

New Personal Tutors' Briefing

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Purpose of this meeting

- ▶ Talk about the role of Personal Tutors in the School of Informatics
- ▶ Go over important PT-related procedures
- ▶ Indicate where to go for further information and support

Please interrupt with questions and discussion at any point!

Aspirations

We tell all our undergrads and taught postgrads:

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.*

(From the School's Personal Tutoring Statement)

Personal Tutor Responsibilities

- ▶ Give advice on course and programme choices
- ▶ Review past performance and engagement
- ▶ Discuss how to improve study skills
- ▶ Help with course registration
- ▶ Provide advice on University rules and regulations
- ▶ Provide support if circumstances impact studies (e.g. health issues)
- ▶ Write academic references

Responsibility delivery

Delivery of responsibilities is by:

- ▶ scheduled 1–1 meetings, 1–3 times per year
- ▶ group meetings for some years
- ▶ additional 1–1 meetings and email exchanges as necessary

More details shortly.

Electronic records

- ▶ Record system is EUCLID
 - ▶ PTs access it via *Teaching and Research* tab, *Administration* section on MyEd
 - ▶ Students access via *PT* and *Self Service* MyEd channels
- ▶ For each student
 - ▶ PT Notes section keeps a sequence of *Meetings* and *Notes* entries
 - ▶ Other sections for *Course* enrolments and results, *Programme* information, *Progression* decisions, any *Adjustments* for disability, etc.
- ▶ Students have full visibility of all entries
- ▶ Students can add entries to their record, as can any authorised University staff member
 - ▶ E.g. Senior Tutor, Student Support Officer
- ▶ Entries can be deleted, but a 'deleted entry' note remains.

1-to-1 Meetings: how many, how important?

- ▶ UG1: start of each semester. **Also**, mid-semester 1, but you can choose to do this in groups instead.
- ▶ UG2: start of each semester.
- ▶ UG3,4,5: start of year.
- ▶ MSc: start of each semester, and early in summer.

Start of year meetings are **essential**: you confirm attendance at these. Some students will balk at S2 meetings, but try to get them to show up for a couple of minutes at least.

The UG1 mid-S1 meeting is a result of widespread requests from UG1s across the university to get to know their PTs better early on.

1-to-1 Meetings: Activities

- ▶ Review past performance and engagement
- ▶ If student is carrying courses, or even re-taking, discuss how they're going to manage.
- ▶ Give advice on obtaining additional support
 - ▶ relating directly to study skills
 - ▶ relating to other factors impacting studies
- ▶ Discuss direction of studies
 - ▶ Is student happy?
 - ▶ Is student wanting to explore alternative programmes?
- ▶ Consider career plans (e.g. in Year 2 meeting)
- ▶ Choose optional courses (Years 1 & 2) - **you** enrol them!
- ▶ Advise on Honours courses (Years 3, 4, 5, MSc) **and enrol them**
- ▶ Discuss project (Years 4 & 5 and MSc)
- ▶ Confirm attendance (Semester 1 only)

1-to-1 Meetings: How long?

- ▶ For freshers in S1, you will probably want to have about 20 minutes of interaction. 30 minutes will allow for making notes on Euclid with student present.
- ▶ Thereafter, it's very student-dependent. In S2, I offer blocks of 10-minute slots, and ask students to book one or two (or occasionally three) as they wish.
- ▶ 2nd year is often straightforward even in S1 – just one outside course to choose.
- ▶ 3rd and 4th year involve course choices – students will want to discuss these, so probably at least 20 mins again.
- ▶ MSc – numbers are high, do what you can

1-to-1 Meetings: Preparation

- ▶ Schedule meetings using email or Doodle
- ▶ Use of *Record a future meeting* EUCLID functionality encouraged, but not essential
 - ▶ Helps Senior Tutor, ITO, College track what's going on

1-to-1 Meetings: Prompt forms

- ▶ Students asked to fill in prompt form before first meeting of year
- ▶ For continuing students, questions are
 - ▶ How satisfied are you with your recent progress?
 - ▶ What study skills do you feel you need to work on?
 - ▶ Are there any issues that have impacted your studies that you would like to discuss?
 - ▶ Are you happy with the direction of your studies?
 - ▶ If you have course choices to make, what do you have in mind? Why?
 - ▶ Is there anything else you wish to discuss?
- ▶ Questions slightly different for Year 1 and MSc students
- ▶ Even when not filled in beforehand, prompts are very useful for structuring meeting discussion
- ▶ Forms available from *Student Supplement* to School's *Personal Tutoring Statement*

