

School Personal Tutoring Statement 2017-18

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. More details on the Personal Tutoring system can be found at: [My Personal Tutor](#)

Your Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor will:

- help you to review your academic progress and performance regularly;
- help you to think about your learning, how it contributes to your future development, prepares you for your time at university and your career;
- help you to become a confident, active member of a community of learners;
- help you to deal with any concerns or problems that might affect your studies and refer you to other staff in the School and support services as appropriate.

You can find out who your Personal Tutor is via MyEd.

Undergraduate Students

During your early years at the University your School will schedule meetings with your Personal Tutor 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. Extra meetings are most conveniently arranged via email, but you can also use the messaging system in your student portal.

If you are not on campus (e.g. studying abroad for a period, or on 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).

First year

When you first come to University, you will meet your PT for the first time in Welcome Week, the week before classes begin. His or her name will be given to you in your Welcome Pack, and you can also find it on your electronic record on MyEd. Your PT will normally have a sign-up sheet outside his or her door for you to sign up for your first meeting. Later in the first semester, you will be called to a group meeting with others following the same programme.

In the second semester of first year, you will be asked by your PT to come to a meeting with him or her after the exam results for the first semester are available, usually about Week 3 or 4. This will allow you to review how the first semester's work went and to discuss any extra help you might need, for example if you have failed an exam or have done less well than you expected, or if you want to work at improving your academic skills in a certain area.

At the end of the second semester, you will be asked to discuss your choice of courses for the next year with your Personal Tutor. This can be done in a one-to-one meeting or by email, or in some cases by group meeting. (You will finalise your course choices later in the summer in preparation for embarking on Year 2.)

During the session, there will also be a group meeting for you to meet with peers to discuss the early experience of your programme. So, you can expect to have four meetings in all through the academic year.

Second year

This pattern from first year broadly continues in second year, although you do not need to see your PT before the start of the semester unless you want to discuss a change of course. You will see your PT a minimum of once per semester, plus once at or after the end of Semester 2 to discuss course choices for the following year.

Your PT will tell you at your first meeting what the arrangements will be for scheduling the future once-per-semester meetings. Otherwise, you may email your PT or send a message via EUCLID at any time and request a meeting if you want to discuss anything that is affecting your studies. Normally, it should be possible for your PT to see you within a week during semester time. Your PT will also have an advertised drop-in hour each week during semester time when you can just turn up.

Third year and beyond

You will meet with your PT at least once during the session. In third year, you may find it helpful to discuss possible Honours Dissertation topics with your PT. As your thoughts turn to next steps in your final year, it would be good to have a chat with your PT about how things have gone and what you might do next, including the possibility of further study.

Postgraduate Taught Students

During the taught part of your degree programme your School will schedule meetings with your Personal Tutor (who is also your Taught Masters Programme Director) 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.

If you are not on campus (e.g. 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).

The first meeting will take place during Welcome Week, and will include both group and individual sessions to discuss your degree programme and the course choices you want to make. Your PT will also want to know about your longer-term academic goals (for example, whether you hoping to go on to a PhD, and on what broad topic) to make sure that you are given the advice you need about any languages or skills that you may need to think about picking up. Your second meeting will take place at some point in the second semester, according to the needs of the programme (your PT will inform you of the arrangements). The third meeting will be as you approach the task of writing your dissertation, and will be focused on supporting you through that task. (At this point, you may relate to your dissertation supervisor more directly than your formal PT.)

You will also be involved a group meeting (later in the taught part of your degree programme), and other activities designed to support your development as a member of an academic community. Your PT will inform you of the arrangements for these.

You may also email your PT or send a message via EUCLID at any time and request a meeting if you want to discuss anything that is affecting your studies. Normally, it should be possible for your PT to see you within a week during semester time. Your PT will also have an advertised drop-in hour each week during semester time when you can just turn up.

Support Contacts

Within each School there are a number of other roles working in partnership with Personal Tutors to make sure the Personal Tutor system works for you.

If you have any concerns you wish to speak with someone about, your first point of contact should be with your PT. As far as possible you will remain with the same Personal Tutor throughout your time at the School (unless you request a change), who is available above all to discuss your academic hopes, progress, skills and plans over the time of your degree, and problems which might affect these. If you want to change your PT, you should email the Senior Tutor (see below).

For routine enquires (e.g., questions about course regulations or non-academic issues), contact a member of the Student Support Team.

Student Support Team

Each School has a Student Support Team (SST) working with Personal Tutors to support you.

The **Undergraduate** Student Support Officers, Roisin O'Fee (Teaching Administrator) and Karen Duncan (Student Support Assistant), can be contacted in the School Office, or by email at Div.Student.Support@ed.ac.uk. Their drop-in hours are 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Student Support Officers (SSO's) enrol you on courses, confirm attendance, help with enquiries about programmes of study, course and programme changes, and ensure your MyEd record is correct. They are responsible for dealing with the documentation relating to special circumstances, deal with attendance, absences and interruptions to studies. On request they provide letters confirming student status for letting agencies, banks etc.

Together with your Personal Tutor, they can assist with enquiries of a pastoral nature and can direct you to other appropriate personnel, and support services.

The **Postgraduate** Student Support Officer (Jessica Wilkinson) can also be contacted in the School Office 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 12:30 - 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, or by email at Divinity.PG@ed.ac.uk (for Postgraduates). She is likewise the person to contact for proof of student status, and for general concerns about your well-being as a student at the School of Divinity.

Senior Tutor

Each School has a Senior Tutor who oversees the effectiveness of personal tutoring within your School. If you feel that you cannot speak to your Personal Tutor (and sometimes people simply do not get along due to no fault of either side) please contact the Senior Tutor in Divinity, Dr Alexander Chow (alexander.chow@ed.ac.uk). If you believe a change in Personal Tutor is necessary in your case for whatever reason, contact Dr Chow to arrange a meeting to discuss this in confidence.

Peer Support

Peer Support activities are also available and we'd encourage you to get involved with these as they're a great way to engage with other students. Karen Duncan in the Student Support Office assists with the Peer Support scheme, and is happy to liaise with you on making contact with peer support, should that be a help.

Postgraduate students may access effective peer support through the PG Student Committee convener, Jo Thor (divinity.postgrad@ed.ac.uk).

- Information about other Peer Support activities across the University from the EUSA Peer Support Office (<http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/getinvolved/peer-support/>).