

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At York St John University (YSJU), we are committed to supporting all of our students to develop and succeed whatever their educational background and personal circumstances ([University for Social Impact Strategy](#)).
- 1.2 The 'Tutorial policy' outlines the roles, responsibilities and practical arrangements required to ensure YSJU students benefit from personalised and tailored tutorial support throughout their studies.
- 1.3 The policy applies to all students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. It identifies expectations appropriate to each level of taught provision.
- 1.4 Our tutorial provision combines a formal academic tutoring system with other supportive tutorial inputs, such as module-specific tutorials and placement supervision.
- 1.5 The policy is informed by extensive scholarly research showing that students are more likely to feel connected to their university community, succeed in their studies, achieve their personal and professional aspirations, or meet career goals, by accessing tutorial support.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.6 Expectations regarding the quantity of tutorials are benchmarked to sector norms and kept under review.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Tutoring:** the generic term the University uses to describe various kinds of flexible instruction academic staff give to individual or small groups of students outside the classroom setting.
- 2.2 **Academic tutoring:** a personalised, purposeful and professional relationship between students and specified members of academic staff (academic tutors) that is characterised by individual or small group meetings (academic tutorials). Academic tutoring is an ongoing and collaborative partnership between academic staff and students designed to last for the duration of a student's course and foster an enduring sense of belonging.
- 2.3 **Academic tutorial:** a regular one-to-one or small-group meeting led by an academic tutor to discuss their tutees' engagement and academic development throughout their course.
- 2.4 **Module tutorial:** a one-to-one or small-group meeting arranged as required between an academic member of staff and student(s) to discuss and examine various aspects of a specific module.
- 2.5 **Office hours:** a set number of hours that an individual academic member of staff advertises to students in order for them to book academic or module tutorials or other short appointments to consult on matters relating to their studies. Depending on course structure and the number of modules / students, two to three 'office hours' might be scheduled per week with students booking 10–15-minute slots via Microsoft Bookings. It may be necessary to increase the hours bookable by students at key junctures during the semester, for example, immediately prior to or during a student's preparation of assignments.
- 2.6 **Personalised study support tutorial:** a personalised, individual meeting designed to support students to develop their learning and academic skills, and delivered by specialist professional staff (e.g., Digital Training Tutors, Academic Liaison Librarians, Study Development Tutors,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Thomas, L. (2006) Widening participation and the increased need for personal tutoring. In Thomas, L. and Hixenbaugh, P. (eds) Personal tutoring in higher education. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Ltd; Lochtie, D. et al (2018) Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education. St Albans: Critical Publishing.

etc.). These sessions are demand-led and opted-into by students. As such, the oversight arrangements, quantity and frequency recommendations described below do not apply to this type of tutorial.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 This policy is owned and approved by Education Committee.
- 3.2 The Pro Vice Chancellor Education and the Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement oversee the guidance and support provided to academic staff regarding tutoring.
- 3.3 School Academic Leadership Teams are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their Schools.
- 3.4 When students enrol at YSJU, Schools will allocate a member of academic staff to all students with knowledge of their course and / or discipline as their academic tutor. (Information about this allocation can be found on [e:Vision](#).)
- 3.5 School Academic Leadership Teams will ensure students are provided with a variety of tutorial formats (individual and group) and types (academic and module tutorials) to meet their academic development and learning support needs and in order to maintain manageable staff workloads.
- 3.6 The University will provide appropriate training and regular updates to members of staff with tutorial responsibilities.

### 4. Key Contacts

- 4.1 For queries regarding the shape and provision of the policy, please contact Professor Richard Bourne, Pro Vice Chancellor Education ([r.bourne@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:r.bourne@yorks.ac.uk)) or Dr Ruth Windscheffel, Head of Teaching and Learning Enhancement ([r.windscheffel@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:r.windscheffel@yorks.ac.uk)).
- 4.2 For queries regarding the implementation of the policy within a School, academic colleagues should contact members of their School Academic Leadership Team, including the Head / Dean of School, Associate Heads / Deans, or Learning and Teaching Lead(s).
- 4.3 For safeguarding queries, YSJU staff should contact the University's Safeguarding Officer, Kathryn Kendon, University Secretary and Registrar ([k.kendon@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:k.kendon@yorks.ac.uk)).

