TUTOR GUIDELINES

TUTORING SERVICES * ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

Mary Graydon Center 243 * PH: 202-885-3365 * Fax: 202-885-1042 * tutoring@american.edu

Welcome to Tutoring Services! As a peer tutor on our active tutor referral list, you must become familiar with our procedures and policies. Please read through the *Tutor Guidelines* and plan to attend our orientation for new tutors. We encourage you to stay in touch to discuss questions or concerns that come up about tutoring during the semester. We are here to support your tutoring efforts and hope that you get the most from your experiences working with Tutoring Services.

Tutor Guidelines is composed of two sections. Please read them carefully, ask questions if needed, and then print, sign, and submit the last page testifying that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the program policies and procedures explained in *Tutor Guidelines.*

PART ONE: TUTORING SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW
PART TWO: YOUR ROLE AS TUTOR

PART ONE: TUTORING SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Tutoring Services is a program managed by the Academic Support Center to match students seeking tutors with qualified peer tutors.

Tutoring Services Staff

- Robin Millay, Coordinator, Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring Services, (x3443)—oversees fulfillment of tutor requests, selects and trains new tutors, and responds to questions and concerns regarding Tutoring Services.
- Melissa Niese, Tutoring Services Program Assistant, (x3365)—fulfills requests, advertises the program and the program needs, provides information about program procedures, and assists in the selection and training of new tutors.
- Maureen Breslin, Coordinator, Academic Support Program for Student-Athletes, (x3890) – handles all concerns related to tutoring for student-athletes.

Tutor Request Procedures

From the student's perspective:

- Students submit a Tutor Request Form to the Academic Support Center.
- **Tutoring Services sends an e-mail to the student, typically within 48 hours, providing the contact information for the tutors.**
- If no tutor is available for the course requested, the student is notified (and referred to an interim resource, if applicable) and then every effort is made to identify a qualified tutor through other means.

From the tutor's perspective,

- Tutor receives student's e-mail describing his or her tutoring needs, including the desired focus for tutoring and the desired frequency and times of tutoring.
- Tutor responds within 48 hours to arrange to meet with the student so long as the student's available times match the tutor's.
- When tutor and the student agree to work together, they establish the time and location of the first session. (Tutors: *Make sure to meet in a public space ON CAMPUS*. For example, the library has group study space on the 2nd and 3rd floors that is usually available.)
- Tutor can notify the tutor services program assistant that he/she will be working with the student.
- Tutor also explains if he or she will no longer take new student referrals.

Tutoring Procedures

Make sure to respond to the student's initial inquiry about tutoring within 48 hours of receiving the message, and sooner, if possible, whether or not you can work with the student.

If you need to reschedule a tutoring session, notify the student as soon as possible to find a mutually convenient time. Keep in mind that last minute cancellations could affect your credibility with the student.

Alert Tutoring Services as soon as you know you cannot take on any new students. Students are discouraged if a tutor turns out to be unavailable. Help us direct students appropriately. If we find that a tutor is repeatedly not responding to student e-mails, or tells students that he or she is not available, we may list that tutor as inactive until we have heard more from the tutor.

If your contact information changes, or if you want to add courses to the list that you are willing to tutor, contact Tutoring Services.

At the end of every semester, Tutoring Services will send you an e-mail asking whether you wish to remain on the active list for the following semester. To remain on the active list, you must reply to this e-mail.

Payment Procedures

Students receiving peer tutoring should pay at the beginning of each session in exact change.

Some students' tutoring fees may be covered by an AU office. In all of these cases, you must report to the appropriate office to complete paperwork **AS SOON AS YOU <u>BEGIN</u> TUTORING** a student in one of the following programs. If you do not follow the procedures detailed here, you risk not being paid. You must follow these procedures for EACH student you tutor from one of these programs, <u>even if you are already tutoring other students from the same program</u>. In order to get paid, the tutor must complete and submit both on-line and paper bi-weekly timesheets, signed by both the tutor and student. Tutors are paid bi-weekly by university check.

