**Edinburgh Medical School: Biomedical Sciences**

**Personal Tutoring Statement 2019/20**

Dear Student,

As a valued member of the Biomedical Sciences community, we very much hope you enjoy your studies with us. Throughout your time at Edinburgh your Personal Tutor and the BMTO Student Support Team are available to provide you with help and guidance. This document outlines how the Edinburgh Medical School: Biomedical Sciences Personal Tutor system works to support you, as well as providing information on other avenues of support available.

If you have any queries or suggestions relating to student support or the content of this document feel free to contact us Deborah.shaw@ed.ac.uk (for undergraduate support) or Kim.Picozzi@ed.ac.uk (for postgraduate support).

Wishing you success and enjoyment

Deborah and Kim

Senior Personal Tutors

**1. Student Support Organisational Structure: Overview**

As a student within the Edinburgh Medical School: Biomedical Sciences you are assigned a Personal Tutor who is an academic member of staff who can provide tailored academic advice and pastoral support. You are also supported directly by the BMTO Student Support Team and have free access to the Senior Personal Tutor. The roles and responsibilities of these different members of staff overlap and interact to provide an integrated structure of support as illustrated below.



**1.1 Aims of the Personal Tutor System**

The Personal Tutor system will provide you with a named member of academic staff, your Personal Tutor, who will support you throughout your time at the University, giving you academic support and a route to pastoral support. You, as a Tutee, will work with your Personal Tutor to reflect on your academic performance, how this contributes to your aspirations and helps you to engage as a member of a community of learners. You will also be supported throughout your time at university by a Student Support Team.

**2. Key Contacts**

**2.1 Your Personal Tutor**

The Biomedical Teaching Organisation (BMTO) is responsible for allocating you a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor is usually a member of staff familiar with your general area of study and the expectations of academic work in your discipline. He/she will have a clear understanding of their role in supporting your studies and how to direct you to any other support you might need during your time at the University.

Your Personal Tutor will help you to:

* Become a more confident learner in your discipline and play an active part in your academic community.
* Reflect on your academic progress and make the most effective use of your academic feedback.
* Develop the range of skills and attributes required for success at university and beyond.
* Help you to deal with any concerns or problems that might affect your studies and refer you to other staff in the Deanery and support services as appropriate.

Our aim is that you enjoy your studies with us and graduate with a solid profile of skills and expert knowledge making you an attractive prospect for employment and ready to pursue a successful career.

Do remember that academic enquiries regarding course specific material (e.g. questions regarding a lecture) should be directed to the appropriate person indicated by the documentation for that course.

Please note: when your Personal Tutor requests to meet with you, **your** **participation in such meetings is not optional**. Personal Tutor meetings are a formal University requirement and attendance will be recorded.

You can find out who your Personal Tutor is through MyEd. If you are a newly enrolled student you will be introduced to your Personal Tutor during induction sessions in Welcome Week.

**2.2 Senior Personal Tutor**

EMS: Biomedical Sciences has Senior Personal Tutors who have oversight of personal tutoring arrangements. If you feel that you cannot speak to your Personal Tutor (and sometimes people simply do not get along due to no fault on either side) please contact the relevant person below. The Senior Personal Tutor is also in a position to advise and provide support on more unusual academic and pastoral issues. As such they provide another source of student support.

The Undergraduate Senior Personal Tutor is:

Dr Deborah Shaw

Tel: 0131 650 9875

Email: Deborah.shaw@ed.ac.uk

The Postgraduate Senior Personal Tutor is:

Dr Kim Picozzi

Tel: 0131 651 1694

Email: Kim.Picozzi@ed.ac.uk

**2.3 BMTO Student Support Team**

Within EMS:BMS there are a number of other roles working in partnership with Personal Tutors to make sure the Personal Tutor system works for you, including your Student Support Team (SST) based in the BMTO.

If your enquiry concerns a request for information of a routine nature (e.g. the location of a specific teaching session, confirmation of student status etc.) the SST provides a readily accessible first point of contact. Equally though, the SST provides a contact point for any student support issues should your Personal Tutor be unavailable for any reason. The team also maintain appropriate records and provide administrative student support. Your SST will usually respond to any query within 3 working days (often sooner!)

The BMTO office is open 9am to 5pm each weekday. Alternatively, the Student Support Team can be contacted at BMTOstudentsupport@ed.ac.uk Further details of the team, which is headed by Karen Harris, Academic Administrator, are provided within the EUCLID Meetings and Notes page in MyEd (see section 4.1).

