Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme
(I.T.A.S) Guidelines.

For Tertiary Students.

(please read me).
Introduction.

Welcome to the rewarding role of ITAS supplementary tutoring.

The overall objective of Deakin University is to respond to the higher education needs of Indigenous Australian Communities, through its established expertise in community based delivery. ITAS supplementary tutoring at the Institute of Koorie Education is a student driven scheme.

The University has a successful history in delivering courses to Indigenous Australian students through its Community based delivery mode of curriculum development and teaching support. Courses have been completed by students in urban, provincial, rural and remote communities across Australia.

The Institute engages in curriculum development utilising pedagogical practices that inform different approaches for the inclusion of Indigenous Australian knowledge and perspectives in course delivery.

The aim of this guide is to provide ITAS supplementary tutors with:
- Background information about the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University.
- Information about the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme.
- Checklists to ensure ITAS supplementary tutors understand the ITAS procedures.
- Answers to frequently asked questions.

About the Institute of Koorie Education.

History.

In December 1991 the Institute of Koorie Education was formally proclaimed. The Institute grew out of work that began in 1986 when two programs for Koories were offered through Deakin University: the Koorie Teacher Education Program (K.T.E.P.) and a final year program for Batchelor College graduates.

The Institute of Koorie Education was established on the recommendation of a working party to the Vice Chancellor. This working party explored the notions of joint authority and joint management of Koorie education initiatives by the University. Here the working party sought advice on administrative structures that would enable the University and the Victorian Koorie Community to work jointly on teaching, curricula, financial, organisational and personnel matters affecting the Koorie equity programs of the University.

The Institute of Koorie Education and its Board are the means by which the partnership between the University and the Victorian Koorie community takes its formal structure. The other formal structure cementing the joint involvement of the University with the Victorian Koorie community is the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (V.A.E.A.I.) - Deakin University Higher Education Agreement. This Agreement was first signed on 1 September 1992 by the Chairperson of the VAEAI, Mrs Mary Atkinson, and the Vice Chancellor, Professor John Hay, establishing the joint management principles by which the work of the Institute of Koorie Education, the Faculties and the University Secretariat can continue.

Structure and customised support.

The Institute’s programs are structured around:
- On-campus intensive study blocks
- Supported by Off-campus community based delivery, and
- Complemented by local ITAS supplementary tutors.
This approach to course delivery promotes access and equity for Indigenous Australian students. Students from all areas; rural, remote and metropolitan, and across all age ranges, particularly mature age, are able to undertake studies without compromising their family and community obligations. In Australia, only a very small number of universities offer degree courses through off-campus study mode and among these, it is Deakin that has developed a comprehensive and sustained range of course offerings.

The Institute of Koorie Education prides itself on being able to develop customised, appropriate teaching styles and timetabling arrangements, together with the incorporation of cultural knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum, which can then be negotiated between the Institute of Koorie Education and Faculty Academic Staff.

The learning experience is an interactive one where students have an opportunity to contribute to the structure and content of their programs so that it reflects their cultural perspectives and is relevant to their circumstances. Students’ feedback regarding their satisfaction with the service consistently praises the flexible nature of the programs and the support received from the Institute’s staff.

The Institute’s administrative and academic staff provide an extensive range of services which support the students with their academic endeavours. Services include, co-ordinating the provision of tutorial assistance, ensuring the availability of appropriate tutorial rooms, providing support to students in the use of computer technology, managing the travel and accommodation needs of students, providing an orientation service and being available to advise and respond to the specific needs of students as they arise.

Role of I.T.A.S. Tutors.

The Institute’s programs are designed to be responsive to individual students’ needs and to be sensitive to the possible impact of non-educational factors on educational achievement. The I.T.A.S. tutors are an essential link in this process, particularly with first year students who will sometimes need to be coached in the essentials of organising themselves for success in academic achievement. Remember that as an I.T.A.S. tutor your role is supplementary, a generalist tutor, which means you are not allowed to teach the content of any particular units that pertain to a student’s degree.

Educational and teaching support over a long distance is the basic practice of the day-to-day operations of the Institute. Students can select from a wide range of subjects and sometimes they can be the only person in their area to study a particular subject and consequently can find themselves fairly isolated in their study. It is in filling this gap that the I.T.A.S. tutor is essential to the Institute’s operations, particularly in the case of first year students.

The I.T.A.S. tutors should examine the intensive timetable included for their students to ascertain when their students are on intensive blocks and when they are in their communities, and plan their tutoring schedule accordingly.

Tutor Reporting.

All tutors conducting tuition under I.T.A.S. must complete a Work Programme, no more than two weeks after tuition commences.

Tutors should develop Work Programmes according to the student needs identified in consultation with the student. The student must endorse the Work Programme which must also be approved by the coordinator of the bulk funding arrangements at the contracted institution (Deakin University).

Towards the end of the tuition period, the student, and the student’s lecturer complete a Tuition Assessment. The purpose of the Tuition Assessment is to provide feedback about the value of the tuition. Comments from different perspectives help ensure that the assessment is a fair indication of the services provided by the tutor.

