student numbers, and the growth in volume³¹ and complexity of students' support needs [F8] – particularly increases in the numbers of students presenting with mental health issues - this situation is likely to intensify. Linked to this is a proliferation in the numbers of students requiring specific learning adjustments and those submitting mitigating circumstances, causing role expansion for tutors [F26]. A need for additional embedded support staff (operating locally, but managed and supported centrally) is identified, to facilitate a more responsive referral system on the pastoral side [F27]. Provision of additional centrally managed advisors also guards against departments creating additional and variable wellbeing provision locally, disconnected from quality, support and professional frameworks provided to advisors within WSS. Central provision also provides greater equity across departments.

d) Space

Recommendation 6: University work towards providing individual office space for all staff with personal tutoring responsibilities. Where shared offices are used, the University identify private meeting room spaces within each Faculty, bookable by Departmental Personal Tutors, to enable tutor-tutee meetings to take place.

Issues of inadequate space availability were identified, within both ITLR and PTR 2017 [F17, F22]. Institutional growth means that space is at a premium, with communal offices, shared academic offices and the loss of meeting-room spaces to accommodate rising student numbers becoming common features across Departments. This causes tensions for personal tutors who report having to meet students in open or communal areas with little opportunity for privacy. This situation is not conducive to effective support.

7.4.3 CoP - Institutional Positioning of Personal Tutoring

Recommendation 7: Criteria identified within existing institutional frameworks used to recognise and reward academic performance (e.g. PDR, promotion and merit pay criteria) – be amended to explicitly include personal tutoring performance (excellence) as one aspect of academic performance to be considered.

There is a widespread perception that personal tutoring is low status work and academically peripheral to other strands of academic work. The issues around workload credit and allocation

³¹ See Table 5 of PTR 2017 for WSS data. Increases in student support needs are mirrored in SU Welfare Advice Centre data, reporting a 23% rise in student support cases from 2016/16 (1,357 cases) to 2016/17 (1,675 cases).

discussed above – where for many, tutoring work is not explicitly recognised within their workload models – contributes to this framing. In addition, personal tutoring work in the main does not link directly to existing institutional frameworks around career development (PDR), progression (promotion criteria) or reward (merit pay). This contributes to an ‘institutional invisibility’ and contributing to the perception that, at the institutional level, a lack of value is placed on personal tutoring³². In turn, this makes addressing under/poor personal tutoring performance or engagement difficult.

Recommendation 8: Introduce a Personal Tutoring award, as a separate strand of the Warwick WATE awards.

Annual Awards for Personal Tutoring³³ could usefully be introduced which would raise the institutional value placed on personal tutoring and more overtly recognise excellent practice in this area. Arising from Senior Tutor nominations (but drawing on specified criteria), this would highlight the importance of tutoring work, support the sharing of best practice and for recipients potentially feed into individual career development and progression.

7.4.4 CoP - Operational Model

a) Developing the Pastoral Model

Recommendation 9: Faculty Senior Tutors explore with Departments the integration of group tutorial programmes within their personal tutoring provision for all first year UG and PGT students.

The pastoral model of personal tutoring although well embedded and predominant across Warwick departments and the HE sector generally has been criticised for its tendency towards being a reactive and deficit model of support [F2]. Reshaping this model to reflect a more proactive and development focus may improve tutoring effectiveness, peer-support opportunities and student engagement [F3]. Laycock (2009; 2017) suggests that embedding group tutorials – particularly with first year students (both UG and PG) – is one way of achieving this reshaping. This suggestion is supported by findings at Warwick where departments embedding aspects of the curriculum model of personal tutoring – specifically featuring group tutorials as a part of this - score more highly within the NSS Academic Support category [F11]. Hence, departments using a pastoral model could benefit from supplementing termly individual tutee meetings with a group tutorial programme embedded within students’ timetables.

Although not wishing to be overly prescriptive, these are envisaged as discipline-based and task-orientated tutorials – covering basic disciplinary knowledge, or more generic skills linked to students’ learning, academic development and/or employability. Group tutorials could also usefully draw on available data and learner analytics and provide a useful forum to discuss academic progress, student engagement, and assessment and feedback with students in small groups. The minimum

³² At a recent SEDA/CRA Personal Tutoring conference (Sheffield Hallam 11/10/2017) academic colleagues at other UK HEI’s shared that all Professorial appointments included the need to demonstrate significant engagement with personal tutoring as a threshold requirement for consideration for promotion at their institutions.

³³ A dedicated Personal Tutor category in the Warwick Staff Awards would be preferred, but given current categories this may not be appropriate. At a minimum, explicit inclusion of personal tutoring prompts within award categories 4 and 9, are required.

suggested frequency is two group-tutoring sessions per term across the Autumn and Spring terms, although many Science Departments schedule these much more frequently (some with credits attached) e.g. on a fortnightly basis, albeit to complement a more concentrated and timetabled teaching provision.

There are potential resource implications attached to this and a need to discuss and develop material to support group tutorial initiatives collaboratively with tutors which will take time to develop. However, embedding group tutorials within the curriculum, linked to a module(s) or aspects of modular content is beneficial [F3], not only ensuring relevance and encouraging student engagement but also capturing the resourcing requirement within the existing modular resourcing envelope. Further, it also more strongly signals personal tutoring's principal connection to the academic support space.

b) Joint and Cross-Department Degree Course Students

In its 'Good Practice Guide for Undergraduate Joint and Cross-Departmental Courses' the Academic Quality and Standards Committee has published clear personal tutoring requirements for joint degree students. These are set out within the existing 'Minimum Requirements' framework for personal tutoring³⁴. Requirements for departments include assigning a Personal Tutor from the home department; ensuring where possible continuity of tutor; and identifying a named contact in the partner department who is able to provide academic advice to students.

The RG agreed the adequacy of these requirements, but also noted the unsatisfactory experiences of personal tutoring shared by joint students as part of this review [F13]. The RG concluded that there was a failure to deliver the requirements to the required standards in some cases. This may arise from a combination of resource constraints (considered in 7.4.2 above) and an absence of any routine monitoring, review and hence enforcement of such matters. The latter applies to personal tutoring provision across the institution and not just to that of joint students [F23] and is considered separately in section 7.4.7 below.

c) PGR provision

Recommendation 10: Amend the Graduate School's guidance, to include a requirement that departments clearly communicate existing personal tutoring arrangements for all PG students and, as part of this, nominate a member of staff, outside of the supervisory arrangements, as a personal tutor for any PGR student requiring support outside of the supervisory relationship.