1-to-1 Meetings: During meetings

- ▶ Check if there is a *Pre-Arrival Questionnaire* on their record
 - ▶ If so, please acknowledge you've seen it at the meeting start and give it a quick scan
 - ▶ The questionnaire is mainly intended to encourage self-reflection; There's no need to discuss its contents in any detail
 - ▶ Topics covered are generally broader than on the prompt forms
- ▶ Add brief notes to electronic Meeting record entry concerning
 - ▶ topics discussed
 - ▶ matters agreed on
 - ▶ recommendations made
- ▶ Add notes either using *Record a recent meeting* feature or as *Comment* on entry created using the *Record a future meeting* feature.
- ▶ Ask your student to add a follow-up *Comment* entry, filling out details and reflecting on meeting

1-to-1 Meetings: After meetings

- ▶ Check up on the notes added by students
- ▶ Add a *Comment*, confirming correctness, clarifying points, and adding further remarks, as needed

Mandatory Additional Meetings

- ▶ Usually in groups, involving perhaps 8–12 students. 25 is too many.
- ▶ Suggest holding them as follows:
 - ▶ UG1/UG2 group meetings in middle of S2 (possibly hang it off the mid-semester gap week)
- ▶ Personal Tutors facilitate discussion on topics such as
 - ▶ study skills, time management skills, work habits and exam-taking tips found most useful,
 - ▶ particularly-recommended optional courses,
 - ▶ experiences from summer jobs or study abroad years,
 - ▶ advice on how to best improve programming skills,
 - ▶ job hunting and possible future careers.
- ▶ Students are strongly encouraged to add some reflective note to their record after the meeting

Choosing Optional Courses

- ▶ For Years 1 & 2: **Hard Deadline for S1:** Fri 27 September.
 - ▶ PTs take care of registration
 - ▶ There is advice in PT statement, and see
 - ▶ http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/imurray2/pt/outside_courses.html (Thanks to Iain Murray!)
 - ▶ Courses in HSS often have caps: **enrol early**.
- ▶ For Years 3–5 and MSc:
 - ▶ Students build course choices on PATH system, send these to you, and you to do the enrolments on EUCLID
 - ▶ The PT Statement includes basic advice
 - ▶ The Year Handbooks provide detailed guidance
- ▶ If students want to do courses not in their degree, consult – we try to be flexible.
- ▶ S1 Changes after 27 Sep: (a) don't, (b) if you must, contact ITO (or me).
- ▶ S2 courses can be changed up to end of S2 week 2.

PATH System

Programme builder for Informatics Programmes at:
<https://path.is.ed.ac.uk/degrees/INF>

Course selections for your tutees can be found at:
<https://path.is.ed.ac.uk/supervisor>
Hover over a course to find its code

Iain Murray has methods for accessing lists of course codes if using Firefox or Chrome. Visit:
<https://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/imurray2/pt/path.html>

Honours/Postgrad Informatics Courses

They have a *level* and a *normal year taken*.

- ▶ UG3 students take level 9/10 *Year 3* courses
- ▶ UG4 students take level 10/11 *Year 3* or *Year 4* courses
- ▶ UG5 students take level 11 *Year 4* or *postgraduate* courses
- ▶ MSc students must take at least 90 credits of level 11 courses, and up to 30 credits of level 10 courses, irrespective of the year labellings. **No exceptions possible.**

What happens when a course is failed?

Years 1 and 2 (Level 8)

- ▶ In each Academic Year, 2 attempts, main in Dec/May and resit in Aug
- ▶ Tier 4 students normally allowed only 3 attempts. 4th only in exceptional circumstances approved by College (UKVI)
- ▶ Others allowed max of 4 attempts

Years 3–5 and MSc (Level 9-11)

- ▶ Normally only one attempt
- ▶ Second attempt allowed in special circumstances in Year 3
- ▶ *Pass on aggregate*. If 80 credits passed and overall average above 40, failed courses are also awarded credits.

A *null sit* for an attempt is when an attempt has been disregarded because of special circumstances.

Confirming attendance

You must confirm attendance (with the button on the EUCLID Programme/Session tab) at start of year.