**2.4 Changing Personal Tutor**

Any requests to change Personal Tutor should be directed to your Senior Personal Tutor and will be handled in strict confidence. Reasons for the request to change Personal Tutor will not be conveyed to the previous Personal Tutor without your consent. Students cannot request to be assigned to a specific Personal Tutor

**3. How the Personal Tutor system works**

To enable EMS: Biomedical Sciences to deliver the beneficial outcomes of the Personal Tutor system you will attend individual meetings with your Personal Tutor and other staff. Group meetings will be embedded in core courses or arranged for specific groups of students.

**3.1 Undergraduate Students**

During your early years at the University your Personal Tutor will schedule meetings to enable you to settle in and build a relationship. Contact will gradually become less formal in the latter years of study, however you are actively encouraged to request meetings with your Personal Tutor as required throughout your time at the University (see section 4). In particular you must arrange to meet with your Personal Tutor if you have experienced any special circumstances that have had a negative impact on your studies. Further information and guidance on what you should do if you have special circumstances can be found on the BMTO website.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/biomedical-sciences/bmto/wellbeing/special-circumstances>

EMS: Biomedical Sciences has responsibility for students enrolled in years 1-4 of:

* BSc Anatomy and Development
* BSc Biomedical Laboratory Science
* BSc Biomedical Laboratory Science (Professional Practice)
* BSc Biomedical Sciences
* BSc Infectious Diseases
* BSc Medical Sciences
* BSc Neuroscience
* BSc Pharmacology
* BSc Physiology
* BSc Reproductive Biology

**All undergraduate students who fall into the above categories can expect the following Personal Tutor provision:**

* **A minimum of three individual meetings with your Personal Tutor (two in semester 1 and one in semester 2). Individual meetings with Personal Tutors will be expected to last around 20 minutes.**
* **One group meeting for year 1 and 2 students which takes the form of a workshop and aims to develop graduate attributes. The workshops are run in semester 2 and last around an hour. The workshops may be run by staff other than your Personal Tutor.** BMTO staff will inform you of the group workshop options.

The above scheduled meetings aim to provide opportunities for you to reflect on and review progress, plan your curriculum, manage new objectives and discuss your future career plans.

**3.2 Summary of the Undergraduate Personal Tutor Meeting Framework**

**Individual Meetings – Semester 1**

**New students Year 1 and Year 2 (direct entry)**

You will be introduced to your Personal Tutor during the Induction session in Welcome Week. The first individual meetings will be arranged at this point. This first meeting will principally be a welcome meeting that defines the Personal Tutor/tutee relationship and provides supplementary academic guidance on curricular choices to back up information provided in your induction session. The meeting will also allow a review of your individual needs and any other general information that it might be necessary to discuss. This initial meeting may be followed up quickly by a second meeting if there are outstanding curricular issues.

In semester 1 another individual meeting around week 9/10 provides an opportunity to discuss progress in adapting to University life and review preparations/plans for the forthcoming examination diet.

**Returning students – Year 2, Year 3, Year 4**

You will meet your Personal Tutor in Welcome Week for an individual meeting. The theme of the first meeting will be driven by reflection on your previous years’ experience and achievement. It will provide the opportunity to review your individual student needs with a view to forward planning for the coming year. A principal aim will be the provision of academic guidance on curricular choices to back up information provided in induction sessions.

In semester 1 another individual meeting around week 9/10 provides an opportunity to discuss academic progress and review preparations/plans for the forthcoming examination diet.

**Individual Meetings – Semester 2, All years**

In semester 2 a meeting around week 4/5 will allow review and reflection of your academic performance in light of semester 1 assessment results as well as a chance to look forward to the next academic year (for students in years 1-3) and beyond. This meeting might be an appropriate time to discuss career plans, work experience opportunities and CV development.

Towards the end of semester 2 non-final year students will be expected to attend meetings with the Degree Programme management team at which course choices for the next academic year are introduced and discussed. If you require help to choose your courses for the next academic year you should request a meeting with your Personal Tutor.

**Group Meetings**

Workshops for all Year 1 and 2 students aimed at enhancing the student learning experience and the development of graduate attributes will be run in semester 2.

