

GUIDE FOR BIOSCIENCES TUTORS 2020-21

This guide outlines the structure for tutor meetings in Biosciences throughout the year, for all year groups. A version of this will be made available to students so that they know what to expect from their tutor meetings.

- Please remember to **send your tutees reminders** of your meetings **in the week before the meeting**.
- **All tutor meetings should take place in the week specified** (or the week before if this is easier to arrange).
- **Meetings cannot be held late** as this may impact on other areas of the curriculum.

For the foreseeable future, the expectation is that the vast majority of the tutee meetings detailed in this document will need to take place online or outdoors.

NEW FOR THIS YEAR: CROSS-YEAR GROUP TUTORIALS

It is widely-recognised that the role of the Personal Tutor is going to be even more important in 2020-21 than in previous years. Online learning and a dramatic reduction in lab-based practicals will limit staff-student and student-student interactions, and tutor meetings are going to be key contact points.

As a result, we are introducing drop-in [cross-year group tutorials](#) for the first time so that they can gain from each other's prior experience and form a mutually supportive network. These sessions will also be particularly important in gaining student feedback on what is working and what isn't working with our blended delivery.

These cross-year group tutorials will run fortnightly throughout Term 1, with the exception of week 6 (which is reading week). They are scheduled to take place at 10.30 on each of the following dates:

- Wednesday 30th September
- Wednesday 14th October
- Wednesday 11th November
- Wednesday 25th November
- Wednesday 9th December

These scheduled tutorials will appear in the timetable of all 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students as "Drop-in cross-year group tutorials (Personal Tutor)". These will be online, via Teams/Zoom.

We intend to run similar cross-year group tutorials in Term 2 (timetable tbc), but we will gauge student engagement with these tutorials during term 1 and review our plans accordingly.

These cross-year group tutorials will be in addition to the year group-specific tutorials detailed on the following pages.

YEAR 1 TUTORIALS

TERM 1

MEETING 1 (10 min Individual and 60 min Group - Compulsory)

Welcome week (w/c 14th sept)

Welcome & Introductions. Individual meeting with each of your tutees, followed by a group meeting with all of your tutees.

- Welcome, and introductions
- Ask tutees if they have registered and have got access to their email
- Outline personal tutor role, what you do for them and what they should do in return
- Make sure all have your email address
- Answer any questions
- Ice-breakers, for example:
 - 'Two truths and a lie' (where each student provides three statements about themselves, and other students have to vote on which one is false)
 - 20 questions-style guessing game (with a scientific theme!)

MEETING 2 (15 min Individual - Compulsory)

Term 1, week 3 (w/c 5th October)

- Touch base and check how students are settling in (e.g. ask about course/home/accommodation). The first few weeks can be daunting from students, so direct them to appropriate resources if they need help.

MEETING 3 (60 min Group - Compulsory)

Term, week 5 (w/c 19th October)

- In this one hour "Met the Academic" tutorial, the students should "interview" you for about 25 minutes as a means of getting to know about you and your science. Please use the remainder of the tutorial to inspire them further about your scientific interests and discuss with them the potential scope of the presentations they will give on your work in week 5. Guide students to produce a 10 min PowerPoint presentation about you and your science that they will deliver to Graduate Teaching Assistants in week 7.

MEETING 4 (60 min Group - Compulsory)

Term 1, week 7 (w/c 2nd November)

- Discuss with students how they should deal with feedback on work.
- Refer to our general marking criteria, and give advice on aspects not understood by the students.

MEETING 5 (60 min Group - Compulsory)

Term 1, week 9 (w/c 16th November)

- Give advice to students on how to read a scientific paper (your choice of subject matter).
- **Set the students a 1,000 word essay (in the style of a news and views article)** on some aspect of current research in the news, possibly related to your research interests.
- Provide some general scientific essay writing guidance.

MEETING 6 (15 min Individual - Compulsory)

Term 1, week 11 (w/c 30th November)

- Talk to students about course so far
- Discuss with them their preparations for the January examinations

YEAR 1 TUTORIALS (cont.)

TERM 2

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 2, week 0 (w/c 4th January)

- Discuss with them their preparations for the January examinations

MEETING 7 (15 min Individual - Compulsory)

Term 2, week 5 (w/c 8th February)

- Return the essays (that you set in term 1, week 9) and discuss feedback
- Review exam performance with the students (from January exams)
NB. Results will be available via SRS and students should have access to them via their iExeter account

MEETING 8 (Group - Compulsory)

Term 2, week 7 (w/c 22nd February)

- Discuss careers and internship options and services available to students
- Signpost towards employability information/PDP on ELE and the careers service. Encourage them to think about work experience if they haven't already done so.

