

The  
Pros and Cons  
of online personal tutoring

© Edinburgh Tutors Ltd. You may copy and distribute this content providing you credit Edinburgh Tutors and link the copied content to [www.scotlandtutors.co.uk](http://www.scotlandtutors.co.uk)

## 1. TOTAL FLEXIBILITY

---

### PROS

Students and parents love the ability to work whenever and wherever, with no disruption to family members in an environment and location they choose. Restrictions, on physical meetings, disappear and free up time for parents and students.

It's also more likely that you will start on time and get going with tuition quickly, meaning more learning and better value.

### CONS

Especially younger or less motivated students may be distracted by incoming social media, browsing during tutorials, or other disrupting screen activities. Parents need to check and ensure no programmes or apps are available to students during sessions.

## 2. A WIDER CHOICE OF TUTORS

---

### PROS

Tutor physical location becomes irrelevant in your choice of tutor. Online tuition widens the pool of tutor choice massively and means you have better access to the best tutor and the one that is right for your needs.

### CONS

Be wary of tutors who may be experts in the subject but are not familiar with the local system and especially if a tutor is unfamiliar with the syllabus being studied by the student. You should choose a tutor who has taken or taught the curriculum themselves, or who specialises in the exam board being studied.

Ideally, you will look for some degree of localness which is a good indicator that the tutor knows the system and the syllabus.

### 3. IF YOU NEED A TUTOR URGENTLY

---

#### PROS

Without the geographical and logistical problems of finding a suitable tutor locally, it's more likely you will find a good tutor quickly. If the need is urgent online is likely to be the fastest solution.

#### CONS

Fast might not mean good. Should you need a fast solution best to go for an agency. Choose an agency where you can talk to a local expert who has done all the work of vetting for you to provide a good safe tutor solution. An agency with local experience will save time and you are more likely to be offered good solutions to choose from.

### 4. THE CLASSROOM TOOLS ARE EXCELLENT

---

#### PROS

Those new to the video environment and experienced video tech users are quickly able to fully utilise the online tools, including document exchange and storage, instant doc retrieval and whiteboards. In addition, the ability to store work digitally and record sessions are particularly helpful to many students allowing them to review processes in detail when revising. The tools available online deliver added value to clients.

#### CONS

A potential downside arises if too much tech becomes an issue, or if the student becomes overloaded with documents and data. Clarity of purpose and a clear understanding of the objective is key. Good tech augments good tuition, it's not a substitute. A good connection and familiar software that is easy to use are important. Beware of exotic video platforms, keep it simple;

Zoom, Google Meets, and Skype are standard and work well.

Check the connections work – before your allotted tutoring time begins. For the first time an advance 'hello meet' online is a good way to get going.

You need to pay for an hour of tuition, not 30 minutes of tutoring and 30 minutes of setting up tech.

## 5. PHYSICAL SECURITY IS GUARANTEED

---

### PROS

Physical security is assured where there is no need for the tutor or the student to travel and with online recording, the parent/responsible adult can review sessions for peace of mind. We recommend that parents are around for at least the beginning of each session to visually ID the tutor.

### CONS

Due care needs to be taken to ensure the online environment is safe and secure, good practitioners will have a code of practice for tutors to adhere to you can download ET's version here. Look for recent reviews that you can verify.

Take care with platforms where a tutor has simply made an online application to an agency before appearing in their lists.

Choose a provider where you have direct contact and access to a person who is responsible for your tutor, to answer your questions and discuss any issues that arise.

Choose agencies where the tutor is known to the agency, has been interviewed, and has their checked credentials.

## 6. PAYMENT IS FAST, RECORDED AND SECURE

---

### PROS

E payments, credit or debit cards avoid the need for cash payments and the problems that can arise.

In the case of ET 95% of our clients pay by E transfer through their banking apps, we don't hold their details and we don't need or want to. However, we can accept cards and even the occasional cheque through the post.

### CONS

Watch out for hefty up-front charges. Take care when making payments in advance of promised tuition and before actual tuition takes place.

Advance payments and hidden charges can be a particular issue with online tuition where agencies require you to pay upfront, often for packages of tuition. It's wise to pay after tuition has taken place and after you have road-tested the tutor and the tuition. Some typical comments:

"Apart from Emma who was fantastic, we chose you in part because you were confident enough to invoice us for payment after tuition, that gave us additional confidence"

"We thought a good agency will fix an issue quickly but it's possible they will be additionally motivated if there are no up-front payments already 'in their bank'."

"It seems no cheaper than face to face tuition but neither should it be more expensive."

## 7. ONLINE IS INCREASINGLY POPULAR

---

### PROS

Getting ahead or simply achieving the grades you need is becoming more competitive. In some cultures, tuition is a must-have for aspiring university students but is popularity alone a good indicator that online is better or even as good as face to face? Yes, it is. Wise parents are voting with their wallets and achieving a successful outcome, that's a sure indication of success. As of April 2022, 85% of ET's clients choose online.

### CONS

There is an unfortunate tendency to believe all tech related solutions are better, as anyone who has tried phoning a large utility recently will testify, it's not necessarily true. Consider that at the height of the pandemic the state school system received, it is fair to say, more than a little criticism when providing learning and tuition online. However, personal online private tutoring works very well and is often a better tutoring solution for most students but not in every case. Discuss the options with your provider who can help you make the right choice for your important young student.

Like all forms of tuition, it's possible to have a bad experience and it's always good advice to take more care when selecting an online tutor and/or agency.