In terms of best practice, what would the Institute like to see?
When student and tutor first make contact, they will arrange a meeting at which they will discuss the next trimester. They will decide upon a regular time and place for their tutorials, and stick to it. Both will be well prepared for each tutorial, and leave each session knowing what they need to prepare for the next tutorial. The required paperwork will be completed promptly, and any difficulties will be discussed with the I.T.A.S. Co-ordinator after discussions with the student. The emphasis will always be upon empowering the student in a positive and encouraging way, by developing the educational skills required for independent academic scholarship. ITAS is not available for subjects outside the student’s formal educational or structured training program.

Cultural Integrity.

At a more subtle, yet fundamental level, the role of the I.T.A.S. tutor is to facilitate the progressive strengthening of a student’s cultural identity, by assisting the student to express in a number of forms, their own perspective or understanding of their studies and the relevance of their own culturally lived experiences within that understanding.

Conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest arises when a student and proposed tutor are members of the same family, or any other circumstance that compromises the professional integrity of tutors or students. Both students and tutors need to be aware that the following restrictions apply to tutors and students for individual or small group tuition: Tutors must not be the student’s partner or immediate or de facto family, and I.T.A.S. tutors must not be the student’s regular unit lecturer, or tutor.

How does a tutor register?

To register as a tutor you must:

- complete an *I.T.A.S. Tutor Retainer Agreement*, each year of tuition
- complete *Casual Employment Agreement*, each year of tuition
- provide evidence of qualifications, and right to work status.

*Note*: Completion of an *I.T.A.S. Tutor Retainer Agreement* or *Casual Employment Agreement* is not a guarantee of work, or continuing work. Tutors will be contacted if work becomes available. Tutors are advised that claims for payment must be submitted on time sheets no later than 3 weeks from the date of the first tutorial and henceforth on a fortnightly basis, or risk non-payment. ITAS does not allow for the aggregation of hours across weeks. No tuition may be provided on public holidays.

Cancelled Tutorials and No Shows.

It needs to be understood that beginning students are learning to be tertiary students, particularly if they have not recently been involved with study. There are many personal, family and community factors which can affect a student’s ability to maintain consistent contact with a tutor. Tutors should make themselves aware of these factors in order to be prepared for such occasions.

While being understanding of problems which students may have, particularly in the early stages of their studies, you should make clear to the students that you have entered into a relationship with the Institute and have arranged your work etc. to accommodate your I.T.A.S. tutoring responsibilities. You may point out that the Institute requires that the tutorials take place in such a way that the students develop regular study habits. If there are repeated cancellations or no shows which, you are unable to satisfactorily resolve with the student, the I.T.A.S. Co-ordinator at the Institute should be informed. Tutors are advised that the Institute is unable to honour claims for cancellations or no shows. Please contact the Institute with any concerns about students repeated no shows or cancellations.
Study Skills.

There are a number of crucial areas of a student’s work which I.T.A.S. tutors are to concentrate upon, especially in the early stages of a student’s studies at Deakin. These will involve teaching the basic academic skills required for academic success, including:

Essay Writing.

Each faculty within the university issues their own style guides, as often do specific schools in each faculty. The particular demands of individual schools should be taken into account in your tutoring. You need to be aware of the different styles of writing that might be required, such as:-

- scientific;
- academic;
- creative;
- autobiographic;
- reportage and;
- journalistic.

Tutors should ensure that all work belongs to the student, while concentrating their advice upon structural questions relating to setting out, argumentative style and so forth, if that is what is required. Tutors may also be supplied with copies of Faculty style guides upon request. In terms of essay content, beginning students will often be hesitant to offer their own views, so the Institute recommends that tutors adopt a discussing mode to elicit from students, knowledge that they in fact already have, despite their disclaimers. Then it is possible, for instance, to make notes of what the student says and use this as the basis for developing an assignment. Tutors should, for instance, aim to assist the student in developing a clear plan of an essay. Helping the student break the task down into smaller, more easily manageable tasks.

Academic and Research Skills.

In the area of study skills and academic research, the Institute expects your advice to students to include:-

- note-taking skills, including e.g. the use of highlighters and mind-mapping (how to research selectively);
- summarising readings;
- preparation for tests and exams;
- time organisation, where it should be emphasised that each subject requires a time commitment of at least 10 hours per week;
- maintaining a study environment;
- preparation for tutorials and seminars;
- effective reading;
- essay writing, as mentioned above, which includes advice on referencing, footnoting, proper use of quotation, the importance of an argumentative structure, and critical analysis, etc;
- oral presentations;
- appropriate language, including the development of keyword lists in particular schools and disciplines, as well as an understanding of standard academic terminology, such as analysis, critique, contrast, describe, discuss, or examine.

You should keep these requirements in mind when you and your students develop your Work Program and they should be commented upon in your Progress Reports. In the final analysis there will be some room for you and your students to ascertain what are the most effective study skills on which to concentrate.

More generally, when in doubt I.T.A.S. tutors can seek advice from Institute lecturers, who may in any case contact tutors at the commencement of tutoring, or as soon as is practicable afterwards.
As an I.T.A.S. tutor you are entering into a relationship with the Indigenous Australian community rather than just an individual member of that community. We wish tutors to embrace and encourage the Indigenous Australian knowledge bases which exist in this country, in your student’s work. A general rule might be to concentrate upon study skills and essay structure, and to focus upon extracting ideas from students, or directing them to appropriate resources, and to avoid providing ideas.

Further Information on tutor responsibilities:

Please refer to the DEEWR guidelines for further information about the ITAS here:


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