

MSc in Digital Education, Personal Tutor system – Full-time Students

In the 2013/14 academic year, the “Personal Tutor” system was introduced for postgraduate students at the University of Edinburgh. The Personal Tutor system provides each student with a named person who can offer support or guidance to help you navigate your programme of study, including discussing any personal issues that are affecting your study, and answering any questions you may have. In addition, your Personal Tutor will invite you to meet with them three times individually, and twice as part of a group, during your year on the programme. These meetings are an important part of the support that the university offers to postgraduate students, so you are strongly encouraged to attend them.

Who is my personal tutor?

You can find their contact details in your MyEd Personal Tutor channel (more on this below) at any time during the year. Your personal tutor will be a member of the MSc in Digital Education team, and for full-time students will normally be your blog tutor for the Introduction to Digital Environments for Learning (IDEL) course.

When will meetings take place?

You will be invited to three individual meetings during the course of your study – one in Semester 1; one in Semester 2; and one during the dissertation stage.

You will also be invited to two group meetings: one in Semester 1, with other full-time students, and one in Semester 2.

Can I contact my Personal Tutor at other times?

Yes, absolutely. You can contact your Personal Tutor at any time during the year if you have concerns or questions about the progress of your studies, have personal or professional issues that may be affecting your progress, or need to discuss any aspect of your experience on the programme. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your Personal Tutor – it is often the case that the sooner you raise concerns or issues, the better.

What will the individual meetings be about?

The focus of individual meetings will be on your academic progress and your future directions. However, if there are other areas where you would like advice, your personal tutor can help you to identify relevant sources of information or support.

If there are any circumstances that you feel are affecting your progress or wellbeing at university, you should not hesitate to raise them. If you think things could be going better, you are struggling or feel unmotivated, talk to your personal tutor about it.

Before each meeting, you are asked to reflect on the following areas, and come to the meeting with any questions or issues you want to raise in relation to:

Semester 1:

- Your goals for the year
- Your experiences so far on the programme
- Interests and possible future directions
- Main areas of concern / challenges
- Other questions, matters for discussion, information to pass on

Semester 2:

- Main achievements from the previous semester
- Main areas of concern / challenges
- How you are preparing yourself for the dissertation period
- Other questions, matters for discussion, information to pass on

During dissertation:

- How your research is building on existing skills and abilities
- What new skills and abilities you are developing
- To what extent you have achieved the goals you set
- Professional development and career plans in light of the programme
- How you can record your strengths, experiences and achievements and take these forward.

What will the group meetings be about?

The first group meeting (Semester 1) will be an opportunity to talk with other full-time students about your experiences on the programme, share ideas and strategies, and discuss any issues that you are experiencing as full-time students on a (largely) part-time programme.

The second group meeting (Semester 2) will be held with a larger group of students at different stages on the programme.

Your Personal Tutor will attend and facilitate these meetings, and take forward any matters raised with the Programme Director and the programme team as needed (with your permission).

What will the platform of the meetings be?

You and your personal tutor can discuss what platform will be most suitable for your individual meetings. This could be real-time discussion in Skype (text or voice), Second Life, Collaborate, by phone, or in another environment that suits you both. If a synchronous meeting isn't feasible due to time zones or other considerations, you can arrange to exchange emails over a planned period of two or three days.

Group meetings will most likely be held in a synchronous text or voice chat format – this will be confirmed by your Personal Tutor when they invite you the meeting.

Is what I talk about with my Personal Tutor confidential?

In order to support you effectively, general information about your progress and your plans is recorded and stored after each meeting. This happens through the recording of meetings in the Personal Tutor channel in MyEd (see below). Where relevant, and with your permission, your Personal Tutor might take issues or questions you have raised directly to the appropriate member of the Digital Education programme team or the University. This can, in some cases, be done without disclosing your identity.

Your Personal Tutor will not normally discuss sensitive information with anyone else without your permission, or include it in your Personal Tutor notes. However, in some cases, for example if they think that there is a danger of harm to you or others, they are required to break confidentiality.

How are meetings recorded?

The MyEd portal provides you with a Personal Tutor channel for tracking the content of meetings you have with your Personal Tutor, and helping you and your Personal Tutor reflect on the progress and direction of your studies. This channel enables you, your Personal Tutor and other University staff to record a sequence of notes, each note either starting a fresh subject or commenting on a previous note. A [guide to using the Personal Tutor channel](#) is available.

After each meeting, your Personal Tutor will add some brief notes to your MyEd meeting record concerning topics discussed, matters agreed upon, and recommendations made. They will not enter details of what you talk about. When matters are of a sensitive nature, your Personal Tutor will be very brief, for example perhaps recording just that "A personal issue was discussed".

You are welcome to reflect on the meeting and add further details to your MyEd record as you think appropriate (not including any personal or sensitive details). Add this further information in a Comment note: open this up by clicking on the Comment link within the post created by your Personal Tutor.

You always have full visibility of all the information on your Personal Tutor channel, and you have a degree of control over who else can see this information. By default, all authorised University staff can view your notes. However, if a particular note is marked as confidential, its visibility will be restricted to you, your Personal Tutor, the School's Senior Tutor, the School's Student Support Team and the Dean of Students.

The University's [Records Management web pages](#) give further information on how the University manages information about you.