### 5. Recommended Quantity, Frequency and Duration of Tutorials

- 5.1 The recommended quantity and frequency of tutorials offered to students varies by academic level as follows:
  - 5.1.1 Levels 3 and 4 and Level 6 Top-Up
    - 5.1.1.1 A minimum of six individual academic tutorials is offered per year – at the start, middle and end of each semester. Exceptionally, this minimum number may be reduced to four or five tutorials where required by programme structure.
    - 5.1.1.2 Two group academic tutorials are offered – during Welcome week / Week 1 and towards the end of the academic year.
    - 5.1.1.3 Module tutorials as required.
  - 5.1.2 Levels 5 and 6
    - 5.1.2.1 A minimum of four individual academic tutorials is offered per year.
    - 5.1.2.2 At least one group academic tutorial is offered towards the start of the academic year.
    - 5.1.2.3 Module tutorials as required.
  - 5.1.3 Level 7 taught programmes
    - 5.1.3.1 Two to three individual academic tutorials are offered per year.

#### 5.1.3.2 Module tutorials as required.

- 5.2 Individual tutorials should last approximately 10-15 minutes, though it is recognised that some may last longer.
- 5.3 Group tutorials are designed for c.5-10 tutees and should be scheduled for approximately 20-30 minutes.
- 5.4 Individual tutorials are booked in 'office hour' slots using Microsoft Bookings; small-group meetings are booked by tutors using the timetable system as needed.
- 5.5 It is recognised that there will be variations (e.g., in frequency and timing), to accommodate students' needs and the structure and requirements of individual programmes (including cohort size).
- 5.6 Recommended indicative schedules may be found in Appendix 1 and expanded guidance on tutorial content is available on the [TLE intranet pages](#).

## 6. Key Responsibilities and Boundaries (Academic Tutors / Tutees)

- 6.1 Our model of academic tutoring is one of partnership, based on mutual respect and dialogue, with complementary responsibilities for both students and staff.
- 6.2 **Academic tutors will:**
  - 6.2.1 Ensure students are offered the opportunity to attend tutorials in line with the quantity and frequency recommendations outlined (see Section 5 and Appendix 1).
  - 6.2.2 Be responsible for between 30 and 35 academic tutees (typically). This number will differ according to cohort size and programme, etc., and should be reflected in wider consideration of Category 1 hours in the Academic Workload Allocation Model.
  - 6.2.3 Act as tutees' primary point of contact regarding academic matters, providing general, scheduled support for their academic studies and development during their time at YSJU ([The Student Charter, While you are studying](#)).
  - 6.2.4 Initiate contact with new tutees as early as possible, normally in Welcome Week.
  - 6.2.5 Meet with their existing tutees on the resumption of their studies at the University.
  - 6.2.6 Arrange weekly 'office hours' during teaching and assessment periods, sufficient to provide students with access to one-to-one module tutorials and academic tutorials. These should be bookable using Microsoft Bookings.
  - 6.2.7 Monitor student engagement via Engage in order to be proactive in contacting tutees.
  - 6.2.8 Refer students to a variety of specialist support services using the Student Hub referral function provided in Engage.
  - 6.2.9 Discuss students' individual and professional development planning and encourage them to complete their [Employability Profile](#) as the basis of future references.
  - 6.2.10 Write references of a professional standard to support applications for further study or employment, as agreed with their tutees and within the timeframe requested by employers, Higher Education Providers, etc.
  - 6.2.11 Respond within three working days to email communications or meeting requests.
  - 6.2.12 Ensure Out-of-Office replies and email signatures clearly signpost available support during periods of unavailability, such as closure periods or approved annual leave.
  - 6.2.13 Keep accurate records of academic tutor meetings using the Engage system.
  - 6.2.14 Respect students' confidentiality within established boundaries and limits. Be clear with tutees that disclosures made to and recorded by them are regarded to have been made to the University and that there are defined limits as to the extent to which information can be regarded as confidential. Confidentiality is limited in cases where a disclosure indicates risks of harm to self or others, or breaches institutional policies. (For further information, see Section 8 below).
  - 6.2.15 Maintain professional boundaries, conducting tutorials in appropriate university settings (offices, meeting rooms or Microsoft Teams). Use only university provided channels of