- ▶ For *all students in attendance*, you cannot confirm attendance until you have *physically seen* the student.
- ▶ For students taking an (exam/assessment)-only repeat year you can just confirm
- ▶ For students studying abroad, you need first some confirmation (e.g. email) that they are at their host institution.
- ▶ Do NOT confirm returning students who cannot yet progress
 - ▶ Look at the latest *Progression history* entry in the *Progression* section on EUCLID
 - ▶ Click on the *Programme Session* date for details

Concessions, Interruptions of Study, and Programme Changes

- ▶ Concessions enable students to continue studies on slight variations of Programmes of Study as described in DPTs
 - ▶ E.g. a student might need permission to resit a failed Year 1 course while simultaneously taking a follow-on Year 2 course
- ▶ Interruptions 'stop the clock', usually for medical reasons.
- ▶ Students can change degrees under some circumstances.
- ▶ See the PT web pages for extensive guidance.

During the year

You probably won't have to do very much, except hold the scheduled meetings and answer the occasional query. Feel free to engage more actively, though.

There is one **important** task during the year:

Special Circumstances

are things outside the student's control that significantly adversely affect their performance.

- ▶ It's up to the student to tell you about such things.
- ▶ Nonetheless, you should actively investigate as soon as you hear of unexpected poor performance or non-attendance (you will get many automatic reports).
- ▶ If you get reports of non-submitted coursework, contact the student: **especially important** for Tier 4 (overseas) students. Immigration consequences can follow!
- ▶ Bear in mind that particularly with depressive illnesses, students may not feel able to report without prompting.
- ▶ It is **now the student's responsibility** to submit a case to all the relevant Boards of Examiners. But please help them if they need it. See PT pages for further guidance.
- ▶ You will be reminded of this at the key times.

Student Support Team

- ▶ UG1&2: Karen Davidson (0131 650 3151)
- ▶ UG3,4&5: Iain Dornan (0131 650 2959)
- ▶ MSc: Katey Lee (0131 650 3148)

inf-sst@inf.ed.ac.uk

Level 6, Appleton Tower

The SST can

- ▶ act as main point of contact for students if they are experiencing any difficulties and for any non-academic queries
- ▶ meet with students during office hours
- ▶ act as a main point of contact for staff, providing accurate and consistent advice on student matters
- ▶ help with regulations and processes such as special circumstances, extensions, progression and degree transfers

Requirements on use of EUCLID

Use of the student record is not optional.

- ▶ You **must** record each of the mandatory scheduled 1-1 meetings at a PT Note
- ▶ **Please** record a brief note, confidential if appropriate, about anything that may affect assessment or progression decisions.
- ▶ For Tier 4 students, you are **required** also to record each 1-1 meeting as an *engagement point*.

Topics for electronic record entries

Minimalist approach: PT and other staff record

- ▶ Notes on each meeting, including agreed actions, course choices etc.
- ▶ Problems and special circumstances (confidentially)
- ▶ Progression decisions, SCC outcomes, etc.

Maximalist approach: PT also writes advice, praise, warnings.
Student notes, e.g.,

- ▶ Satisfaction with recent progress
- ▶ subjects or skills that need attention
- ▶ Career areas of interest
- ▶ Experiences in summer jobs and internships

resulting in a detailed portfolio record of the student's career here.

Personal Tutors and students are encouraged to experiment

Confidentiality

- ▶ Currently system provides 2 levels of access restriction
 - ▶ By default all authorised university staff
 - ▶ Can restrict to student, Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor, Student Support Team and Dean of Students
- ▶ Personal Tutors and students may not wish to use system for particularly sensitive information
 - ▶ in these cases, still important to leave some trace on system: could just say that some special circumstances were noted and advice was given
- ▶ In general, PTs and students are encouraged not to restrict visibility
 - ▶ As they do so, possible support provided by the Uni becomes more limited

Student record versus email/paper

- ▶ Information that is long-lasting or important should be on EUCLID. (For SST, Senior Tutor, next PT, or if current PT is unavailable.)
- ▶ Email often more convenient for discussion – when an important conclusion is reached, make a note on EUCLID.
 - ▶ Data protection: how long to keep student email? When student leaves, try distilling out the info you need for writing references, and discard the email.
- ▶ If student tells you very confidential stuff, agree with them whether it may be noted (confidentially) on EUCLID, whether it's definitely never to go beyond you, etc.

Confidentiality – relatives

The University's relationship is with the student.