1) <u>Learning Services Program (LSP)</u>: Tutoring fees are covered for students in the Academic Support Center's Learning Services Program. In this case, the tutor must come to our office (MGC 243) to fill out the appropriate paperwork to be hired by American University **BEFORE YOUR SECOND TUTORING SESSION** (or e-mail tutoring@american.edu if

you are tutoring other LSP students already).

2) Tutoring fees may also be covered for students in Multicultural Affairs programs. If the student you are tutoring is in one of these programs, you must go to the Multicultural Affairs office (MGC 204) to fill out the appropriate paperwork to be hired by American University **BEFORE THE FIRST TUTORING SESSION**. If you have further questions, contact the Multicultural Affairs office at 202-885-3651 or ma@american.edu.

3) Tutoring fees for varsity student-athletes are covered by the Department of Athletics. Please contact Maureen Breslin (202-885-3890, breslin@american.edu), the Coordinator of the Academic Support Program for Student-Athletes, if you are tutoring a student-athlete, **AS SOON AS YOU BEGIN TUTORING**.

If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact Tutoring Services at tutoring@american.edu or call 202-885-3360.

PART TWO: YOUR ROLE AS TUTOR

The Tutor's Role

Most people can remember a favorite teacher who really helped them learn—a teacher who was patient, open-minded, honest, enthusiastic, caring, reliable, prepared, and knowledgeable. Effective tutors share these interpersonal qualities as well as specific academic knowledge and skills. As in teaching, a tutor's role is to help students become independent learners; however, the tutorial provides a different means than the classroom for achieving this goal.

The tutorial responds to individual students' specific needs.

- Tutors encourage students to determine the focus of the session and to engage in planning what will be covered.
- Tutors also use *active learning techniques* to ensure that the session allows time for the students to practice, to make their own discoveries, and to assess what they are learning as well as what they need to learn.
- Tutors do not lecture or simply tell a student what the key ideas are; instead, tutors help students *understand* the concepts or procedures by providing opportunities to practice and to get feedback on that practice and by making *how* to do the work a priority of the session.
- The learning that occurs in a tutorial is not simply content-related. Tutors also model good student habits as well as encourage students to try out effective study techniques or strategies/skills pertinent to learning the subject matter. Tutors help students who may be struggling with a subject to build confidence in order to motivate themselves to persist in their efforts to master it.

Goal #1: Facilitate Learning

By focusing on the unique needs of each student and by structuring and presenting the academic content in ways that stimulate understanding and mastery, tutors work to facilitate growth in skills and learning.

Goal #2: Act as a Role Model

Tutors model good learning strategies by demonstrating ways to approach materials and concepts. A question concerning a definition, for instance, can lead to a search for the appropriate resource materials.

Goal #3: Encourage Effective Study Habits

Tutors assist students in developing effective study habits and focus on specific skill areas, as appropriate, such as organization, note-taking, test preparation, and test taking.

Goal #4: Promote Independence

The ultimate goal of tutoring is to help students build necessary skills and internalize specific strategies that will enable them to be successful, independent learners.

Tutoring Basics

- **Demonstrate a genuine interest** in the students and an enthusiasm for the subject.
- **Be patient** if your student makes slow progress or if your student becomes frustrated with his or her rate of progress. **Repetition and review** are key components to tutoring and to learning.
- Accept your students as thinking adults. **Listen** as much as you talk to your tutee. Tutoring is two-way communication. Involve your tutees in the session, solicit responses, listen to their opinions, and do not lecture. Above all, **do not do the work for your students**. Present options and help students examine them as possible solutions to an academic difficulty, but do not try to make students' choices for them. Provide opportunities for the student to practice or to follow through independently on your explanations or demonstrations before giving feedback or additional explanations.
- **Encourage students to articulate their strengths and weaknesses as well as their expectations from tutoring**. Consider these strengths and weaknesses when establishing realistic goals and try to work toward students' goals.
- **Build on the students' strengths** in order to remediate weaknesses. Point out success and explain the positive. At the same time, **be realistic in your praise**. It is counterproductive to create a false impression of the students' skill level or accomplishment.
- **Be honest about what you know and what you don't know**. Students will respect the tutor who doesn't claim to have all the answers and who shares with them the process of researching an answer.
- **Take responsibility for the quality of the tutoring session BUT NOT for the quality of the students' work**. The student alone is responsible for success or failure.