communication, such as YSJ email.

- 6.2.16 Keep discussion focused on academic and pastoral matters, signposting to the Student Hub for wider guidance and access to specialist support.
- 6.2.17 Undertake Continuous Professional Development in order to enhance their tutoring practice.
- 6.2.18 Maintain familiarity with the overall provision of university services and provide students with information on how to access specialist support via the Student Hub.

6.3 Academic tutors are **not** expected to:

- 6.3.1 Provide tutees with specialised or specific medical / health advice or counselling (i.e., whilst it is appropriate to make time to listen actively and to communicate non-judgmentally and with empathy, academic tutors are not expected to go beyond the boundaries of their roles or expertise in relation to non-academic matters or needs).
- 6.3.2 Provide highly detailed specialist academic advice (e.g., on particular assignments that tutees are preparing) or mark work set as part of a module assessment. Students should seek input from module tutors for such guidance.
- 6.3.3 Be available to support tutees outside of normal business hours and / or their typical working patterns.
- 6.3.4 Resolve or comment on formal complaints or academic appeals.
- 6.3.5 Intervene in or provide guidance on personal or family matters.

6.4 Academic Tutees (students) **should**:

- 6.4.1 Take responsibility for resolving problems considerately and ethically, and seek support when they need it, including meeting with their academic tutor ([The Student Charter, While you are studying](#)).
- 6.4.2 Take the initiative to arrange meetings where necessary, especially if they are experiencing difficulties or require academic guidance.
- 6.4.3 Keep tutorial appointments (whether one-to-one or group sessions), inform tutors in good time if unable to attend, and keep in touch with tutors using an agreed method (face-to-face, Microsoft Bookings, email, Microsoft Teams, phone, etc.).
- 6.4.4 Respond to requests from either their module tutor or their academic tutor to discuss any unexpected absence from timetabled classes / overall course so that their situation may be recognised, understood, and relevant support can be put in place.
- 6.4.5 Come to tutor meetings ready and willing to contribute actively having engaged fully in any preparatory activities.
- 6.4.6 Support their peers in tutorial groups, engage fully in group tutorial meetings and activities, remaining mindful at all times of the importance of attending on time, being respectful of others and maintaining appropriate boundaries and levels of confidentiality.
- 6.4.7 Update their Employability Profile regularly and share reflections on their personal, academic and professional development, strengths and weaknesses, with their tutor to enable them to write future references.
- 6.4.8 Expect a range of topics to be discussed, appropriate to the stage they have reached in their learning journey, and for their tutor to refer to a range of attendance, engagement and achievement data about them to help both parties evaluate how the tutee is progressing.
- 6.4.9 Take ownership of their academic and professional development. Agree with their academic tutor how the outcomes of tutorial discussions will be taken forward, follow through on the actions for which they have taken responsibility (including setting goals within Engage or their Employability Profile, as appropriate), and be ready to report back on progress at their next tutorial meeting.
- 6.4.10 Provide constructive feedback on academic support through established mechanisms including student surveys, SU course representatives. These help the University to improve the support provided.