In previous years workshop themes, decided after input from both students and staff have included: "Making the Most of Feedback", "Making the Most of your Time at University - thinking about your future", "Making the Most of your Graduate Attributes - how to make yourself more employable", “Handling Stress”, “Handling Interviews” and “Handling Presentations”.

You will be able to choose which workshop to attend based on individual preference or need. Further information will be provided during the year.

**Intercalated Degrees**

EMS: Biomedical Sciences is also responsible for the final year of the Bachelor of Medical Sciences programmes in Anatomy and Development; Anaesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine; Bioethics, Law and Society; Biomedical Sciences; Epidemiology, Health Sciences; Infectious Diseases; Neuroscience; Pharmacology; Physiology and; Reproductive Biology; and the BSc Veterinary Sciences programmes in Infectious Diseases; Neuroscience; Pharmacology; Physiology and; Reproductive Biology.

As an intercalating student you will retain the same MBChB/ BVM&S Personal Tutor for your Intercalated Honours year. Your Personal Tutor will meet individually with you at the same frequency as in your previous years to reflect on and review progress and manage new objectives.

Throughout your Intercalated Honours year, the core courses for each discipline provide numerous small group activity opportunities for students to develop core graduate skills in presentation, communication and reflective practice. Detail will be provided in the programme handbooks but these activities will be aimed at encouraging the use of learning and skills developed in specific areas of the programme for independent problem solving.

Although you will retain the same Personal Tutor, the BMTO Student Support Team and the Senior Personal Tutor in the EMS: Biomedical Sciences are fully committed to providing you with the same support as is available to any student enrolled on a degree programme within our Deanery.

Students from other institutions who enrol on intercalating degree programmes within the EMS: Biomedical Sciences will be assigned a Personal Tutor by the BMTO.

**Undergraduate students who are not on campus**

If you are not on campus (e.g. studying abroad for a period, or on a placement, or studying an online degree) then your meetings may take place by telephone, live internet call, or a web conferencing application. Email exchanges are not considered to be meetings unless they take place within a pre-agreed timeframe to enable you to have a “conversation” (e.g. if you are overseas and emailing within a 24-36 hour period to take account of time differences).

If you require any further information on the student exchange process please contact the Exchange Co-ordinator – Dr Emma Wood on Emma.wood@ed.ac.uk

In particular do note that if you have any special circumstances while abroad, your first point of contact should remain your PT but it would be useful if Dr Wood could be made aware that there are issues impacting on your studies. Also, it is important that any changes to the planned study abroad (ie courses taken) are approved by Dr Wood. Your PT can advise, but cannot authorise the course choices, as they may not be aware of all the requirements.  To reiterate all course choices (learning agreements) need to be approved

by Dr Wood.

**3.3 Postgraduate Students**

The EMS: Biomedical Sciences provides Personal Tutor support for both on-campus and on-line distance learning (OLDL) students enrolled on its Taught MSc degree programmes. As a postgraduate taught student you will be assigned to a Personal Tutor at the beginning of your degree programme.

EMS: Biomedical Sciences has responsibility for:

* MSc in Human Anatomy
* PgDip in Anatomical Sciences (OLDL)
* MSc in Science Communication and Public Engagement
* MSc in Science Communication and Public Engagement (OLDL)
* MSc in Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (OLDL)
* MSc in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health (OLDL)
* MSc in International Animal Health (OLDL)
* MSc in Global Health and Infectious Diseases (OLDL)
* PGCert in Global Health Studies (OLDL)
* MSc in Translational Medicine (OLDL)

During the taught part of your degree programme you will have the opportunity for meetings with your Personal Tutor to enable you to settle in and support your development as a member of your subject area’s academic community. You will also have one further scheduled individual meeting with your Personal Tutor during the research part of your degree programme (as appropriate).

**In summary, all postgraduate taught students who are enrolled on one of the above degree programmes and are under the responsibility of the EMS: BMS can expect the following Personal Tutor provision:**

* **At least two individual meetings with your Personal Tutor in the taught part of your degree programme and,**
* **At least one individual meeting in the research part (as appropriate).**
* **Group activities may also be included within the delivery of your programme, either within a face-to-face or online setting.**

Please note: for part-time students scheduled meetings are allocated on a pro-rata basis over their period of study as a whole.

**3.4 Summary of the Postgraduate Personal Tutor Meeting Framework**

**Individual Meetings**

For campus students, the first of your scheduled individual meetings will take place in the first week of Semester 1 or as soon as possible thereafter. In this meeting your Personal Tutor will confirm your attendance on the programme, and give you an opportunity to discuss your aspirations for the coming year, your academic options or choices in programme, and any other matters that you may wish to discuss. Online students may interact with their PT within the framework of their course, or in a synchronous discussion.