The Graduate School's 'Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students'³⁵ sets out the requirements for supporting PGR students (para. 2(d)) which include nomination of a member of staff (other than the supervisor) as an advisor/mentor/personal tutor for each research student. For departments with small numbers of PGR students, this person may be the Director of Graduate Studies, or be combined with the role of second supervisor.

The experiences of a number of PGR students suggests that there is a lack of clarity around the arrangements and PG personal tutoring more generally [F14, F17]. An issue with linking personal

³⁴ <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/dean-of-students-office/personaltutors/functions/#mr>

³⁵

https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/formslibrary/guidelines_on_supervision_and_monitoring.pdf

tutoring to the supervisory process – with the nominated tutor, or tutoring work undertaken by supervisors - was noted as problematic for some students [F13, F14]. A need for the separation of these roles emerges.

d) Monitoring points

Recommendation 11: Where monitoring points are considered problematic in the tutoring encounter, departments consider reframing them as structured engagement points for students within personal tutorials.

There is an external requirement placed on the University to undertake attendance monitoring. The RG noted that attaching monitoring points to personal tutoring meetings was seen by some as a means of incentivising contact between tutors and tutees. For example, the ITLR Review Panel for WMS specifically recommended the introduction of monitoring points within its personal tutoring provision. Yet, the potentially negative consequences of linking personal tutoring to attendance monitoring, in terms of creating a more perfunctory engagement was also identified [F15]. The RG concluded that concerns around the effect of using monitoring points within personal tutor were reflective of, rather than being the driver of poor practice. A need is identified to reframe monitoring points as incidental to, rather than the focus of, the personal tutoring encounter and reposition them as development opportunities for students.

e) Other operational aspects

The RG considered that all other operational requirements for personal tutoring, agreed by Senate in 2012, including regularity of meetings; tutor availability; reviewing assessment feedback; provision of academic support; factual record-keeping; provision of references; and advising on mitigating circumstances remain as is within the CoP. Similarly, the responsibilities conferred on personal tutors within existing University Regulations³⁶ would be included within the CoP.

7.4.5 CoP - Tutor Roles and Responsibilities

Recommendation 12: Amend the Role/Responsibility Specifications (previously agreed by Senate in 2012) for Personal and Senior Tutors³⁷ and approve that for Faculty Senior Tutors as set out below.

The RG found that the volume and complexity of students' support needs are rising [F8], but that increases in WSS capacity have not kept pace with this increasing demand. As a result, tutors have been called on to plug these gaps and provide increasing levels of pastoral support to students [F24].

The resourcing issues around this have been considered in Section 7.4.2 above, but a further aspect of this role expansion is a loss of role clarity. The RG, although not recommending changing the fundamental conception of the personal tutor role – still positioned as a shared academic responsibility, delivered in Departments and still within a broad but adapted pastoral model – it does recommend re-establishing its focus onto academic support, with responsibility for basic pastoral support (everyday wellbeing) of students. Some narrowing and simplification of the current role

³⁶ Relevant Regulations are 11(A) and 11(B), 23, 36 and 42.

³⁷ To also apply to staff undertaking personal tutoring as part of alternatively named roles e.g. Director of Student Experience / Progression, Director of Learning and Teaching and Director of Wellbeing.

specifications³⁸ to more clearly set out and bound the scope and limitations of the roles are suggested as follows:

Personal Tutor Roles and Responsibilities

1. Be an accessible and approachable departmental point of contact discharging all University and Departmental requirements of personal tutors.
2. Provide responsive academic and routine wellbeing support and guidance that facilitates tutees' learning development and experience.
3. Maintain awareness of relevant University regulations and policies, departmental and University support and development opportunities, to signpost and refer students as required.
4. Undertake Personal Tutor training as required.

Departmental Senior Tutor Roles and Responsibilities: (ST will be an experienced member of academic staff with significant personal tutoring experience)

1. Be responsible, with the Head of Department, for the effective operation of departmental personal tutoring and discharge all University and Departmental Senior/Personal Tutor requirements.
2. Be an accessible, approachable and responsive contact for departmental personal tutors, providing support and guidance, informed oversight and leadership of personal tutoring provision at the departmental level.
3. Be the first point of referral for departmental personal tutors in resolving more complex student cases – consulting or referring onwards to Faculty Senior Tutors as required.
4. Maintain awareness of and communicate relevant university regulations and policies, departmental / University support services and development opportunities, to signpost and refer students as required.
5. Ensure that mitigating circumstances are appropriately recorded and considered throughout the year, within Mitigating Circumstance Panels and at Examination Boards.
6. Engage with the Dean of Students' Office and the Senior Tutor network across the University, attending updates and training, and disseminating information from the Dean of Students' Office to departmental colleagues.
7. Produce a Senior Tutor Annual Report³⁹ that feeds into an institutional Annual Report and Compliance Review of personal tutoring undertaken by the Dean of Students' Office.
8. Provide advice, support and guidance to students directly if the personal tutor is unavailable, or otherwise as necessary, including providing references as required.
9. To contact, when dealing with potentially life-threatening situations, WSS, or outside hours, the Security Team.

Faculty Senior Tutor Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Be responsible, together with the Dean of Students, for the effective operation and development of personal tutoring within their designated Faculty.
2. Promote good practice and act as a champion for personal and senior tutoring, maintaining regular contact with departmental Senior Tutors within their designated faculty.

³⁸ As is the case now, Departmental delivery of personal tutoring would remain the joint responsibility of Heads of Department and Senior Tutors. Responsibility for the review and revision of these role specifications will rest with the Dean of Students' Office.

³⁹ Dean of Students' Office to design a Senior Tutor Annual Report for this purpose.

3. Provide advice, support and guidance to students if departmental Senior Tutors are unavailable, or otherwise as required.
4. Actively contribute at Senior Tutor networking events, promoting a strong and effective network of colleagues with a shared purpose and common vision for personal tutoring.
5. Be the Faculty point of escalation for all concerns regarding the academic progression of individual students.
6. Provide support and guidance to departmental Senior Tutors and Personal Tutors within their designated Faculty.
7. With the Dean of Students, develop and deliver training to departmental Senior or Personal Tutors.
8. Report at meetings at departmental/faculty meetings on the operation or development of personal tutoring within their faculty, including innovations, key issues and showcasing good practice.
9. Engage with working groups and other university activities where representation is required on personal tutoring and issues pertaining to academic support matters.

