

School of GeoSciences¹

School Personal Tutoring Statement

The Benefits of the Personal Tutor system

By working in partnership with your Personal Tutor you will:

- Become a confident learner in your discipline and play an active part in your academic community.
- Reflect on your academic progress and your effective use of academic feedback.
- Develop the range of skills and attributes required for success at university and beyond.

More extensive details on all aspects of the Personal Tutoring system, as well as other sources of support at the University, can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services/academic>

Full details of the academic and pastoral support in School of GeoSciences can be found at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/teaching-organisation>

How your School will deliver these Benefits – Undergraduate Students

One-to-one Meetings:

As an undergraduate student you will have at least two individual meetings with your Personal Tutor each academic year.

- At the start of academic session (ie. Freshers' Week), first year students will have an introductory meeting with their Personal Tutor to go over your degree programme structure and requirements, course selection and discuss any relevant issues that may impact on your studies. For continuing student you are also welcome to meet with their Personal Tutor at the start of the year, particularly, if you have not pre-selected your courses in advance or to reflect on your performance in the previous year.
- You will then have one individual meeting with your Personal Tutor each semester which will likely take place mid-semester for 15-30 minutes.
- The individual meetings will be coordinated by your Personal Tutor or Student Support Coordinator. The focus of individual meetings may differ depending on your year of study but may include:

Semester 1:

- Academic progress review
- Discussion of your development of specific academic skills and goals
- Where appropriate, the Personal Tutor will refer you to specialist and skills workshops, for example the Institute of Academic Development, or resources
- Encouragement of you to engage in peer support networks
- Study skills and time management skills

Semester 2:

¹ Please note: For students on the MBChB programme, teaching and student support are organised at programme level rather than through a School. For PGT students in CMVM, some aspects of teaching and student support are organised at College and programme level rather than through a School. In CMVM, IT support for Personal Tutoring is through EEMeC and EEVeC rather than MyEd.

- Academic progression review considering semester 1 examination and course marks and feedback reflecting on attainment of goals so far across all courses taken and any cross-cutting issues
- Discuss your objectives and ideas regarding summer employment, personal development and goals for return to University (most relevant for students moving from pre-honours to honours level study)
- Provide discipline-specific guidance, for example, careers, research or postgraduate study (most relevant to honours level students)
- You can request additional meetings if you feel this is necessary or you have a specific academic issue during semester you would like to discuss. If so, you can request a meeting through your MyEd Personal Tutor channel or email your Personal Tutor directly requesting a mutually convenient time, or alternatively contact your Student Support Coordinator to facilitate this.
- If you are experiencing issues affecting their ability to study or attend lectures you should contact the Student Support Coordinator via phone, email or the MyEd system as soon as possible.
- If you are not on campus and taking part in a year abroad or Erasmus exchange then your meetings may take place by telephone, live internet call, or a web conferencing application such as Skype.
- 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).
- Your PT or Student Support Coordinator will record a summary of your meeting onto your student record for you to refer to or comment on.

Group Meetings:

Each year you will be involved in at least one group meeting and other activities designed to support your development as a member of an academic community.

- The group meetings will enable you to engage with students from across your degree programme. Some group meetings will be facilitated by your Personal Tutor, a group of Personal Tutors or a University Support Service such as Careers or the Institute of Academic Development. The meetings will be organised by your Student Support Coordinator who will notify you of the upcoming meetings in the semester.
- The themes of the group meetings, which normally last for up to one hour, can include academic writing, presentation and technical skills, CV workshops and opportunities to meet with employers and industrial contacts depending on your programme of study. We aim to make the group meetings as relevant to your degree programme and year of study as possible to enable you to develop skills to use beyond your degree.
- Students are encouraged provide suggestions for group meeting topics to their Personal Tutor, Student Support Coordinator or via the Student Staff Liaison Committee.
- Attendance at group meetings will be recorded on your student record.

Peer Support:

Peer Support activities are also available to every campus-based undergraduate. We encourage you to get involved with these as they are a great way to engage with other students.

- The School of GeoSciences has a Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme for 1st year students which will launch in September of 2013. All first year students are allocated to a peer support group that runs every two weeks. Two trained student facilitators from your degree area lead each group and you will be able to engage with other students on particular topics or to discuss any issue you might be facing on your degree in a friendly environment.
- Information and schedule information can be found at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/teaching-organisation/students/peer-support>
- Information about other Peer Support activities across the University can be found at the following link: [EUSA Peer Support](#)

How your School will deliver these Benefits – Postgraduate Taught Students

One-to-one Meetings:

As a postgraduate taught student you will have at least two individual meetings with your Personal Tutor during the taught component of your degree programme and one individual meeting during the dissertation phase.