- 6.4.11 If students have queries about arrangements for academic tutoring, they should talk to their academic tutor in the first instance and then either their Course Lead or Associate Head of School.

## 7. Record Keeping and Management

- 7.1 An electronic record will be made on YSJU's student support system, Engage, after each tutorial interaction between tutor and tutee.
- 7.2 Tutees can expect their tutor to discuss what they record with them and make an effort to ensure that they are happy with it.
- 7.3 All records will be kept in line with the University's Data Protection Policy: <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/data-protection>.
- 7.4 All records will be kept securely and kept only as long as necessary in accordance with the University's retention schedule: <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/records-management/>.

## 8. Safeguarding and disclosures /confidentiality and information sharing

- 8.1 Tutors who are involved in supporting students who are under 18 years of age on the first day of the month in which their course commences need to ensure they work in cooperation with local and institutional safeguarding officers and follow specific, appropriate measures to safeguard those students which may include undertaking Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) at the appropriate level.
- 8.2 Tutors should ensure they understand what factors lead to a student aged over 18 being classified as 'an adult at risk' and act according to the University's Safeguarding Policy (see [Safeguarding Policy](#), section C1).
- 8.3 If any person with whom a tutor is working is in immediate danger or at risk of harm to themselves or others, the tutor should contact emergency services and, if the person / persons at risk is on campus, inform Security staff by calling 01904 876 444 or 07885 201 182 (call or text).
- 8.4 Tutors with safeguarding concerns about any children or adults should promptly consult the Local Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Safeguarding Officer, and report to the appropriate person / body (see [Safeguarding Policy](#), section 27).
- 8.5 The University has, in the exercise of its functions, a duty placed upon it by Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The University regards its Prevent duty as part of its community safeguarding responsibilities to protect the welfare and safety of its students. Tutoring is one way in which this wellbeing support for students is offered. If tutors have concerns under the Prevent duty, they should follow the guidance on raising these in [Prevent Policy](#) section D and the [Safeguarding Policy](#), section D4-D7, and Appendix B.

## 9. Appendices

[Appendix 1](#): Suggested schedule of academic tutorials for a typical undergraduate programme (Levels 3, 4 and 6 Top-Up)

[Appendix 2](#): Suggested schedule of academic tutorials for a postgraduate taught programme (London / International)

[TLE Intranet pages](#)

[Tutor Talking Points](#)

## Version Control Statement

<b>Version Reference:</b> <b>2.0</b>	<b>Responsible Department:</b> <b>PVC Education</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>
<b>Approved By</b> <b>Education Committee and</b> <b>Academic Board June 2025</b>	<b>Effective Date</b> <b>September 2025</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b> <b>June 2027</b>

## Appendix 1

Suggested schedule of academic tutorials for a typical undergraduate programme (Levels 3, 4 and 6 Top-Up)

Individual tutorials (c. 10-15 mins): Up to 6 per year - Levels 3, 4 and 6 (Top-Up) Up to 4 per year- Levels 5, 6 (standard) (c. 15 mins)		Group tutorials (for c.5-10 tutees; c. 20-30 minutes): Up to 2 per year – Levels 3, 4 and 6 (top up) At least 1 per year – Levels 5, 6 (standard)	Module tutorials / other supportive tutorial provision
Tutorial 1: Week 0 / ‘Welcome Week’ (new starters) or Week 1 (returning students)	Tutorial 2: Prior to Christmas / Winter vacation	Group Tutorial 1: start of each year <u>Year 1</u> : Introductions, explanation of role and relevant areas of support; discussion of best ways of keeping in touch; time management <u>Year 2</u> : Recap on progress; summer activities / employments; look forward to what is expected in Year 2; Employability Profile <u>Year 3</u> : Reflect on progress during Year 2, summer activities / employments and look forward to what is expected in Year 3, sharing and supporting any anxieties or concerns, feedback	Bookable via ‘office hours’ (if based on campus) or via placement providers
Tutorial 3: Re-engagement meeting in January / February (discussion of Semester 1 assessment / Semester 2 modules)			
Tutorial 4: Prior to Easter / Spring vacation			
Tutorial 5: Re-engagement meeting after Easter / Spring vacation	Group Tutorial 2: summer <u>Year 1</u> : reflect on the first year including experiences, academic progress, and plans for Year 2 / Employability Profile <u>Year 2</u> : progress towards Year 3 / end-of-year project plans / Employability Profile <u>Year 3</u> : reflections on university experience, references, options for further study / Employability Profile		
Tutorial 6: End of year review			