7.4.6 CoP - Development and Support

In order for tutors to discharge their tutoring responsibilities effectively, they require appropriate development and support. Issues around workload credit, workload allocation, space constraints and referral pressures linked to this have been considered in section 7.4.2. Here, we focus on two further aspects - training and practice support.

a) Personal Tutor Training

Recommendation 13: Approve the development and implementation of Personal Tutor Basic Training, compulsory for all new members of staff who have, or are likely to have, personal tutoring responsibilities – undertaken within the first year of their appointment.

Many tutors deliver personal tutoring to students without any formal personal tutor training or induction briefing about how tutoring is structured and practiced at Warwick [F28]. All that presently exists is a single ninety-minute Personal Tutor Induction Training session compulsory only for academic staff on probationary contracts. Only a small fraction of staff are captured within this category. A number of recommendations are made to address this training deficit as follows:

Subject to approval, training would be designed and developed by the Dean of Students' Office in 2017/18 (in consultation with departments) with delivery to commence in 2018/19. This training would replace the existing induction briefing, hence all probationary staff undertaking APP TE would also undertake this new basic training from 2018/19 onwards. LDC have been consulted and are supportive of this change.

Delivered as a half-day (3 hour), face-to-face and interactive session, it would seek to draw on participatory pedagogic approaches e.g. case-study scenarios, video resources and/or enacted student perspectives (subject to resource availability). Indicative content might usefully include:

- Clarification of the personal tutoring role and responsibilities including its boundaries
- Departmental aspects of personal tutoring – local aspects, processes and practices
- Understanding key stages and stress points within the student lifecycle
- Key academic regulations and policies – including mitigating circumstances, specific learning adjustments, academic appeals and complaints

- Signposting and referrals – including main support and development resources across the University – including student safeguarding and wellbeing and the Student Support Referral Pathway
- Developing the tutor/tutee relationship and conversation starting
- Student perspectives of personal tutoring
- Who’s who in Personal Tutoring, Wellbeing Support Services & Students’ Union Welfare Advice Centre
- Advice and support for Personal Tutors

Acknowledging that a number of departments have flagged the crucial role that frontline administrative staff play in supporting students, this resource could be adapted and made available to key front-facing administrative staff who undertake student support work as part of their role either formally or informally.

The above basic training would only capture new members of academic staff joining the University. However, many existing staff members have not come through Warwick’s probationary programme and as a result have not received any personal training either. A further strand of training is required to meet the needs of these members of staff, many of whom may have been at Warwick for a number of years, or have experience of personal tutoring through roles at other HEP’s.

Recommendation 14: Approve the development and implementation of Personal Tutor Refresh Training, compulsory for all existing members of staff with personal tutoring responsibilities – undertaken once every three years.

Subject to approval, this training would be designed and developed by the Dean of Students’ Office in 2017/18, with delivery to commence in 2018/19. Delivered as a ninety minute, face-to-face and interactive session, it would seek to draw on participatory pedagogic approaches, including fictional student cases and a final self-assessment quiz to enable training providers and participants to gauge levels of assimilation/understanding of the material covered.

Content, updated annually, would aim to provide a refresh of basic tutoring practices and processes, and a reinforcing of, key aspects of personal tutoring work. External and internal changes in the learning environment, e.g. changes to key regulations and WSS provision; student presentation of issues; key personal tutoring challenges (informed in part by the Annual Report); updates to student and staff support and development resources; and signposting of any new or additional resources relevant to the work of personal tutors would be included.

In addition to basic and refresh training, a number of additional and existing training and development resources relevant to the work of Personal Tutors would be made available to personal tutors. Including existing University courses (such as those offered by [LDC](#)⁴⁰) and free externally run online training (e.g. those run by CWMT⁴¹ and Epigeum⁴²) these would be optional elements of additional training. They could also be a useful training resource made available to administrative staff who undertake student support work.

⁴⁰ LDC offer many workshops and online courses relevant to the work of Personal Tutors, such as ‘Working with International Students’; ‘Mental Health Awareness’; ‘Disability Awareness’.

⁴¹ [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) free online training that provides non-specialist staff (such as Senior Tutors) with the skills, knowledge and confidence to offer first line support to students who may have mental health issues and as part of developing a more effective referral process to specialist staff.

⁴² Epigeum free online training – ‘[Consent Matters: Boundaries, Respect and Positive Intervention](#)’ which explores issues around sexual consent and promotes positive change in the university community.

b) Senior Tutor Training

Recommendation 15: Approve the development and implementation of compulsory Senior Tutor Training (to be undertaken within the first year of appointment to the role) and a requirement to undertake the following one-off training elements:

- 1. Online CWMT training.**
- 2. Mental Health Awareness – ½-day one-off session.**

Senior Tutors occupy a pivotal role within the personal tutoring system at the University. They are the Departmental experts on personal tutoring and have a key connecting role between the Dean of Students' Office and Personal Tutors across the University. In this way, they underpin effective operational aspects of tutoring and require particular forms of support and training.

Recommendations made around training for Senior Tutors connect to earlier recommendations about the explicit recognition of the work of all personal tutors, but perhaps particularly Senior Tutors, who shoulder much of the burden of the more complex and time consuming aspects of personal tutoring at the departmental level. It is not our intention to increase the already heavy burden on Senior Tutors, but to draw attention to this work in ways that support its explicit inclusion within workloads, and provide support through training.

Although compulsory for all Senior Tutors new to their role, existing Senior Tutors would be invited to attend, so their attendance would not be mandated. Subject to approval, this training would be designed and developed by the Dean of Students' Office in 2017/18, with delivery to commence in 2018/19.

Delivered as a half-day, face-to-face and interactive session, it would seek to draw on participatory pedagogic approaches, including developing student cases, role-play scenarios, and student perspectives. Indicative content might usefully include:

- Purpose of Senior Tutor – Link to the CoP strategic framing
- Roles and responsibilities of Senior Tutors – scope, boundaries and boundary management
- Understanding key stages and stress points within the personal tutoring relationship
- Supporting the work of Personal Tutors
- Referral and signposting – developing best practice
- Student safeguarding and wellbeing – including Prevent Duty
- Sharing best practice and innovations in Senior Tutoring across and beyond Warwick
- Updates and developments within key support and development services and new initiatives across Warwick

Given their key role, all (new and existing) Senior Tutors would be required to undertake two additional training requirements (CWT and MHA) that seek to support them in their role. The expectation would be that all Senior Tutors complete these training packages in 2018/19 and subsequent to that, new Senior Tutors undertake this training during their first year of appointment to the role.