MEETING 9 (Group - Compulsory)

Term 2, week 9 (w/c 8th March)

- Discuss module choice options; how to make choices online, things to consider e.g. looking ahead to the module pathway to L3, assessment methods, and answer any questions about this. *NB. They should have already had a talk from one of the education team about module choices.*
- Discuss preparation for May exams
- Remind them about the compulsory themed practicals in Term 3 (after the exam period)

TERM 3

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 3, week 1 (w/c 26th April)

- Invite your tutees to make an appointment if anything has worried them in their revision or preparation for exams.

MEETING 10 (60 min Group - Compulsory)

Term 3, week 5 (w/c 24th May)

- Brief catch up with group; check they are engaging with themed practicals
- Discuss challenges of, and preparation for, 2nd year
- Tell them that over the summer they need to think about things like work experience placements for the following summer as many summer studentship application processes start in October
- Remind them that they can change modules once they have their exam results if they feel that they would do better in a different area
- Remind those who are doing study abroad or industrial experience/professional placement that deadlines crop up early in term 1 of the second year

HUMAN BIOSCIENCES: Please note that if your 1st year tutees are Human Biosciences students, only tutorials 1, 3, 5 and 7 are required; other elements will be covered by their personal tutor in Sports & Health Sciences.

YEAR 2 TUTORIALS

TERM 1

MEETING 1 (15 min Individual - Compulsory)

Term 1, week 1 (w/c 21st September)

- Review and discuss student's performance from 1st year (grades available on SRS)
- **Tutors to set essay question (1000 words) for a formative essay.** Tutors should aim to tailor essay question to your interests AND those of the INDIVIDUAL tutee.

MEETING 2 (60 min Group – Compulsory)

Term 1, week 3 (w/c 5th October)

- Select a scientific paper and take it apart critically
- NB. Term 1, week 3 - Students hand in their formative essay (from week 1)*

MEETING 3 (60 min Group – Compulsory)

Term 1, start of week 7 (w/c 2nd November)

- Having marked the formative essays, return those essays and provide generic FEEDBACK to the group
- Discuss any concerns about writing essays
- This meeting must happen early in week 7 so that the students have time to act on the feedback prior to submitting their summative essay (which is based on the same question as used for the formative essay). *Students hand in their summative essay in week 9.*

MEETING 4 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 1, week 11 (w/c 30th November)

- Provide detailed FEEDBACK on their summative essay

TERM 2

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 2, week 0 (w/c 4th January)

- Email them all immediately prior to the start of term to invite them to make an appointment if anything has worried them in their revision or preparation for exams

MEETING 5 (20 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 5 (w/c 8th February)

- Review exam performance and feedback with the students (from January exams)

MEETING 6 (30 min Group – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 7 (w/c 22nd February)

- Discuss careers in biosciences

MEETING 7 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 9 (w/c 8th March)

- Discuss module options for 3rd year and answer questions relating to project choices
- Discuss preparation for May exams

YEAR 2 TUTORIALS (cont.)

TERM 3

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 3, week 1 (w/c 26th April)

- Invite your tutees to make an appointment if anything has worried them in their revision or preparation for exams

MEETING 8 (60 min Group – Compulsory)

Term 3, week 5 (w/c 24th May)

- Catch up with group and discuss challenges of 3rd year
- Discuss project allocations for their 3rd year, and encourage them to contact their supervisor if they haven't already
- Remind them that they can change modules once they have their exam results if they feel that they would do better in a different area
- Remind students thinking of applying for PG medicine, dentistry, teaching and some management trainee schemes e.g. NHS, that deadlines can be early

HUMAN BIOSCIENCES: Please note that if your 2nd year tutees are Human Biosciences students, only tutorials 1, 3, 4 and 5 are required; other elements will be covered by their personal tutor in Sports & Health Sciences. There should be a whole cohort meeting of Human Bioscience students to discuss HB-specific aspects of module choices & project allocations (instead of tutorial 7).

YEAR 3 TUTORIALS (incl. returning Study Abroad, Professional Placement/Industrial Experience students)

TERM 1

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 1, week 1 (w/c 21st September)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they have any concerns about the new academic year

MEETING 1 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 1, week 3 (w/c 5th October)

- Review and discuss exam feedback and student performance from previous year
- Discuss settling-in to the new academic year
- Check the student knows arrangement for their project/dissertation, bearing in mind they may be running in Term 1 or Term 2 (NB. If running in Term 1, they should be starting this week)
- Have a look at the [NSS questions](#) and ask the students if they have any areas of concern going into their third year. Please let the Education Team know of any issues that arise.