## Appendix 2

Suggested schedule of academic tutorials for a postgraduate taught programme (London / International)

<b>Individual tutorials: Up to 3 per year (c. 10-15 mins)</b>		
<b>Timing</b>	<b>September Intake Year 1</b>	<b>January Intake Year 1</b>
<b>Week 0 / 'Welcome Week' (new starters) or Week 1 (returning students)</b>	<b>Tutorial 1:</b> start of the 1st semester <u>Semester 1:</u> Introductions, explanation of role and relevant areas of support; discussion on best ways of keeping in touch; Student Charter – their roles and responsibilities; who to contact if they have serious problems	<b>Tutorial 3:</b> start of the 1st semester <u>Semester 1:</u> Welcome back to teaching, Academic progress to date & support / signposting to relevant areas; work placement plans for Year 2 if on two-year programme
<b>Prior to Christmas / Winter vacation OR weeks 3, 5, 9, 11 based on Visa attendance data</b>	Ask for reasons for any low / non-attendance; log interaction on Engage <b>AND</b> Attendance Data spreadsheet for UKVI compliance	Ask for reasons for any low / non-attendance; log interaction on Engage <b>AND</b> Attendance Data spreadsheet for UKVI compliance
<b>Engagement / Re-engagement meeting in January / February (discussion of Semester 1 assessment / Semester 2 modules)</b>	<b>Tutorial 2:</b> after first assessment results <u>Semester 2:</u> Academic progress and support / signposting to relevant areas: wellbeing, academic skills training / 1-2-1 writing tutorial, resubmission support, careers and employability, etc.	<b>Tutorial 1:</b> start of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester <u>Semester 2:</u> Introductions, explanation of role and relevant areas of support; discussion on best ways of keeping in touch; Student Charter – their roles and responsibilities; who to contact if they have serious problems
<b>Prior to Easter / Spring vacation OR weeks 3, 5, 9, 11 based on Visa attendance data</b>	Ask for reasons for any low / non-attendance; log interaction on Engage <b>AND</b> Attendance Data spreadsheet for UKVI compliance	Ask for reasons for any low / non-attendance; log interaction on Engage <b>AND</b> Attendance Data spreadsheet for UKVI compliance
<b>Re-engagement meeting in May / June (discussion of Semester 2 assessment / dissertation / Capstone progress)</b>	<b>Tutorial 3:</b> after second assessment results <u>Semester 3:</u> reflect on the first two semesters including experiences, progress with dissertation / Capstone module; work placement plans for Year 2 if on two-year programme	<b>Tutorial 2:</b> after first assessment results <u>Semester 3:</u> reflect on the first semester including experiences, progress with dissertation / Capstone module academic progress and support / signposting to relevant areas: wellbeing, academic skills training / 1-2-1 writing tutorial, resubmission support, careers and employability, etc.



<b>Year 2</b>		
<b>1: During Q1 of Placement</b>	Check on attendance and progress made in role; think about reflection in role	Check on attendance and progress made in role; think about reflection in role
<b>2: During Q2 of Placement</b>	Check on attendance and progress made in role; work on BCP	Check on attendance and progress made in role; work on BCP
<b>3: During Q3 of Placement</b>	Check on attendance and progress made in role; BCP submission	Check on attendance and progress made in role; BCP submission