- Your first two individual meetings will take place at relevant points during the taught portion of the programme, for example, after the first semester examination diet to review progression or during the dissertation selection phase. Your individual meetings will also focus on:
 - Academic progression review considering semester 1 examination and course marks and feedback
 - Discussion of the students' development of specific academic skills and goals
 - Where appropriate the Personal Tutor will refer the student to specialist and skills workshops, for example the Institute of Academic Development, or resources
 - Study skills and time management skills
 - Reflect on attainment of goals so far across all courses taken and any cross-cutting issues
 - Discussion of the students' selection and planning for your dissertation project
 - Provide discipline-specific guidance, for example, careers or PhD study
- Your third individual meeting will take place from May to August in person or via Skype. The meeting will focus on your dissertation, including reviewing progress or agreeing to a study outside of Edinburgh plan. It is also an opportunity to discuss any issues related to dissertation supervision. You will have regular contact with your dissertation supervisor.
- You can request additional meetings if you feel this is necessary or you have a specific academic issue during the programme they would like to discuss. If so, you can request a meeting through your MyEd Personal Tutor channel or email your Personal Tutor directly requesting a mutually convenient time. The Programme Secretary can also assist you with organising a meeting.
- If you are experiencing issues affecting your ability to study or attend lectures you should contact your Programme Secretary or Personal Tutor/Programme Director as soon as possible.
- 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).

- After each individual meeting you will be asked to provide a summary of notes and actions on your student record. This note will be shared with your Personal Tutor automatically.

Group Meetings:

You will also be involved in at least two group meetings (in the taught part of your degree programme) and other activities designed to support your development as a member of an academic community.

- Your two group meetings will be focused at programme level on relevant topics and will include all students on your degree programme. The group meetings will take place during the taught element and be led by your Programme Director/Personal Tutor. The group meetings can involve external speakers or careers focused sessions.
- Attendance at group meetings will be recorded on your student record.
- In addition to your group meetings, you will have the opportunity to take part in a number of research skills group sessions including:
 - Examination and essay writing skills (September/October)
 - The Dissertation Mixer which is a great networking event with academic staff and external organisations discussing potential dissertation topics and work based projects (November)
 - Quantitative and Qualitative skills training (March/April)
 - Literature Review sessions (March/April)
 - Invites to the Global Environment and Society Academy seminars and training sessions (September to June)

Distance Learning (PGCert):

If you are registered on the distance learning PG Certificate in Global Environmental Challenges you will have a Personal Tutor who will review your academic progression on all three courses. Your Personal Tutor will contact you requesting a meeting via Skype or equivalent after your first assignment on each course has been returned to you. This will enable you to review your feedback and reflect on your progression.

Student Support Organisational Structure – Who to Contact?

All taught students have a Personal Tutor, a Senior Tutor, and a Student Support Team in the School. You can find out who your Personal Tutor is through MyEd and identify your Student Support Team. The student support system in the School of GeoSciences is managed through the Teaching Office with three Senior Personal Tutors.

Full details on the academic and pastoral care in the School of GeoSciences can be found at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/teaching-organisation/students>

Undergraduate:

Your Personal Tutor is your first point of contact for academic support. If you are experiencing issues that are impacting on your ability to attend lectures or study the first point of contact is your **Student Support Coordinator** who is part of the Teach Organisation team who can assist you with:

- Guidance on degree regulations and requirements

- Information on procedures and requests for deferred submission of course work
- Requests for special circumstances related to your course work or examination
- Advice on support for personal, health and accommodation issues making relevant referrals to University Support Services
- Processing degree transfer and interruption of study requests
- Advice on visa requirements and extensions
- Guidance on applying for study abroad
- Providing letters to confirm student status and non-academic based reference letters
- Assisting Personal Tutors with organising individual and group meetings

New students will receive a welcome letter from your Student Support Coordinator to ensure you have one point of contact for any induction questions. They will also support the GeoPals Peer Learning system and be involved in your local Student Staff Liaison committees. The Student Support Coordinators are:

Emma Latto (Emma.Latto@ed.ac.uk)

Student Support Coordinator (Earth Science and Environment and Ecological Sciences
Room 328 Grant Institute, King's Building Campus (also available in the Crew building for appointments)

0131 650 5932

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=2473&cw_xml=person.html

Cathy Campbell (Cathy.Campbell@ed.ac.uk)

Student Support Coordinator (Geography)

Room 2.09 Geography Teaching Office, Drummond Street

0131 650 2523

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=1844&cw_xml=person.html

Your **Personal Tutor** is your first point of contact for issues regarding your academic progress, including:

- offering academic advice to student on course choices, study abroad or degree programme transfer requests
- guiding students on study skills and any study difficulties they are experiencing
- imparting guidance on exams and other assessment techniques including advising on essay and field/laboratory report writing skills
- advising on feedback and academic progress
- giving guidance on careers related matters
- requests for academic references

The **Senior Personal Tutors** are responsible for:

- Approving undergraduate progression and concession requests
- Overseeing the undergraduate Personal Tutor system and monitoring individual and group meetings

The Senior Personal Tutors are:

Professor Mat Williams (Mat.Williams@ed.ac.uk)

Senior Undergraduate Personal Tutor (Earth Science and Environment and Ecological Sciences)

Dr Neil Stuart (N.Stuart@ed.ac.uk)

Deputy Senior Undergraduate Personal Tutor (Geography)

The GeoScience Teaching Office manages academic and pastoral support. If at any time you wish to raise issues with the academic or pastoral support provided on your degree programme or to request to be allocated to another Personal Tutor, please contact Sarah McAllister, Manager of the Teaching Organisation at Sarah.McAllister@ed.ac.uk. We also welcome feedback from students directly or via their Student Staff Liaison Committee.

Postgraduate:

Your Personal Tutor is your first point of contact for academic and pastoral support. However, If you are experiencing issues that are impacting on your ability to attend lectures or study you may also contact your **Programme Secretary** who is part of the Teach Organisation team and can assist you with:

- Information on procedures and requests for deferred submission of course work
- Requests for special circumstances related to your course work or examination
- Advice on support for personal, health and accommodation issues making relevant referrals to University Support Services
- Processing degree transfer and interruption of study requests
- Advice on visa requirements and extensions
- Providing letters to confirm student status and non-academic based reference letters
- Assisting Personal Tutors with organising individual and group meetings

Olivia Eadie (Olivia.Eadie@ed.ac.uk)

Postgraduate (Taught) Team Leader (MSc in Carbon Management and MSc in Ecosystem Services)

Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, High School Yards

0131 651 4657

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=3665&cw_xml=person.html

Natasa Honeybone (Natasa.Honeybone@ed.ac.uk)

Programme Secretary (MSc in Environment and Development and MSc in Environmental Sustainability)

Room 2.09 Geography Teaching Office, Drummond Street

0131 651 7274

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=3213&cw_xml=person.html

Lynne Gillivray

Programme Secretary (MSc in GIS, MSc in Environment, Culture and Society and MSc in Human Geography)

Room 2.09 Geography Teaching Office, Drummond Street

0131 650 2543

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=3499&cw_xml=person.html

Olivia Eadie (Olivia.Eadie@ed.ac.uk)

Programme Secretary (MSc in Carbon Capture and Storage, MSc in Integrated Resource Management and MSc in Petroleum Geoscience)
Room 214 Ecology Teaching Office, Crew Building
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/people?indv=3665&cw_xml=person.html

Scottish Rural College University:

Elsbeth Martin (Elsbeth.Martin@sruc.ac.uk)
Programme Secretary (MSc in Ecological Economics, MSc in Environmental Protection and Management, MSc in Soils and Sustainability and MSc in Food Security)
Room 249 Peter Wilson Building, King's Building Campus
0131 535 4198
http://www.sruc.ac.uk/directory_record/10947/martin_elsbeth

In vast majority of cases your Programme Director will act as your **Personal Tutor** but for larger programmes a Deputy Programme Director will also act as a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor is your first point of contact for issues regarding your academic progress, including:

- Guidance on degree regulations and requirements
- Offering academic advice to student on course choices, study abroad or degree programme transfer requests
- Guiding students on study skills and any study difficulties they are experiencing
- Imparting guidance on exams and other assessment techniques including advising on essay and field/laboratory report writing skills
- Advising on feedback and academic progress
- Giving guidance on careers related matters
- Requests for academic references

The **Senior Postgraduate Personal Tutor** is responsible for:

- Approving interruption of study requests
- Overseeing the Personal Tutor system at postgraduate level and monitoring individual and group meetings

The Postgraduate Senior Personal tutor is:

Dr Dave Reay (David.Reay@ed.ac.uk)
Senior Postgraduate Personal Tutor

The GeoScience Teaching Office manages academic and pastoral support. If at any time you wish to raise issues with the academic or pastoral support provided on your degree programme or to request to be allocated to another Personal Tutor, please contact Sarah McAllister, Manager of the Teaching Organisation at Sarah.McAllister@ed.ac.uk. We also welcome feedback from students directly or via the Postgraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee.

Distance Learning:

If at any time during your distance learning courses you are experiencing issues that are impacting on your ability to study or submit assessments, please get in touch with your Course Organiser and Personal Tutor as soon as possible to ensure we can offer you the appropriate level of support.