You may not discuss any aspect of the student's career here outside the University, unless you have the student's permission.

Not even with parents. (Genuine emergencies excepted, but if there's time to seek advice, do.)

Informatics PT information pages

`http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/ito/staff/pt`

Bookmark this!

If you notice anything that needs adding or fixing, please let me know.

Important examples of resources follow.

Informatics PT Quick Guide

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/inf-ptguide/>

Linked to on *Resources for Personal Tutors* information page

Topics of particular relevance for new PTs include:

- ▶ Additional courses/credits
- ▶ Careers
- ▶ Course registration and changes
- ▶ EUCLID how-to's
- ▶ Matriculation
- ▶ PT meetings
- ▶ Role of a Personal Tutor
- ▶ Study skills
- ▶ Visiting Undergraduate Students (VUGs)

The DRPS

DRPS = *Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study*

<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/>

- ▶ DRPS lists every Degree Programme and every course at the University
- ▶ Go look the DPTs (*Degree Programme Tables*) for at least a couple of the Informatics Programmes (e.g. Computer Science, Informatics)
 - ▶ Years 1–2 have compulsory Informatics and Maths courses
 - ▶ Years 3–4 or 3–5 allow a lot of choice
- ▶ From a DPT, click through on a few Course links to see Course Descriptors
- ▶ Lists of all courses in any School can be found via the right-hand menu.

The Informatics Personal Tutoring Statement

<http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/ito/admin/personal-tutoring-statement>

This includes

- ▶ An overview of the Informatics Personal Tutoring system
- ▶ A *Supplement* for the students that expands on many topics touched upon earlier in this presentation
- ▶ A *Staff supplement* with additional information directed specifically at PTs

You are strongly encouraged to scan over all three parts to see what is there.

Further Important Sources of Information (1)

- ▶ IAD (Institute for Academic Development)
 - ▶ Personal Tutoring Guidance
 - ▶ Study skills advice
- ▶ EUCLID Guide to Student Administration by Personal Tutors
 - ▶ Be sure to explore EUCLID's functionality before your first student meeting

Sources relevant to mental health

- ▶ The Student Counselling Service
 - ▶ Short term 1–1 counselling
 - ▶ Lots of online self-help resources for depression, anxiety, perfectionism, etc.
- ▶ Helping Distressed Students guide for University staff
 - ▶ Provides flowcharts to help you quickly decide what to do and who to contact
 - ▶ Well worth having a copy at hand
- ▶ The Student Disability Service (see next slide)

Personal Tutors are *not* expected to have any expertise on handling mental health issues.

But, if approached, they must listen and try to ensure, as needed, that appropriate support is sought.

The Student Disability Service

- ▶ Supports students with a wide range of impairments and difficulties.
 - ▶ E.g. dyslexia, autism, sensory and mobility impairments, mental health problems, diabetes, asthma
- ▶ Assesses students and ensures appropriate support is in place.
 - ▶ E.g. schedules of adjustments, note takers, mental health mentors, assistive technology
- ▶ Vital that students needing their support make contact early
 - ▶ Can be need to apply for government funding
 - ▶ One prompt question for incoming students is to check if there are any mental or physical issues that might impact studying and if so, whether contact has been made with SDS

The Advice Place

Run by EUSA = Edinburgh University Student Association

- ▶ Money
 - ▶ budgeting, emergency loans, opening a bank account, benefits
- ▶ Housing
 - ▶ finding accommodation, repair issues, checking leases, deposits, infestations
- ▶ Health
 - ▶ Special circumstances policy, signposting to mental health and wellbeing support in uni and beyond, registering with GP or dentists
- ▶ Academic
 - ▶ Progression, appeals, academic misconduct, interruptions of studies, complaints.
- ▶ Further
 - ▶ crime and hate crime reporting, sexual assault reporting, domestic violence, harassment, discrimination.

People

- ▶ The Student Support Team – Karen Davidson, Iain Dornan, Katey Lee
- ▶ The Senior Tutor – Paul Jackson
- ▶ The Student Progression Officer – Stephen Gilmore
- ▶ The SCAO (*School Curriculum Approval Officer*) – Stephen Gilmore
 - ▶ Handles deviations from DPTs and programme changes
 - ▶ Contact via SST for routine programme changes

If you need urgent advice, please feel free to ring me (50-5131) or contact the Student Support Team.