Tutoring in Action

First Tutoring Session: Getting off to a good start.

- Discuss mutual expectations about payment, punctuality, cancellation and no-show procedures, and preparation for sessions. Use the First Meeting Checklist given to you after you were hired.

- Discuss expectations for the kind of assistance the tutoring session will provide, the session format, and the overall goals for working together.

- Encourage dialogue. Establish an open, friendly, "no risk" environment in which the student actively participates and directs the course of the sessions. Create rapport by listening at least as much as you talk, by being patient, and by being open.

The 12 Steps of Tutoring [Adapted from The Cambridge Stratford Study Skills Institute (1997)]

BEGINNING STEPS	**TASK STEPS**	**CLOSING STEPS**
[Set the tone] ***STEP 1*** Greet and create comfortable work environment. [Set the session's agenda] ***STEP 2*** Identify problem areas student needs help in. ***STEP 3*** If applicable, breakdown problem areas into components that can be handled individually. [Build in study tips and problem-solving techniques] ***STEP 4*** Show student different ways to approach the components of the problem or of the content, e.g., use examples, charts, graphic organizers. Share ways you have learned to study and remember the information.	[Use your tutoring techniques of listening, questioning, waiting, and comprehension-checking to fully engage student.] ***STEP 5*** Vary your explanations as needed to accommodate different learning styles. Make sure, however, to allocate sufficient time for the student to answer a question or complete a task. ***STEP 6*** Allow student to apply the methods for tackling problem areas. Hands-on practice is key to learning. ***STEP 7*** Constantly evaluate student's understanding of the material. Ask student to work steps aloud. Ask specific questions to check comprehension. Ask student to summarize content reviewed. ***STEP 8*** Praise or give partial positive reinforcement as warranted. Build student's confidence by pointing out what he or she has learned.	***STEP 9*** Confirm student's understanding of material. Ask student to summarize the session and together write down notes. ***STEP 10*** What Next? Show how what was learned in session is connected to subsequent subject areas. ***STEP 11*** Arrange the next session. Check syllabus to preview upcoming assignments or exams in order to plan the next session. ***STEP 12*** Closing and good-bye. Again, be positive and encouraging to the student and point out progress.

Tutoring and Professionalism

Know the limits of the tutor's role. As tutor, your role is to support, encourage, and assist students academically. A tutor needs to be sensitive to the students—if a student is feeling overly anxious or worried about some other problem, a tutor may need to determine whether the student can settle into the task at hand or whether it is best to reschedule. However, tutors should avoid giving advice to students outside of the subject itself—whether personal, career, or academic advice. Instead, make an appropriate referral (see Referrals below).

Maintain a professional distance. Tutors are friendly, open-minded, and accessible. However, sometimes a student may misunderstand the relationship. Students may waste time in session chatting, or it could be that the student confides a serious personal problem or issue. Respond sympathetically, but suggest more appropriate resources for the student (see Referrals below). If you become concerned for the student, alert Tutoring Services so that the student can get help immediately.

Foster independence, not dependence. Sometimes students who feel anxious about their ability to master the subject will request several appointments per week or wish to work with you on every aspect of a paper or on every problem. If you feel a student is becoming dependent on you to get their work done rather than building the confidence needed to attempt to work independently (and to follow through on the work begun in tutorial), then you will need to talk about the importance and benefits of independent work. Be careful that the number of appointments you schedule in a week fits both your own schedule and your perception of the student's skill level. If necessary, refer the student to other tutoring options on campus, or to their professor or TA. If a student appears to have more trouble with a subject than is usual, or if the student has learning difficulties that you feel you cannot help with, then refer that student to the Academic Support Center.

Be reliable in attending sessions on time and in responding to your student's communications about the sessions. Taking two or three days to reply to an e-mail about rescheduling a session, for example, conveys a message of "I don't' care."

