Enhancing Student Support:
Briefing Note with Context on Writing Records and Confidentiality
(https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/153654703/ESS-Brief-Records-20120821.pdf?version=2)

This guidance draws on information presented to the Senior Tutors Network meeting by Susan Graham, University Records Manager, on 31 July 2012. It provides context for the standard text on writing records and confidentiality for School Personal Tutoring Statements: https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PESS/Senior+Tutor+Network

- Information relating to University business belongs to the University. The University has legal obligations in relation to information management and using the EUCLID Personal Tutor IT Tools will help compliance.
- Data Protection legislation expects that information will be managed in an appropriate way and the IT Tools will help to support this. For example, individuals have the right to see information held on them by the University and this can present problems where the information is held locally. The use of IT Tools will also reduce the burden on individual staff members in meeting information legislation obligations.
- Recording information using the IT Tools will ensure that it is secure, maintained and backed-up.
- **Information must be adequate, relevant and not excessive.** Therefore, a judgement has to be made as to what information is made generally available and what is restricted to those directly supporting the student. It is rarely good practice for information to only be available to one person.
- It is important to consider what is appropriate to record. For example: "This student has a personal life difficulty and has been referred to counselling" is an appropriate note to be available to the core group supporting the student.
- In general, the detail of the student's 'personal life difficulty' should not be recorded unless the student specifically requests otherwise. The information recorded should be adequate to reflect the situation so that those supporting the student are able to do so but it should not reveal intimate details.
- In terms of recording matters relating to Special Circumstances, staff should record that the student is experiencing problems (although not the detail), note what is being done, and state where relevant information is held.
- Where students have discussed a matter with a member of staff and have stated that they do not wish any further action to be taken (including disclosure to other staff) then the consequences of this need to be explained to the student. A record should be made that a meeting took place, that the student requested that no further action be taken and that the consequences have been explained to the student. No information about the actual issue should be recorded. This restriction means that no action can then be taken. However, it is important that there is a record that the conversation took place.
- The information within the IT Tools should not just be viewed as the record between a student and a Personal Tutor as there are other staff who play an important role in supporting the student who also need to have access to appropriate information.
- Due to cultural reasons, some international students may not wish to discuss private matters in what they perceive to be a formal discussion. Discussions with their Personal Tutor provide the opportunity to educate them about the purposes of the record and the University's approach.
- Students see all notes added to their record in MyEd by staff using the IT Tools. www.myed.ed.ac.uk

EUCLID User guides provide information for Personal Tutors:
www.euclid.ed.ac.uk/staff/User_Guides/Personal_Tutors/Personal_Tutor.htm

More information on the disclosure of information about students is available from Records Management:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information

Sara.Welham@ed.ac.uk, 21.8.12