The second and third scheduled individual meetings will take place at appropriate times in each programme. These meetings will be an opportunity to discuss your academic progress, career aspirations and personal development as a postgraduate student, as well as any other matters you would like to raise.

Your Personal Tutor will invite you to arrange these meetings at a mutually suitable time.

If you are enrolled on one of the online distance learning programmes, or not on campus for any reason (e.g. studying abroad for a period, or on placement) then your meetings may take place by telephone, live internet call, or a web conferencing application. Email exchanges are not considered to be meetings unless they take place within a pre-agreed timeframe to enable you to have a “conversation” (e.g. if you are overseas and emailing within a 24-36 hour period to take account of time differences).  Please see the section “postgraduate students who are not on campus” for further details of how we provide support for OLDL students.

You can also request *ad hoc* meetings with your Personal Tutor to discuss specific issues if and when they arise. In particular, you must arrange to meet with your Personal Tutor if you have experienced any special circumstances that have had a negative impact on your studies. Further information and guidance on what you should do if you have any special circumstances can be found on the BMTO website (see section 2.1).

In addition to your Personal Tutor, you may request to meet the Postgraduate Taught Senior Personal Tutor, Dr Kim Picozzi Kim.Picozzi@ed.ac.uk at any time in the course of your degree programme. The Senior Personal Tutor amongst other things has the responsibility to help with any issues which you feel you would prefer to discuss with a member of staff other than your Personal Tutor.  For online distance learning students tools to contact the Senior Personal Tutor are provided in the virtual learning environment (VLE), while all other postgraduate students may email the Senior Personal Tutor directly.

**Group Meetings**

You will also be involved in at least two further meetings and group activities designed to support your development as a member of the postgraduate academic community. These will vary according to the programme and will be embedded within the taught or research components. These meetings may involve your Personal Tutor, other academic staff such as project supervisors, graduate students, and external specialists such as visiting faculty or speakers at seminars or lab meetings. Your Personal Tutor will review your engagement and personal academic development as part of the discussion in the scheduled meetings.

**Postgraduate students who are not on campus**

The EMS: Biomedical Sciences is firmly committed to providing the same high level of student support for online learners as for students who study on campus in Edinburgh.

As a student enrolled on an online postgraduate degree you are expected to be in regular and frequent contact with various members of your programme team - the Programme Director, Course Organisers, lecturers on specific topics and course tutors. In the third year of study, the primary contact will be with your dissertation supervisor (how this works in practice is negotiated between you and your supervisor. The programme handbook provides further details). The extent of this contact inevitably affects the role of the Personal Tutor as described elsewhere in this document.

It is likely that as a student registered for an online degree, the most appropriate person to address the majority of issues you might encounter will be your Programme Director or Course Organiser. These members of academic staff will know you, will have an understanding of the potential issues and problems and are optimally positioned to provide relevant support. Therefore, we recommend that for most matters of academic concern you should contact initially the Programme Director or Course Organiser; contact should be initiated by email or via your EUCLID student record.  For some students, the Personal Tutor may, indeed, also be a member of the programme team.

The role of your Personal Tutor is to provide an additional point of contact for all matters (academic and personal) arising out of your studies. It is particularly important that any student who is experiencing difficulties with the course team has access to an independent advocate. Please be aware that if your assigned Personal Tutor is also a member of the programme team, students are encouraged to contact the Postgraduate Senior Personal Tutor (Dr Kim Picozzi; Kim.Picozzi@ed.ac.uk) in such circumstances.

It is important that all students also familiarise themselves with the range of support services available to them, many of which now have online access. These include career progression, writing and transferable skills, English language and statistics courses, Disability Office and information relating to further study opportunities.  If you encounter problems accessing these services then please contact either your programme team or your Personal Tutor.

**4. Meeting with your Personal Tutor – how to arrange and record your meetings**

Personal Tutors will have responsibility for notifying you of the arrangements for scheduled meetings. Please note that a scheduled meeting means that a reasonable proactive attempt has been made to arrange a meeting between a Personal Tutor and a Tutee.  It is accepted that a Tutee may choose not to respond or attend the meeting, which could impact on the support offered to you.