Attendance and/or completion of any mandated training for Personal and Senior Tutors would be monitored by the Dean of Students' Office in collaboration with departmental Senior Tutors. Recording engagement and completion of the required training elements would also form part of the Annual Report and Compliance Review prepared by the Dean of Students – discussed in section 7.4.7 below.

A number of additional and existing training and development resources, relevant to the work of Senior Tutors could be signposted as optional elements of additional training. In this way, individual Senior Tutors could choose to develop expertise in specific support areas of interest, e.g. as LGBTUA+, BME or Disability / Mental Health ambassadors⁴³. This would enable staff and students in departments to have access to someone who can relate to their concerns and signpost them to the appropriate help/resources.

c) Support for Personal Tutors and Personal Tutees

Recommendation 16: Redesign of the Dean of Students' website.

The Dean of Students' website is the primary source of key information, guidance and support for personal tutors and tutees. A review of its provision found it required redesign and development [F29].

The Dean of Students' Office currently author, review and update materials on its website, but scope exists for a complete redesign with improved navigation and enmeshing of images, infographics, videos and text to create an engaging and communicative resource that meets users' needs. The visual architecture of a connective support system is essential in playing a part in bringing together an integrated support system that is currently organisationally fragmented and difficult to navigate for tutors and tutees alike. The redesign would be led by the Dean of Students' Office, but require technical input and support. It would include development of a Personal Tutor/Tutee Support Hub as a one-stop-shop resource for personal tutors and tutees. This would signpost key student support and development resources across the University in an easy to navigate and single site, including reshaping the existing Personal Tutor handbook, to create a downloadable succinct guide for Personal Tutors. The handbook could also usefully contain thematic tabbed sections (e.g. examinations and assessment; mitigating circumstances, mental health) with flow-charts to support ease of signposting and referral.

A final support initiative links directly to the need for more information about personal tutoring for students (as tutees) in the form of a guidebook for students.

Recommendation 17: Develop a Personal Tutee Guidebook for Students.

Led by the Dean of Students' Office, this would be developed in collaboration with Warwick SU and student participants and seek to inform students about personal tutoring at Warwick. In addition to an online (Dean of Students' website) and downloadable Personal Tutee Guidebook, a summary flowchart that identifies key support and development services, and a personal development form would also be developed. The flowchart would be available for students to download, but could also be distributed in hard copy format at relevant induction events⁴⁴. The personal development form would be an additional resource available for students to complete and email to tutors in advance of meetings as required. It would seek to encourage students to frame tutor meetings as development

⁴³ Ambassadors are envisaged as trained front-line staff who students (and staff) might approach about particular issues. The RG understands that these are to be developed for LGBTUA+ at present but may also be developed for other areas.

⁴⁴ This could include the new Welcome Week being developed by the University and building on the existing International Orientations and Welcome Week for PG students. This represents an excellent opportunity to support understanding of personal tutoring, informing students' expectations of and engagement with personal tutoring at this early stage.

opportunities and identify key themes or topics that they might want to discuss – e.g. skills development, module choices, feedback.

Together these resources would set out for students the nature and purpose of personal tutoring at Warwick and seek to both inform and shape students' expectations and engagement with personal tutors (e.g. to attend meetings, keep appointments) as part of their broader learning experience.

7.4.7 CoP - Monitoring and Review

Recommendation 18: Introduce an Annual Report and Compliance Monitoring for Personal Tutoring and seek to embed this within the appropriate existing institutional review framework.

Monitoring and review of personal tutoring is a key aspect of improving the dynamic at the University, Faculty and Departmental levels regarding accountability for personal tutoring [F23]. This is especially important given that many students report a clear failure by some tutors to deliver the personal tutoring system as currently mandated by the University [F13]. Students' dissatisfaction with personal tutoring largely relates to delivery and/or management failings rather than with the role itself.

The ability to manage and deliver personal tutoring is currently compromised by an absence of available and accurate departmental and institutional data about personal tutoring and the absence of a monitoring and review framework. This translates into opacity around the authority and responsibility to manage personal tutoring at both the departmental and institutional level. The QAA (2006) have flagged the importance of regular monitoring of the effectiveness and compliance with the institution's personal tutoring regulations to ensure the quality of provision.

Prepared by the Dean of Students and reporting annually to AQSC, this would draw on information from a variety of sources including Annual Reports of departmental Senior Tutors⁴⁵, WSS data, NSS comments coded to identify comments relevant to personal tutoring, feedback provided by SSLC's, information from Senior Tutor Network Events, Dean of Students' Office data and best practice developments across the personal tutoring field to review and inform developing practice at Warwick. Although it represents a first step in formalising routine institutional oversight and monitoring of personal tutoring to inform University decision-making and development of personal tutoring, a need for institutional investment in the collection and analysis of data more generally remains [F12]. In the first stages, it would support developing compliance with any CoP introduced; report key data over time; act as a regular means of sharing/disseminating ideas and improved practice; facilitate early identification of issues to be addressed; and inform institutional decision-making around personal tutoring.

The RG noted that there has been a longstanding requirement (contained within the current Minimum Requirements) for departmental Senior Tutors to prepare an Annual Report. However, there is no evidence that this has been happening since its inclusion in 2012. There is also no agreed or standard report format in place to support more consistent and relevant departmental reporting. As part of the introduction of any institutional annual reporting that is agreed, the Dean of Students' Office would develop a standard Departmental Senior Tutor Annual Reporting form to bring consistency and relevance to the feedback provided by departments about personal tutoring and

⁴⁵ Annual ST Reports will be particularly important the content of which will need to be agreed, but likely to include information on workload credit, student:staff and tutee:tutor ratios, practice developments, key challenges, provision for Joint degree and PG students, numbers of tutors undergoing training, SSLC feedback on tutoring, and meeting rates.

ensure inclusion of key areas. This would include information about the numbers of personal tutees and tutors; list of new personal tutors (new starters) for the year; average tutee/tutor ratio (and average student/staff ratio if available); outline of key challenges faced during the year; information about innovations/good practice at the departmental level during the year; general feedback comments on personal tutoring provision and nominations for recognition and reward. A review of the coded NSS comments relating to personal tutors would also be an invaluable supplement to the quantitative NSS data – which focuses on academic support more broadly. The coded comments would be a useful tool in assisting departments (and the Dean of Students' Office) in understanding students' experiences of personal tutoring and monitoring provision over time. In particular reviewing the overall balance of positive and negative comments and the identification of themes within these would be useful to inform both NSS action planning and more routine personal tutoring review.

