

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

Guidelines.

For Tertiary Students.

(please read me).



Introduction.

The overall objective of Deakin University is to respond to the higher education needs of Indigenous Australian communities, through its established expertise in distance education.

The University has a successful history in delivering courses to Indigenous Australian students through its community-based mode of curriculum development and teaching support. These courses have been successfully studied and 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.

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 one of a supplementary tutor, a generalist tutor, which means you are not required 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 semester. 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.

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.

How does a tutor register?

To register as a tutor you must:

- complete an *I.T.A.S. Tutor Retainer Agreement* form,
- complete a Deakin University Casual Academic / General Staff Recruitment Authority,
- provide evidence of qualifications.

Note: Acceptance of a *Retainer 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.**

Cancelled Tutorials and No Shows.

It needs to be understood that beginning students are going through a process of learning to be tertiary students, particularly if they have not recently been involved with study. There are many 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 contract with the Institute and have arranged your work etc. to accommodate your tutoring responsibilities, and point out that the Institute requires that the contracted 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 is the most effective way of spending your time.

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. The Institute appreciates your professional competence regarding assessments of the extent and nature of assistance given to students.