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 1, week 7 (w/c 2nd November)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they have any concerns, particularly project/dissertation.

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 1, week 11 (w/c 30th November)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they are concerned about project write-up (for those doing Term 1 projects) and/or January exam preparation

TERM 2

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 2, week 0 (w/c 4th January)

- Email them all immediately prior to the start of term to invite them to make an appointment if anything has worried them in their revision or preparation for exams

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 2, week 3 (w/c 25th January)

- Invite them to an individual meeting to discuss progress with research projects/dissertations.
NB. Students who did a term 1 project will be writing up, whilst those students doing a term 2 project will have just started their projects.

MEETING 2 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 5 (w/c 8th February)

- Look through exam results and feedback with the students (from January exams)
NB. Students who did their project/dissertation in Term 1 will have just submitted their report.

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 2, week 9 (w/c 8th March)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they are concerned about any aspect of their preparation for May exams and/or progress with project/dissertation (for those doing their project in Term 2)

TERM 3

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 3, week 1 (w/c 26th April)

- Invite your tutees to a meeting if concerned about preparation for the May exams, and/or the project write-up (for those who did term 2 projects).

YEAR 4 (MSci) TUTORIALS

TERM 1

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 1, week 1 (w/c 21st September)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they are concerned about any aspect of the new academic year

MEETING 1 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 1, week 3 (w/c 5th October)

- Review and discuss exam feedback and student performance from previous year
- Discuss settling-in to the new academic year, ensuring that projects are underway
- Have a look at the [NSS questions](#) and ask the students if they have any areas of concern going into their third year. Please let the Education Team know of any issues that arise.

Optional Meeting (15 min)

Term 1, week 9 (w/c 16th November)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they are concerned about any aspect of their studies, particularly progress with their project

TERM 2

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 2, week 1 (w/c 11th January)

- Invite students to an individual meeting if they are concerned about any aspect of their studies, particularly progress with their project

MEETING 2 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 5 (w/c 8th February)

- Check-in with students and discuss progress with research projects

MEETING 3 (15 min Individual – Compulsory)

Term 2, week 9 (w/c 8th March)

- Discuss research project progress and write-up
- Discuss preparation for May exams

TERM 3

Optional Meeting (15 min Individual)

Term 3, week 1 (w/c 26th April)

- Invite your tutees to discuss preparation for exams and/or project report write-up (project report deadline is 4th May)

Biosciences Tutor Role Description

The Tutor will have primary responsibility for:

- Developing and maintaining a safe and confidential relationship with their tutees
- Providing advice and support to tutees in matters related to academic work and where appropriate students' personal development
- Working with tutees to find appropriate pathways to resolve difficulties
- Representing the University to the tutee and the tutee to the University.
- Maintaining effective communication with other support services on behalf of tutees.

Main duties and responsibilities as a tutor

- 1) Maintaining regular contact with each tutee
- 2) Giving appropriate support to tutees
- 3) Documenting tutorial support
- 4) Supporting tutees in their career development
- 5) Following up tutees who are not making satisfactory progress
- 6) Liaising with other members of academic and administrative staff, as appropriate
- 7) Maintaining awareness of other sources of support within the University
- 8) Providing information regarding academic progress, assessment and examinations
- 9) Writing references on request

Responsibilities of tutees

Your tutees have responsibilities in their relationship with you and it is important that **you make these clear to them at the first group meeting**. At a minimum they should include:

- To attend all scheduled and other requested meetings, or agree an alternative time if it is inconvenient.
- To check e-mail every day and respond as appropriate.
- To seek support from you when needed.
- To be familiar with the University's procedures and practices in personal tutoring and to respect the limits of the Bioscience Tutor role.
- To tell you about any disability or health condition for which they wish arrangements to be made.
- To notify the Bioscience Admin team (info.peterchalk@exeter.ac.uk) if they are ill and unable to attend University
- To notify you if they are experiencing problems which are affecting their attendance or having an adverse effect on the standard of their work or progress on their programme.
- To contact you immediately if they feel that their performance in forthcoming examinations is going to be affected by ill-health or other extenuating circumstances.
- To keep the Biosciences admin team informed of any change in term-time and home addresses.