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Appendix 1: TOR and membership document for PTR2017

Constitution of Personal Tutoring Review Group:

Dean of Students (Chair):	Professor Louise Gracia
External member:	Dr Alison Stenton, King's College, London
Faculty Senior Tutors:	Dr Fiona Anderson-Gough Dr Dave Britnell Dr Helen Toner
A SSLC Staff Co-ordinator:	Prof Cathia Jenainati
Faculty Boards of Arts:	Dr David Lees, Modern Languages
Faculty Board of Medicine:	Andrew Taylor, Medicine Dr Shirley Rigby, Medicine
Faculty Board of Science:	Professor Robin Ball, Physics
Faculty Board of Social Sciences:	Professor Elizabeth Jones, Economics
Wellbeing Support Services:	Shirley Crookes
SU Advice Centre Representative:	Amanda Woodfield
Education Sabbatical Officer:	Hope Worsdale
Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer:	Dr Nat Shiers
Undergraduate Student	Hannah Koestler, School of Engineering
Secretary:	Louise Hasler, Academic Registrar's Office
Assistant Secretary:	Patricia Burke, Dean of Students' Office

Terms of Reference:

- a) In consultation with Heads of Departments, staff and students and via submissions made to the ITLR 2017 and reports arising, identify current practice and experiences of personal tutoring across the university; current strengths, innovations and constraints; and opportunities and areas for improvement and development;
- b) To conduct a review of data, underlying systems and information provision relating to personal tutoring;
- c) To explore the purpose of and requirement for a Personal Tutoring system;
- d) To conduct a review of good practice in personal tutoring provision within the HE sector for students at all levels of study;
- e) To consider alternative models of provision for personal tutoring at Warwick;
- f) To consider barriers to the adoption of good practice and means of incentivising best practice;
- g) To consider matters relating to the reward and recognition of good personal tutor provision at the individual, departmental and institutional levels;
- h) To consider the increasing size, shape and complexity of the institution, the increasing diversity of the student population and optimum means of supporting departments in the provision of personal tutoring to students in these circumstances;
- i) To make recommendations to the University relating to future provision of personal tutoring, informed by best practice, demographic and diversity considerations, together with resourcing implications and timescales for implementation.

Appendix 2: Higher Education Providers consulted as part of PTR 2017

HEP	Consultation – all undertaken March – August 2017
Aston	Website review
Bath	Telephone interview with Senior Tutor
Birmingham	Interview with Senior Tutor
Bournemouth	Telephone interview with key administrative staff
Bristol	Email discussion with key administrative staff
Cardiff School of Management	Telephone interview with Personal Tutor Unit Manager
Coventry	Telephone and face-to-face interview with academic staff
Durham	Website review
Exeter	Telephone interview with academic development staff
Greenwich	Telephone interview with academic staff
Kings	Detailed consultation with Senior Tutor
Leeds	Telephone interview with academic staff
Loughborough	Telephone interview with academic staff
LSBM	Telephone interview with key administrative staff
Nottingham	Telephone interview with key administrative staff
Robert Gordon	Telephone interview with key administrative staff
Sheffield	Website review
Surrey	Telephone interview with academic staff
Swansea	Email discussion and telephone interview with key administrative staff
York	Website review

Appendix 3: Review of Personal Tutor provision across identified Higher Education Providers

	PT Website	Code of Practice - CoP	PT Purpose statement	PT Roles set out	Student Guide to PT	Recognition and Reward	Senior Tutors	Workload Credit for PT/ST	Training	PT linked to Annual Appraisal	Annual Review of PT	Compliance monitoring
Aston	Student Hub		Yes	Yes	Yes				Induction only		Yes	Informally
Bath	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SU PT award	Yes	Yes	Induction only	Under review	Yes	Informally
Bristol	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Under review	Yes	Variable	Induction only			
Coventry	Academic Support Hub	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes					
Durham*												
Exeter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Under review	SU PT award	Yes	Yes	Online	Under review	Yes	Yes
Loughborough	No	No	Yes	Yes				Yes	Induction only			Yes
Sheffield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Surrey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
York*												
Leeds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Greenwich	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Kings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Under review	Yes	Under review	Yes			Yes

* Notes

Durham – Operate a College system. Each College has a College Head and a Student Support Office with full-time Student Welfare Officers. Colleges also offer structured peer support through its Common Room system. Have centralised specialist student support.

York - College system within which each College operates its own tutoring. Students are allocated an Academic Supervisor – which is akin to a Personal Tutor. University also has a centralised Student Hub on central campus – which houses student support and development services.

Appendix 4: Rank Analysis of NSS 'Academic Support' Scores 2014-16 (3-year average)

Note: There may be some misallocation of subjects to particular faculties in some ambiguous cases due to NSS categorisation.

Faculty	Warwick NSS Academic Support scores	Average 14-16
Science	Microbiology	95%
Arts	Classics	93%
Arts	German and Scandinavian studies	91%
Arts	Italian studies	90%
Arts	Media studies	90%
Science	Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry	90%
Science	Chemistry	89%
Social Sciences	Others in Social studies	89%
Science	Biology	87%
Medicine	Others in Subjects allied to Medicine	86%
Science	Computer Science	86%
Science	Physics and Astronomy	86%
Arts	Drama	86%
Arts	French studies	85%
Science	Civil Engineering	84%
Arts	Imaginative Writing	83%
Science	Electronic and Electrical Engineering	83%
Arts	History	83%
Science	Mathematics and Statistics	83%
Social Sciences	Economics	83%
Social Sciences	Politics	82%
Science	Psychology	82%
University	ALL SUBJECTS	82%
Social Sciences	Sociology	81%
Social Sciences	Operational Research	81%
Arts	Comparative Literary studies	81%
Science	Mechanical, Production, Manufacturing Eng.	81%
Social Sciences	Accounting	80%
Social Sciences	Finance	80%
Social Sciences	Management studies	78%
Arts	English studies	78%
Social Sciences	Business studies	76%
Social Sciences	Law	76%
Social Sciences	Philosophy	76%
Science	General Engineering	75%
Arts	American and Australasian studies	74%
Medicine	Medicine	73%
Social sciences	Academic Studies in Education	71%

Red = Social Science departments; **Blue** = Arts Departments; **Green** = Science departments.

