

# Student Contact with Teaching Staff Beyond Formal Learning Opportunities Policy

**Scope**

All students of City, University of London. Policy setting out expectations concerning what students can expect from interaction with teaching staff beyond formal learning opportunities including personal tutoring, academic tutorials and responses to queries.

**Date approved/re-approved**

11th August 2008

Updated minor amendments October 2012

Updated September 2020

**To be read in conjunction with**

Assessment and Feedback Policy

## **Policy on Student Contact with Teaching Staff beyond formal learning opportunities**

### **Context**

The Education and Student Strategy supports you in becoming professional, analytical and enquiring graduates. Your development is dependent on the support you receive, the environment in which you study, and the academic quality of your programmes; your own motivation to learn provides an additional essential factor.

Beyond scheduled teaching, you should be provided with clear information on the opportunities available for interaction with teaching staff. Staff also need to have established structures that enable them to manage communications with you effectively so that expectations of both parties are clear. Personal Tutoring and Academic Tutorials provide two formal ways in which you receive support. However, from time-to-time, you may have ad-hoc queries which may be discipline-specific or relate to your wider educational or personal experience.

Where programmes are delivered in partnership, a policy on student contact should be in place which is subject to the approval of the University; this should be in line with the principles within this policy.

### **Equality and Diversity Statement**

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

### **Meetings with Teaching Staff**

During each teaching week of the Academic Year, all teaching staff who have a responsibility for teaching, in its broadest sense, and/or personal tutoring should be available for a time that totals at least two 'contact hours' weekly so you can book appointments in this time. This contact time could be face to face or online. This provides you with clear opportunities in which ad-hoc meetings can be held. This time is separate to personal tutoring or academic-related tutorials. These opportunities operate on the following principles:

- You will be advised via programme handbooks and induction about this type of support and how you should liaise with staff on setting-up a time to meet.

- Staff availability will be published in a form that will be most accessible to you for your programme. This may include publication via Moodle, a departmental webpage, or an additional line in the signature of a staff email.
- Staff should use their judgement in instances where you may require further time beyond the “contact hours” slot and schedule this accordingly.
- Where visiting teaching staff are not available, the Head of Department must ensure that other relevant teaching staff will be accessible to you to answer specific queries. Arrangements must be made clear to you at the start of a module.
- If a member of teaching staff has to cancel or postpone the contact hours you will be informed of this change and a new appointment will be provided.

### **Responses to Student Queries**

You will be advised of teaching staff email addresses through programme handbooks and teaching staff will be advised of students’ email addresses through the course officer, following registration. Liaison between staff and you will operate on the following principles:

- Teaching staff will respond to students’ emails and telephone messages in a timely manner. It is expected, for example, that where a query is straightforward and where the member of staff is at work, a response within two calendar days (this does not include weekends and bank holidays) would normally be reasonable.
- Where the nature of the query means that it is not possible to provide a full response, the issue should be acknowledged and information provided as to how and when the issue will be responded to and by whom.
- Where it is immediately apparent that the nature of the query means that a personal discussion would be more appropriate, and where it is not an emergency, you may be referred to a contact hour meeting which may be face to face or virtual.
- Unless agreed otherwise, these principles will not normally apply to requests asking for a detailed response on draft submissions or feedback on assessments. This process will be managed in line with the University Assessment and Feedback Policy.
- Where a member of staff is on leave from the University, an out-of-office message should be provided which will normally provide details of alternative contact for queries that are an emergency.

- Where teaching staff choose to provide you with their mobile phone number and/or use text-messaging as a formal communication mechanism, they have a responsibility to ensure that responses are timely and in accordance with the principles above.
- If visiting staff are not able to comply with these principles due to other commitments, the Head of Department must ensure that other relevant teaching staff will be accessible to answer specific queries. Arrangements must be made clear to you at the start of a module.
- Social networking sites will not normally be used for formal communication with you on matters relating to your academic progress.

## Policy Details Table

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