

Enhancing Student Support Personal Tutor System

Recording Notes: Levels of Confidentiality

Students use the Personal Tutor software to record comments and reflections on their meetings with their Personal Tutor. Staff write notes to support students. All notes are 'open'¹ and can be seen by all authorised users of the software unless marked confidential. Marking notes confidential limits access to the student, their Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor(s), Student Support Team, the creator of the note and the Dean of Students.

Authorised users will treat all recorded information appropriately and will limit disclosures to the minimum necessary. However, with more confidential or sensitive information, access will be restricted and, in some cases, details are not recorded. The use of restrictions needs to be balanced with the desire for efficient access to information to support students.

Levels of confidentiality: These categories are used by staff and students to decide together what level applies to specific notes and to support a common approach.

Level 1	<p>Straightforward, factual information e.g. – study development advice, student reflection, discussion of graduate attributes, time organisation comments, action points from Personal Tutor and tutee meetings and general advice Discussion of some topics will involve a number of in-person or email exchanges. In such cases it may be most appropriate to record in the Personal Tutor software a summary note at the end of the discussion.</p>	<p>Keep open – record online i.e. do not mark as confidential</p>
Level 2	<p>Feedback and advice e.g. an open note about most of the academic and pastoral advice, with an attached confidential note</p>	<p>Discretionary – record online This may be open or confidential, depending on the context</p>
Level 3	<p>Personal matters, which may be special circumstances e.g. personal issues affecting a student's performance which the student agrees can be recorded online so that the University can take appropriate action</p>	<p>Confidential – record online</p>
Level 4	<p>Issues that the student does not wish disclosed further or recorded online If students mention that there are factors which are affecting them, but they do not wish to share this information more widely or for details to be recorded online, they need to understand the implications of this. For example, staff may not be able to take any further action if they may not disclose the issue to relevant colleagues, e.g. Special Circumstances Committees make evidence-based decisions and cannot act unless evidence is provided; students may need referring to specific services like the Student Disability Service.</p>	<p>Confidential statement recorded online but no other details are online A confidential statement is noted: "The student disclosed a significant issue that may affect his/her studies and academic attainment. The student asked that it should not be disclosed further or recorded in the online system. The student has been made aware of the implications of this decision which limits the actions the University can take."</p>

The University cannot keep sensitive information without a student's consent. Under Level 4 the student may agree that information can be stored securely by the member of staff, so long as it is not on the public record. Staff need to get the student's written consent (see template below) and store this with the

¹ The MBChB programme uses EEMeC, where all notes are visible only to the student, the Personal Tutor, the note creator and the Student Support Team. The BVM&S programme uses EEVeC, where all notes are visible only to the student, the Personal Tutor, the Student Experience Officer and the Senior Tutor.

information. If the student provides new information this needs a new consent form. Each School² and Personal Tutor has a protocol whereby this information can be accessed at the discretion of the Head of School³ if necessary, for example if the Personal Tutor is unavailable, or if the student decides the information can be used for a special circumstances case. The School² reports this protocol to the Dean of Students. If the student does not consent then the information cannot be recorded in any format but the confidential statement for Level 4 is recorded.

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Consent to hold sensitive information

Template to be adapted by Schools to align with their record retention schedule

The University asks permission to keep those confidential notes, which are not stored in the Personal Tutor software⁴, for five years after the end of the student's studies in order to conform to the Data Protection Act. These notes are kept securely and are only accessible to staff when authorised by the student or the Head of School.

In very exceptional circumstances the Head of School⁵, on behalf of the University, may have to disclose the information:

- Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal court procedure if the information is not disclosed.

- Where the member of staff believes that the student or a third party is in serious danger.

In these circumstances the University will try to encourage the student to pass on information to the relevant person/agency themselves. However, if the situation is critical, the University may pass on the information directly.

Consent to disclose information will be sought from the student, if at all possible.

I confirm that I understand the information on Personal Tutor Recording Notes: Brief on Confidentiality

Issue: <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/153654703/Brief-ConfidentialLevels.docx>

I agree to the limits of confidentiality outlined above and give my permission for notes to be kept.

Student signature:

Date:

² For the MBChB programme in CMVM, teaching, student support and information handling are organised and delivered at programme level rather than through the Schools.

³ For the MBChB programme, the Director of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching, CMVM

⁴ The Personal Tutor software is EEMeC for the MBChB programme and EEVeC for the BVM&S programme.

⁵ For the MBChB programme, the Director of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching, CMVM