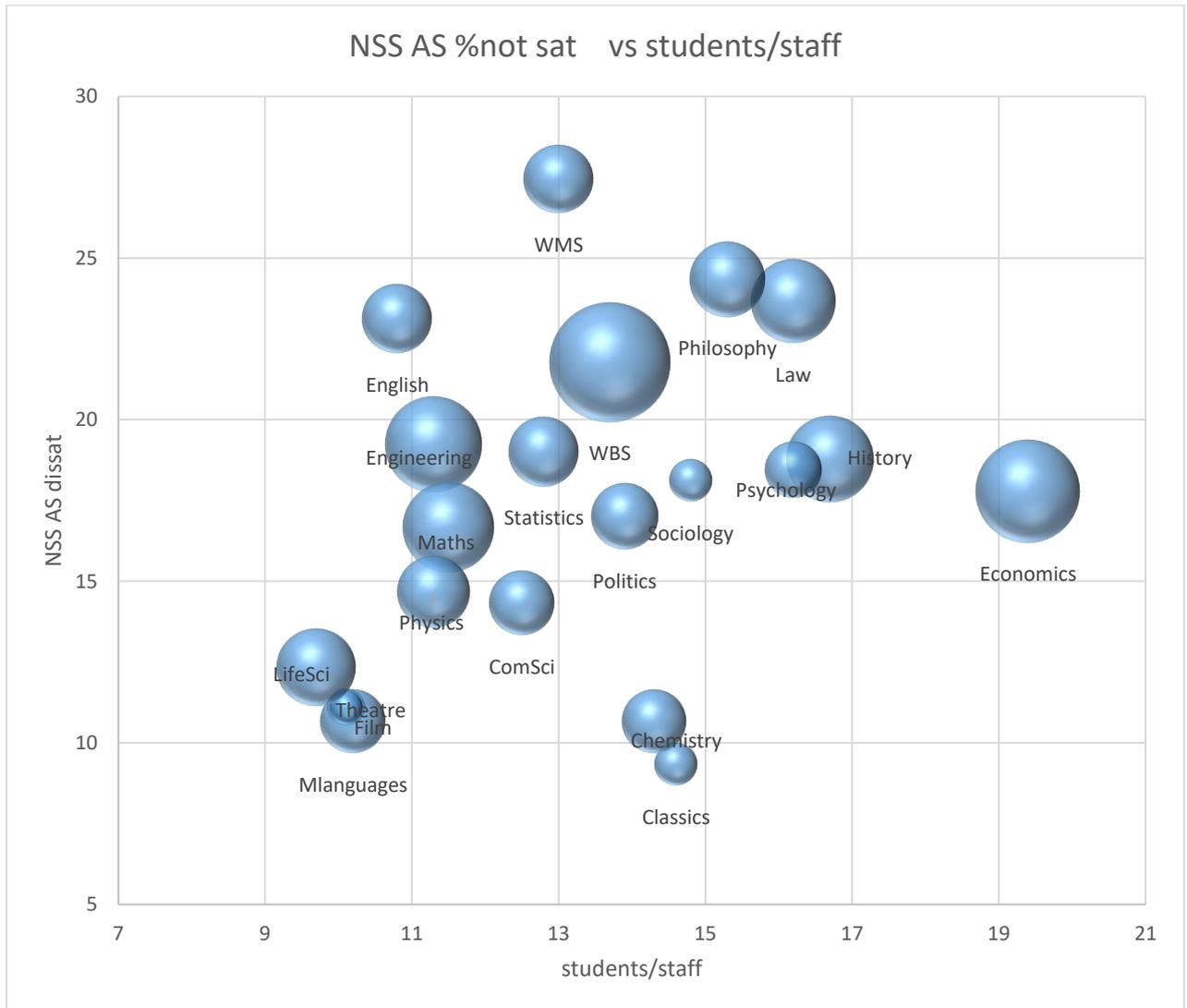
Appendix 5: Ranked Department Student to Staff Ratio - 3 year averages, 2014/15 to 2016/17

Note: GSD is included for completeness only as figures were only available for 2016/17

Faculty	Department	
Arts	Liberal Arts/GSD 2016/17 only	3.6
Social Sciences	CAL 2016/17 data only	6.8
Medicine	WMS	8.4
Arts	Theatre	10.9
Sciences	Life Sciences	11.0
Arts	Film	11.1
Arts	English	11.1
Science	Engineering	11.5
Science	Physics	11.9
Science	Maths	12.2
Arts	Modern Languages	12.3
Science	Statistics	12.7
Science	Computer Science	13.0
Arts	History of Art	13.9
Science	Chemistry	14.0
Social Sciences	CES	14.0
Social Sciences	PAIS	14.1
Social Sciences	Sociology	14.7
Social Sciences	WBS	14.9
Arts	Classics	15.5
Social Sciences	Philosophy	15.8
Arts	History	17.8
Social Sciences	Economics	18.2
Social Sciences	Law	18.3
Science	Psychology	20.0
Social Sciences	CLL	35.0
Social Sciences	CAL 2016/17 data only	6.8

Red = Social Science departments; Blue = Arts Departments; Green = Science departments.

Appendix 6: Departmental breakdown of % NSS AS not satisfied score (2014-16, 3-year average) against student: staff ratios