The default method of contacting you will be through the EUCLID notes tools found in MyEd. You will receive an email to your University email account notifying you that a request to attend a meeting can be found in your EUCLID notes. It is very important that you regularly access your University email account. In fact, it is a University requirement that you respond promptly to any request received from the University or a member of University academic and support staff.

You are free to request additional meetings with your Personal Tutor at any time. You should make this request through the EUCLID notes tools on MyEd. Any request from you for a meeting with your Personal Tutor will be responded to within three working days. If no response is received in this time it will be automatically flagged to the BMTO Student Support Team who will then act on it.

**4.1 The EUCLID Meetings and Notes Tools**

The EUCLID meetings and notes channel on MyEd allows you to:

* Request a meeting with your Personal Tutor
* Write notes that record the content and outcomes of your meetings\*
* Read comments placed by your Personal Tutor, BMTO Student Support Team or Senior Tutor\*

\***Confidentiality** - some information may be sensitive. Although it may be necessary to consult colleagues, University staff will treat such information as confidential and will limit disclosures to the minimum necessary. By marking notes and comments as confidential when required, access is limited to you, your Personal Tutor, Senior Personal Tutor, your Student Support Team, the creator of the note (if different from any of the above) and the Dean of Students. More information on confidentiality and how we handle sensitive information can be found online: [University Records Management](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section)

In addition, the EUCLID notes channel provides links to Information about the Personal Tutor System, as well as the following details:

* Name, Email & University telephone number of your Personal Tutor
* Notification of unread notes, meetings or comments made by your Personal Tutor, Student Support Team or Senior Personal Tutor.
* An additional link displays the names of Student Support Team members and the Senior Tutor.

**4.2 Writing Notes**

Writing notes of your meetings with your Personal Tutor will help you get the most out of your discussions about your academic and personal development. You are encouraged to do this using the notes facility in the Personal Tutor channel in MyEd: [www.myed.ed.ac.uk](http://www.myed.ed.ac.uk)

**6. Other Sources of Support**

**6.1 Peer Support**

Peer Support activities are also available to support you and we would encourage you to get involved with these as they’re a great way to engage with other students. Each School has Peer Support activities and there are also activities organised across the University.

**EMS: Biomedical Sciences Academic Family Peer Support Scheme**

Peer support at Edinburgh is defined as “more experienced students supporting less experienced students in their transition to university and beyond”. For all new undergraduate students on a Biomedical/Medical Sciences degree programme, peer support takes the form of ‘Academic Families’. All new undergraduate entrants are allocated into an Academic Family, each led by two or three senior students from our Deanery.

The aims of the Academic Family system are to encourage the forming of relationships, to foster a sense of belonging to the University and to ensure that new students quickly feel part of the learning community within our Deanery. Academic families offer a safe and welcoming environment where new students can feel comfortable in seeking advice and guidance about course choices, study techniques, common pitfalls or even the best places to go out. The scheme also gives the later year students the opportunity to nurture newer students and facilitate their learning.

Every Academic Family will meet at least 5 times throughout the year, although the exact frequency of meetings will be up to each individual family to decide. A named academic member of staff will provide support for the Family structure and a point of contact for leaders. Our scheme has won the EUSA Impact Award for Best Peer Support Scheme in 2015/16 and 2016/17 - so do get involved!

The current staff contact is Deborah Shaw Deborah.shaw@ed.ac.uk

Information about other Peer Support activities across the University can be found at: [EUSA - Peer Support](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/peersupport)

**6.2 Further Information**

Your Personal Tutor and BMTO Student Support Team are part of a wider network of specialist student support services provided by the University to help you have the best possible experience during your studies. Make sure you find out about all that these services have to offer. More information can be obtained on these student services through the following links

* [Student Support Services](http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services/introduction)
* [Academic and Personal Support for Undergraduate Students](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/undergraduate/apsupport)
* [Academic and Personal Support for Postgraduate Taught Students](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/taught)
* [Information about the Personal Tutor IT Tools](http://www.euclid.ed.ac.uk/student/personal_tutors.htm)
* [Information about Graduate Attributes](http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/documents/PT-GA-Intro.pdf)
* [EUSA - Services to Support Students](https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/160340602/EUSA%2Binformation.pdf)

More extensive details on all aspects of the Personal Tutoring system, including each School Personal Tutoring Statement from across the University, can be found at: [My Personal Tutor](http://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/personal-tutor)