

Course Name	Postgraduate Certificate in Informatics by Distance Education
Delivery Method	Distance Education
Contact	Robert Fisher

1. How does this programme fit with both College and University Strategy?

- The programme is being developed under support from the University's Distance Education Initiative. It contributes to the strategic objective of greatly growing the number of distance students.
- The programme also contributes to the goal of diversifying the sources of MSc students, e.g. in the School of Informatics. Currently, Informatics benefits greatly from a large number of OS students. Political or economic changes may make a significant impact on numbers and thus income. In other words, we have too many eggs in the same basket.
- A third contribution is to increasing the engagement between the University and industry, by marketing the courses as career enhancers for company employees (as well as suitable for traditional students).

2. Who are the main competitors for this Programme. How does Edinburgh's offering compare?

I am not aware of any specific Distance Based PgCert degrees in the USA. Three somewhat comparable and competitive full MSc degrees are from Stanford (£14,500 for 1/3 of their MSc), Univ of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (£8877 for 1/3) and Georgia Inst of Technology (£1879 for 1/3). The latter course has received much publicity and they boast of 3358 enrolments (32% success rate) since their 2014 launch. Their educational model is unclear, but is probably based on considerable computerisation of delivery and assessment. The program also benefits from \$2m investment from ATT (Note: GIT is also introducing an online MSc in Analytics). In the UK (full MSc costs), Hertfordshire (£6400 UK/OS), Leicester (£11,400), Staffordshire (£6000 UK/EU), Liverpool (has a variety of MSc with 1000 enrolled students, price unclear). Manchester offers 4 individual courses by Distance (price unclear). Edinburgh's Informatics has a much higher reputation.

3. What is the target market of the Programme? Will any existing programmes be affected by the introduction of this Programme?

A market that seems to not have been penetrated as much is skill upgrade in the industrial sector. These students are as likely to take a few courses through PPD, as completing a full degree. Having the PgCert will allow delivery of the PPD courses as well.

A second potential market is overseas students, in that the eventual full MSc course cost is only 70% of the on campus course cost. The distance course also avoids visa issues.

Because of the use of 60 credits of Informatics courses by both the PgCert proposed here and the MSc in Data Science, Technology and Innovation, there is a risk of some PPD students who might normally go on the PgCert in Informatics taking the DSTI PgCert instead. From a University perspective, either is fine, but it may weaken the PgCert's income. On the other hand, some of the income flowing into the DSTI course will flow onward to Informatics, because we deliver the courses. As additional distance courses are created in Informatics, and in the DSTI degree, the two will become more distinct (already happening with more medicine-flavoured courses in DSTI).

4. What Marketing has been planned or completed to support the predicted student numbers?

- Standard University web based advertising.
- Exploiting company contacts through ERI and Informatics Business Development Executives.
- Some staff have extensive email lists and there are a variety of subject area maillists.
- There are a variety of relevant web services, like findamasters.com, mastersportal.eu

5. If this programme is in collaboration with other institutions, give details of the partners and the fee structure.

Not with other institutions, however at present the component courses are also used as part of the PgCert, PgDip and MSc in Data Science, Technology and Innovation. Their constituency at present has more of a medical perspective and their offering is moving further in that direction. This degree programme is intended to move more in the engineering direction and so will support a different student community, especially as additional courses are added to bring this up to a full MSc. Both courses charge the same fees per course.

6. Additional financial notes:

- 1) The fees are specified in terms of 5 PgCert students, however, this translates to thirty 10-credit course deliveries, and we will be happy with PPD as well as PgCert students.
- 2) The distance courses are paired with on campus courses, and the distance students will be effectively part of the same course (but with suitable support). This means that it is not necessary to have a separate course and lecturer. The additional lecturer costs are notional and are absorbed until the number of students justified use of an additional lecturer.
- 3) The Professorial cost is for the course director, the Personal tutor costs are for the additional real tutoring costs (class sizes, marking, contact time, distant student support).
- 4) The Laboratory Technician is a small amount of supplementary Computing Support Officer, and a substantial amount of a Learning Technology Officer, responsible for helping academic staff create and maintain online materials.
- 5) The Clerical costs are primarily for the course administrator, plus some incremental support from the general Informatics Teaching Organisation arising from additional student numbers (eg. management of marks, exam papers, contact questions, etc).
- 6) Because of limitations of the required spreadsheet, the staffing costs each year are identical and don't scale with the number of students, although the admin, tutoring and lecturing costs are in fact likely to be lower in the early years.
- 7) It is expected that the most likely mode of delivery for the programme is part-time. The spreadsheet does not have options for this, assuming instead that all delivery for an intake is in the given year.