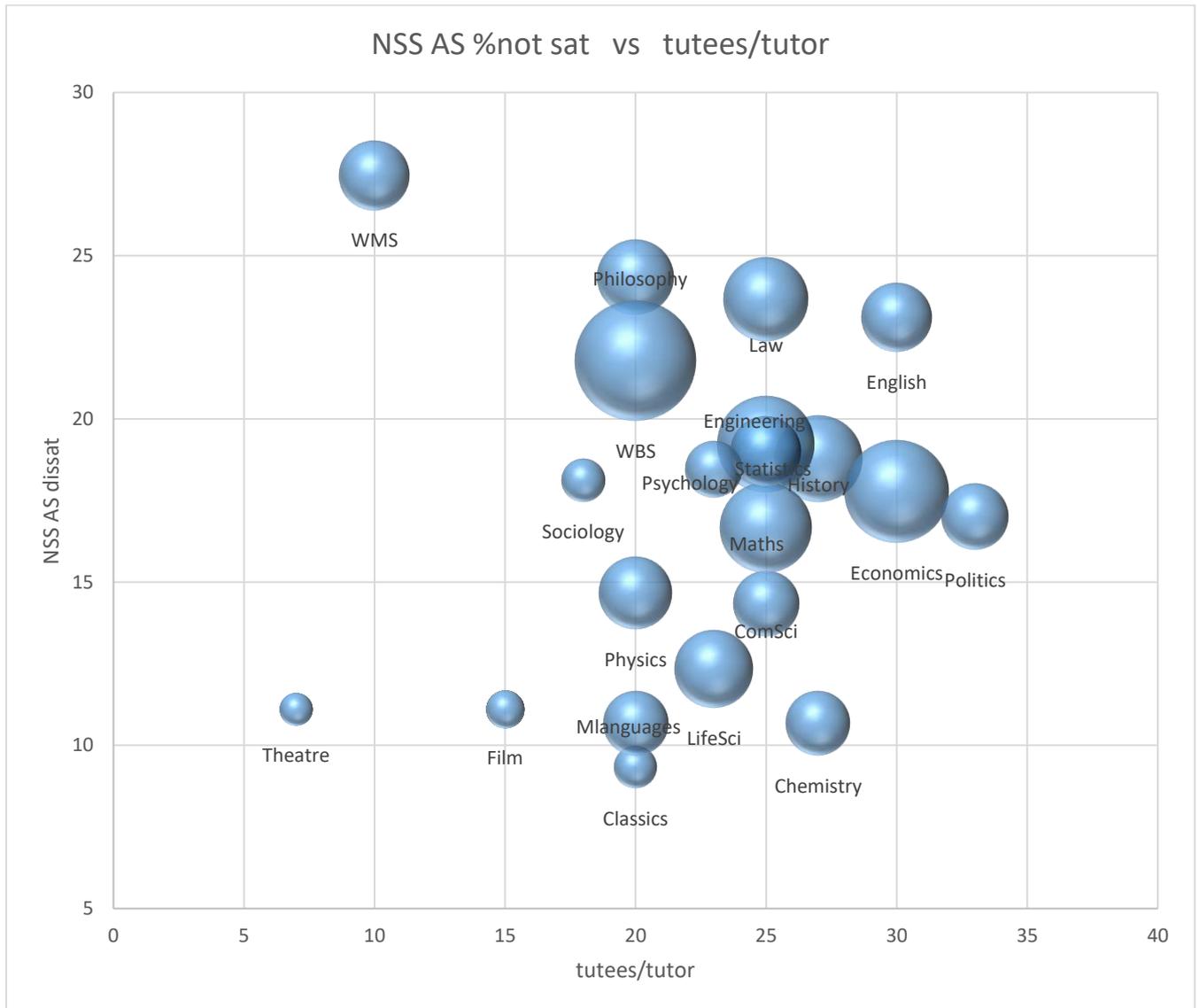
Appendix 7: Average Number of Personal Tutees per Personal Tutor by Department as reported by Senior Tutors (Spring Term, 2017) – Personal Tutor Loadings

Note: GSD is included for completeness only as figures were only available for 2016/17

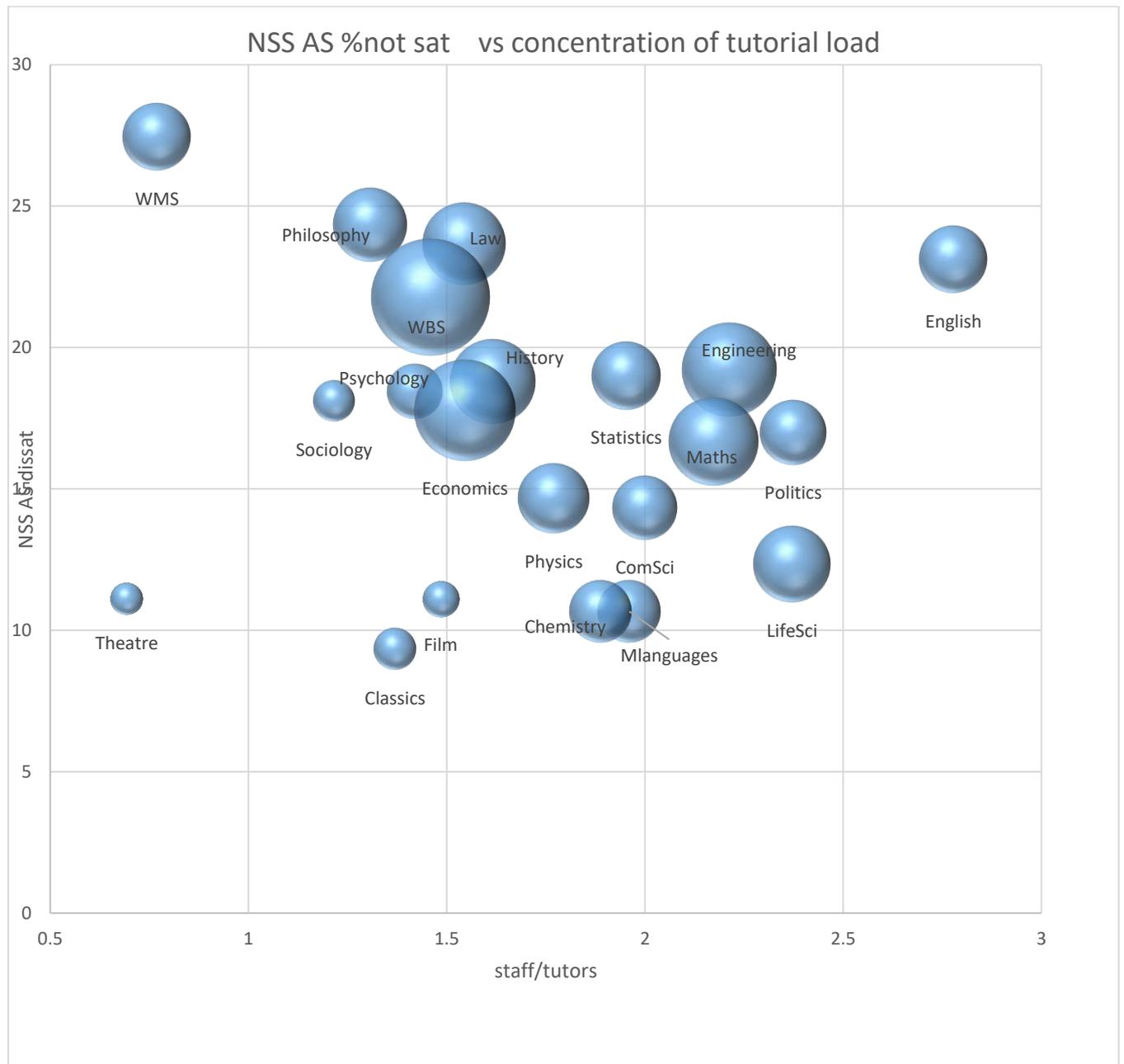
Faculty	Department	Average Number of P Tutees (UG and PG)/ P Tutor
Social Sciences	CAL	9
Medicine	WMS (UG only)	9
Social Sciences	CES	12
Arts	Film and TV	15
Arts	Modern Languages and Cultures	16
Science	Life Sciences	19
Arts	History of Art	20
Arts	Classics	20
Science	Physics	20
Social Sciences	CPE Primary and EY PGCE	20
Social Sciences	Philosophy	20
Arts	Hispanic Studies	21
Arts	German	22
Science	Life Sciences	22
Science	Psychology	22
Social Sciences	WBS	22
Science	Statistics	25
Science	Engineering	25
Science	Computer Science	25
Science	Maths	25
Arts	History	27
Science	Chemistry	28
Arts	English	30
Social Sciences	Law	30
Social Sciences	PAIS	32
Science	WMG	34
Social Sciences	Economics	35
Social Sciences	PPE	35
Arts	Global Sustainable Development	36