About payment procedures: Clarify with your student in the first session the payment procedures. If the student will pay you directly, explain that you can only accept exact change and cannot allow the student to pre-pay for a session. Take steps to document in your records when you get paid, so that no questions or confusion arises with regard to payment. Students are alerted that they are responsible for paying for a tutoring session if they fail to cancel at least three hours before the tutoring session, or for a whole 1-hour session even if they arrive late. You have the right to charge the student for a no-show; however, be reasonable in applying this policy. Talk with the student about why he or she was unable to notify you that they could not attend or were late — there may be a very good reason! Good will is essential in a strong tutoring rapport.

If your student participates in a program that pays for peer tutoring, please go as soon as possible to the office the student directs you to. You must be hired and follow the office's policies on documenting tutoring hours. You will also need to submit bi-weekly time sheets.

Stay current with your own studies. You are a student first and foremost. And as a role model, your credibility rests on being a responsible student. Try to avoid allowing your extra-curricular work to detract from your own academic mission.

Tutoring and Ethics

Confidentiality. A tutor must protect the privacy of a student by keeping information related to the tutorial confidential.

Anti-Discrimination. American University provides equal opportunity for all qualified persons in its educational programs and activities. It also seeks to be a community in which freedom of expression and rigorous debate are valued and provided to all its members free of all forms of discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to exploitation, coercion, and intimidation. To achieve these goals, the university has adopted a policy prohibiting discrimination and discriminatory harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and any other bases under federal or local laws. The policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity applies to every aspect of the operations and activities of the university, including admissions and employment. This policy is also consistent with the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Non-Discrimination policy approved by the university Board of Trustees.

Tutoring and Academic Integrity

As a tutor, your goal is to help the student perform at his or her highest level by reinforcing the content from lecture and the readings, by providing feedback on practice exercises, by providing strategies and tips for learning the material or getting through the readings, and by providing feedback on drafts of papers. Through these activities, the tutor facilitates the student's learning. It is important that the tutor understand, though, the potential danger of directing the student's work and providing "too much help" even if the tutor's intentions are honorable.

Here are rules every tutor must adhere to:

- Tutors should never assist students on take-home tests or quizzes.
- Tutors should never write a paper or a part of a paper for a student.
- Tutors should not assist students on graded homework assignments; instead, work on practice problems that help students review key procedures and concepts and prepare to do the graded homework set on their own.
- Tutors should be careful when responding to students' written work:
    - Tutors should not correct a paper's grammar and spelling mistakes. Instead, look for patterns of error, choose one or two instances of a particular error

and then review with the student how to correct it and why. Then ask the student to identify and correct the rest of the errors of that type. In other words, you demonstrate and teach the student, but the student actually follows through on the corrections.

- Tutors should not impose their own ideas or structure on a student's paper. Instead, ask students to brainstorm/develop their own ideas and explain why they will discuss certain ideas first, second, etc. Explain structure in general terms and ask them to identify the specific structure for their ideas.
- Tutors must be careful not to do the students' thinking for them. When explaining a concept or a text, make sure that you are not simply telling the student what is important or what is important to say about an idea. Use techniques that engage your tutee in active learning so that they are making discoveries and assimilating information rather than passively receiving your ideas. In a paper, the student should be writing about their discoveries of meaning, not yours.

When you are unsure about whether your help is appropriate, please contact Tutoring Services and consult the AU Code of Conduct:
http://www.american.edu/american/registrar/AcademicReg/New/reg80.html

If you feel a student/tutor has behaved inappropriately, please alert Tutoring Services as soon as possible.

Referrals

A tutor needs to know how and where to refer a student for a situation that must be addressed *outside* tutoring. The student may be working through a personal problem or an academic situation that is appropriately addressed by another college office. The student may just need to be made aware of one of the resources below. **If you are concerned about the student for some reason, please contact Tutoring Services to discuss what to do.**

➢ **If a student brings up specific learning difficulties:**
In the process of tutoring someone for a particular course, you may become aware of other ways in which a student needs help academically. For example, the student may discuss with you a specific concern or problem with learning or manifest some of the following characteristics:

- Complains about not being able to read quickly or with sufficient comprehension
- Has disorganized class notes
- Lacks knowledge of the fundamentals of grammar and writing
- Experiences difficulties in taking exams
- Is frequently unable to use time efficiently

If the student is asking for additional resources or if you observe these or similar behaviors, then perhaps the student would benefit from a referral to the Academic Support Center. The Academic

Support Center provides individualized instruction and counseling to help the student develop the reading, writing, and study skills necessary for college work. If you have any questions before referring a student, contact Tutoring Services at 202-885-3365 or an Academic Support Center counselor at 202-885-3360. If a referral seems appropriate, let the student know that appointments can be scheduled with an Academic Support Center counselor in Mary Graydon 243 or by calling 202-885-3360.

