

FIRST GROUP MEETING WITH PERSONAL TUTORS

These resources have been written to be used with new undergraduate or postgraduate taught students. The content has been informed by feedback from undergraduate students (from across all year groups) representing at least 12 departments.

It might also be useful to have the guide to personal tutoring and support services to hand during the meeting. The current Colchester and Southend versions are held [here](#). (The students will have received their own paper copy via their department. How it is distributed will vary by department.)

Discussion topics / Activity	Resources / Referral
<p>Personal Tutor Introduction A typical introduction by a Personal Tutor will contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, where tutor is from, hobbies, academic area/specialty • Contact details of tutor 	
<p>Icebreaker activity 1 (choose one) The following icebreakers have been designed to help new students get to know one another and to make the first meetings/sessions less awkward. They also allow the Personal Tutor to join in so they can learn more about their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Bingo • Memory Circle • Line Up Race • Fact or Fiction <p>The aim of these icebreakers is to learn names and brief facts about other students and to find things in common with others.</p>	<p>See the appendix for detailed information about how to run each icebreaker activity.</p> <p>Personal Tutors should read the instructions prior to the session in order to prepare effectively.</p>
<p>The Role of the Personal Tutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that Personal Tutors can provide advice on academic/non-academic issues (e.g. study skills, referencing, adjusting to uni) • Explain that if you can't help then you will recommend other University support services that can help. • Make it clear that Personal Tutors are members of staff • Explain that Personal Tutors are there to help guide their tutees throughout their studies – not just first year • State that the aim of the Personal Tutor is to help students achieve their potential. 	
<p>Common worries and concerns Aim: to help students feel more confident and ease their concerns Suggested concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional modules • Getting lost on campus – mention Find Your Way App • How students will be assessed – point to module outlines/Moodle/ORB • Getting to know other students – direct to SU, SubZero, clubs and societies – departmental society could be advertised, library, volunteering 	
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to write down questions and put them in hat • Tutor briefly answers questions where possible • If unsure about the answer, make a note and email all tutees the answer later that week. 	<p>Box/hat Pens and paper/sticky notes</p>

Discussion topics / Activity	Resources / Referral
<p>Close and what next?</p> <p>Personal Tutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify availability and contact details • Clarify how regular meetings should be and that meeting lengths may vary, depending on the topic • Explain the process of making appointments if the students wish to schedule a meeting • Explain the process of rescheduling appointments • Ask students what other sessions they plan to attend in Welcome Week. Discuss the programme and suggest the students might arrange to attend it together. • Ask students what other sessions they plan to attend in Welcome Week. Discuss the programme and suggest they arrange to attend some events together. • Suggest they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. arrange another time to meet as a group later in the week or in Week 2. b. ask their peer mentors to show them where their classes and lectures for Week 2 so that they don't get lost. c. ask their peer mentors to show them how to find their readings for Week 2 and how to use the relevant online resources (e.g. Moodle and FASER). 	

Additional Notes:

- The order of the icebreaker and the introduction of the tutor could be swapped
- Where possible, these meetings could take place in an informal environment, such as a common room.
- Ideally groups should be a maximum of 15 people
- If a tutor has a very large group they could divide them into sub-groups and undertake meetings/activities with the smaller groups
- Peer Mentors could be invited to the meeting to help facilitate conversation.

Additional topics that might be relevant for PGT students

- What are the arrangements for project supervision within the department? What will the relationship be between the personal tutor and each student's supervisor? How might personal tutors help students with their dissertation?
- Are there any key dates or events for PGT students during the year, such as conferences or training opportunities? How can PGT students prepare and get involved?
- Are there any bursaries or scholarship deadlines that PGT students need to be aware of for PGR applications?
- What is the availability of personal tutors and supervisors over the summer?

Appendix

First Meeting Icebreaker Activities

Human Bingo

Aim	To learn names and brief facts about each other
Equipment required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A copy of the Human Bingo grid for each person (see below)• Pens• A small prize (eg. chocolate or a notebook etc.)
Group size	Up to 25
Explanation	<p>Give everyone a copy of the Human Bingo grid (see below). Personal Tutors can join in too. There are 16 boxes on the grid with a different heading in each box.</p> <p>As soon as everyone has a grid, participants must speak to other people in the room to find someone who matches the heading for each box. For instance, one of the headings is “Plays an instrument” – participants must find someone in the room who plays an instrument and write that person’s name in the box.</p> <p>There must be a different person for every box.</p> <p>The winner is whoever fills in all the boxes first. They should shout “bingo” or let the Personal Tutor know they have completed their grid. The winner or the Personal Tutor can read out the answers to check with the group that they are all correct and provide extra information – such as “Sophie plays an instrument. What do you play Sophie?”</p>
Variations	<p>The grid headings can be changed to cover other subjects – including ones relevant to your department. Make sure the questions are inclusive and don’t reinforce stereotypes.</p> <p>The grid can be made smaller if there are fewer people in the group.</p> <p>The game will last longer if there are runner up prizes for second and third place.</p>

Human Bingo

This is a great way to get to know one another and you will probably speak to everyone in the room by the time you are finished. The idea is to find a different person for each box and to put their name under the heading they match. You must put a different person's name in each box! When you are finished, let your Personal Tutor know – you can shout “bingo” if you like!

Plays an instrument	Has a brother	Can speak 2 or more languages	Travelled to more than 5 countries
Enjoys reading	Has a birthday this month	Has met someone famous	Drinks coffee
Was born in a different country	Plays a sport	Lives off campus	Performed in a play
Has a cat	Has been to Italy	Has volunteered	Likes cooking

Memory Circle

Aim	To learn names and brief facts about each other
Equipment required	Whiteboard or paper to write the categories on
Group size	Up to 10 maximum (a large group can be divided into smaller groups)
Explanation	Students should form a circle. One student is chosen by the Personal Tutor to start the game by stating their name, origin country, course of study and one interesting fact about themselves . (These categories should be written on a whiteboard or piece of paper that is visible in case anyone forgets). The next student needs to repeat everything that was said by the previous student(s) and add their information. For instance, the 4th student in the group will repeat what the 1st, 2nd and 3rd students said and add their personal information after. The game ends when everybody has been repeated by others

Line Up Race

Aim	To get students talking to each other
Equipment required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Space to line-up• Small prizes (e.g. sweets) for the winning team
Group size	10 – 20
Explanation	Ask everyone to stand up. The Personal Tutor reads out a category such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First name in alphabetical order• Birthdays (date and month)• Distance travelled to uni that day• Favourite hobby, in alphabetical order <p>Each team must quickly arrange themselves in proper ascending (or descending) order, lining up accordingly. For each category, the Personal Tutor must define each end of the line e.g. 'January near the door, December over there.' When a team is in the proper order, they must let the Personal Tutor know (shout!). The first group to successfully complete each task wins the round. The Personal Tutor will check to make sure that the team is in fact in the correct order by asking each person to state their answer. The Personal Tutor should also do this for the losing team too so that students get to know more about the other team too. The team to finish first and in the correct order wins.</p>
Variations	To make this more challenging, (perhaps after the first or second round) this game can be completed in silence so participants must use body language to communicate.

Fact or Fiction

Aim	To find out interesting things about each other and to discover things in common with other students
Equipment required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper or sticky notes.• Pens
Group size	Ideal for smaller groups (up to 10)
Explanation	Ask members to introduce themselves by first name only, and then ask everyone to write on a piece of paper two things about themselves which may not be known to others in the group. One is true and one false. They must then take it in turns to state the two facts, and then the rest of the group will decide which is true and which is false. The leader will repeat the facts to the other members to remind people before voting.