Red = Social Science departments; **Blue** = Arts Departments; **Green** = Science departments.

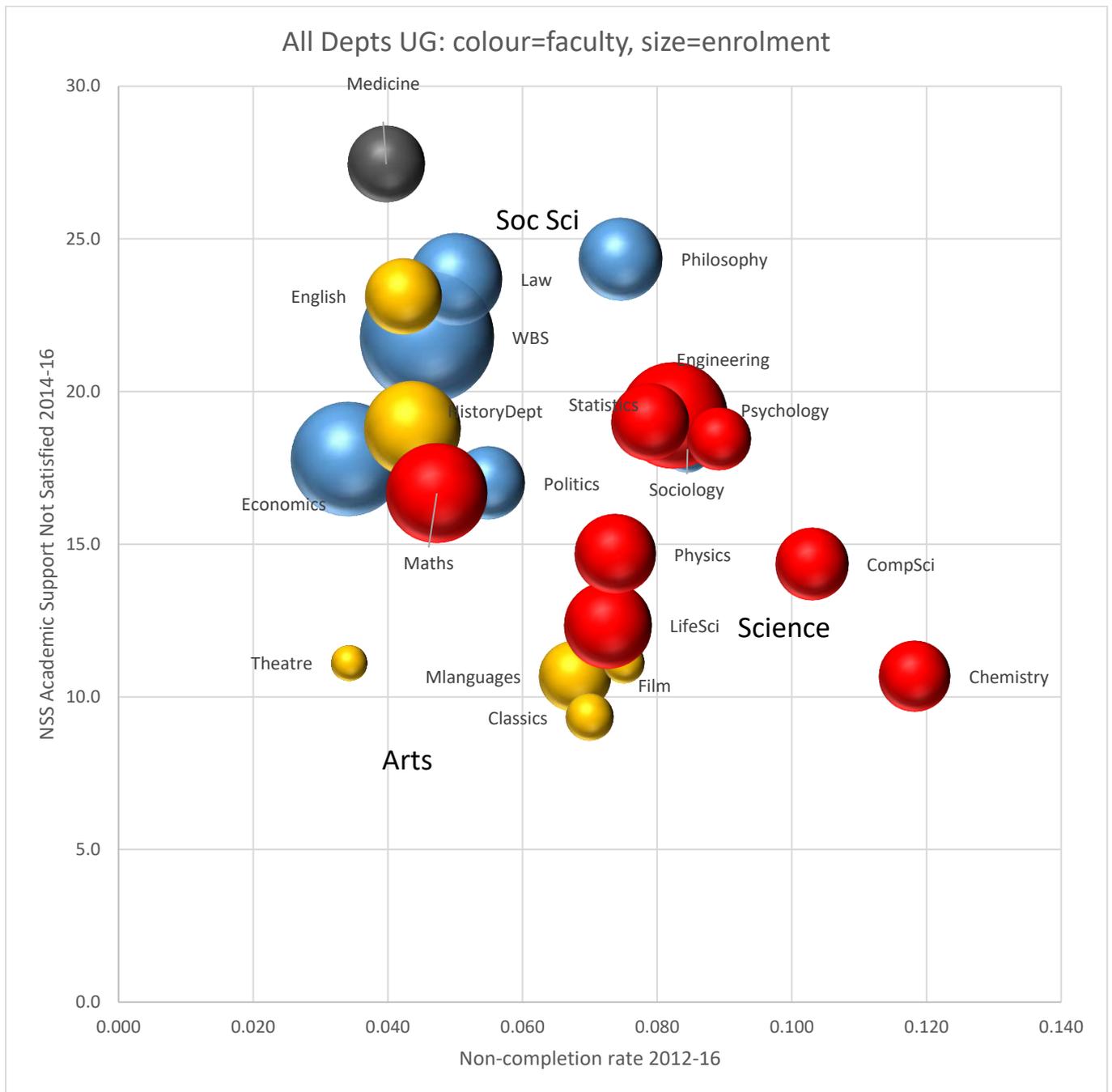
Appendix 8: Departmental breakdown of % NSS AS not satisfied score (2014-16, 3-year average) against personal tutee: tutor ratios



Appendix 9: Departmental breakdown of % NSS AS not satisfied score (2014-16, 3 year average) against concentration of tutor load.



Appendix 10: Departmental breakdown of % NSS AS not satisfied score (2014-16, 3 year average) against non-completion rates (2012-2016).



Appendix 11: NSS 2016: Student Comments - Focus and Number

Department	Positive Comments	Negative Comments	TOTAL
Chemistry	5	3	8
Computer Science	2	1	3
Classics	2	0	2
Economics	2	4	6
English	3	10	13
CES	1	0	1
Engineering	2	1	3
Film & TV	6	0	6
History	2	6	8
WBS	4	8	12
Law	6	5	11
Life Sciences	2	0	2
SMLC	6	1	7
Mathematics	5	1	6
WMS	3	4	7
Philosophy	4	5	9
PAIS	2	1	3
Physics	4	0	4
Psychology	7	0	7
Sociology	3	1	4
Statistics	1	0	1
Theatre	0	1	1
TOTAL	72	52	124

Appendix 12: Departmental breakdown of fraction of unfavourable NSS personal tutoring comments against % NSS AS not satisfied score (2014-16, 3 year average) - Note that this plot has area of point equating to the number of PT comments.