- **If the student needs additional help with math or statistics:**

The Mathematics and Statistics Tutoring Lab offers additional tutoring services. Their schedule is available on their Web site: http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/cas/mathstat/tutoring.cfm. The lab is located in Gray Hall 110, and can also be reached at 202-885-3154.
Students can get help with statistical software in the Social Science Lab in Hurst 203.

- **If a student needs additional help with writing:**

Writing Center: The Department of Literature sponsors the Writing Center, employing approximately 20 peer writing consultants. The Writing Center is located in Battelle-Tompkins 228. Call to make appointments at 202-885-2991, and consult the Web site for hours of operation and other information: http://www.american.edu/cas/lit/writing_center/.

Writing Lab: The Academic Support Center's Writing Lab also offers appointments with writing counselors. Several counselors are trained to work with international/multilingual students. The Writing Lab is located in Mary Graydon 243. Consult the website for information or to schedule an appointment: www.american.edu/ocl/writinglab.

- **If an international student needs help beyond the subject you are tutoring:**

Individual Instruction: Students can meet with the ASC counselor for international students for individual instruction in academic skill areas and to ease the transition to academic culture in the United States. Students may talk about such topics as time management, textbook reading, note taking, classroom presentations, and preparation for exams. Students can also discuss adapting to higher education in the U.S., both in and out of the classroom. Appointments can be made in person in Mary Graydon 243 or by calling 202-885-3360.

Group Study Skills Workshop Series: Workshops are provided on a variety of study skills topics by Academic Support Center staff, including writing workshops for international students. **A workshop schedule** is available on-line and in the ASC office. In addition, a weekly series of workshops focusing on **classroom participation for international students** is offered each fall and spring semester. Enrollment is limited to 12 participants. If you are interested in this workshop series, contact Shari Tanck, counselor for international students, at tanck@american.edu.

To find out how to arrange for English-language conversation practice, visit http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/TALK.htm TALK@american.edu

- **If the student would like information about free group tutoring and study in other subjects:**

The Supplemental Instruction Program, operated by the Academic Support Center, offers free weekly group study/tutoring sessions for selected courses in applied Calculus, macroeconomics, microeconomics, statistics, chemistry, physics, and accounting. Current sessions are listed at: http://www.american.edu/ocl/asc/supplementalinst/sessions.html.

- **If the student needs help researching a topic:**

The library offers several services to help students develop a research plan or find resources. The Web site, http://www.library.american.edu/about/students/index.html, provides more information about library services. Students may also call the Reference Desk at 202-885-3238, or 'Ask a Librarian' by e-mail: http://bender.library.american.edu:8083/php/ask_a_librarian.php. Students may also chat with a Librarian in real-time: http://www.library.american.edu/about/services/ reference/vr.html.

- **If the student wishes to do career exploration:**

The AU Career Center is located on the 5th floor of Butler Pavilion. Students can call 202-885-1804 or visit the Web site for more information: http://www.american.edu/careercenter/.

- **If the student expresses a need for counseling for personal reasons:**

Students may call the Counseling Center at 202-885-3500, or stop by Mary Graydon 214. More information is available on the Counseling Center Web site: www.american.edu/counseling/.

Please sign and tear off below. Return signed form to Tutoring Services, MGC 243.

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Academic Support Center, Tutoring Services
Peer Tutor Agreement Form

I, ______________________________________, have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures explained in *Tutor Guidelines*.

Throughout the semester, if I have questions or concerns about tutoring, I will call Tutoring Services at x3365 or e-mail tutoring@american.edu to discuss them.

If my contact information changes OR if I can no longer take new student referrals, I will alert Tutoring Services immediately.

____ ________________________

Signature Date