

Peer Tutor Training



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Dear peer tutor.

Congratulations, you have accepted an important and challenging responsibility.

As a peer tutor, you can encourage students to reach their academic potential. Your positive interaction with students can make a critical difference in their educational endeavors. Your role involves both the command of an academic subject area and strong interpersonal skills.

This training manual is designed to provide you with information specific to the Peer Tutoring Program at Bow Valley College as you build and improve your peer tutoring methods.

The objectives of this training are to:

- understand your roles and responsibilities as a peer tutor.
- equip yourself with effective strategies and tools to ensure successful peer tutoring.
- help you navigate through the challenging aspects of peer tutoring.
- become aware of the resources available to you as a peer tutor.

Please contact us if you have questions or concerns related to peer tutoring.

All the best,

Wendy Ho-Wong

Peer Learning Specialist, Student Services

who-wong@bowvalleycollege.ca

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Tutor and Tutee Roles and Responsibilities

Peer tutors will:

- **Assist** and coach **tutees in becoming** more effective and **independent learners**.
- **Ask questions** to evaluate tutee's understanding and facilitate learning by clarifying concepts taught in class.
- **Share study tips**, time management and problem-solving strategies.
- **Maintain professionalism** with tutee following the [Learner Code of Conduct](#)
- **Meet regularly** with your tutee at a time that is convenient for both of you. Missing tutoring sessions and poor punctuality may jeopardize your assignment as a peer tutor.
 - If there is a scheduling conflict or if the student does not show up for a scheduled session, contact the Peer Learning Specialist immediately. You are required to contact the tutee and wait 15 mins before considering the tutee a no show.
- **Maintain confidentiality** of all tutee information, including grades and any personal information a tutee may disclose to you.
- **Uphold academic honesty**. Assignments and any other work required for grading are not to be completed or corrected by peer tutors. Tutors may review required concepts but may not help with the actual work for grading.
 - Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and may result in consequences ranging from a failing grade to expulsion from the College. Suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated and adjudicated fairly.
 - All students are required to follow the Academic Integrity Policy. For more information, visit: <http://bowvalleycollege.libguides.com/academic-integrity>
- **Have regular contact with the Peer Learning Specialist** to provide feedback on how the tutoring sessions are going and to discuss any issues or concerns.

Tutees will:

- Be an active participant, ask questions and listen to suggestions
- Attend class and take thorough notes
- Complete assignments without help from peer tutor
- Review class material to identify areas that are causing difficulty
- Prepare specific questions you wish to address during tutoring session
- Arrive on time for tutoring sessions. Two missed sessions will result in disqualification.



Note: Tutoring is not a replacement for missed class.

The Tutoring Environment

All peer tutoring **MUST** take place in person at the BVC Calgary downtown campus and/or virtually via MS Teams.



Tips to help peer tutors maximize the learning experience for their tutees

Work in a quiet setting

- For in-person sessions at the college, use a quiet space at the library or book a study room.
- For virtual sessions, eliminate background noises and make sure that what's behind you isn't distracting.

Help your tutee get focused and stay motivated

- Take breaks and divide focus times into 5-to-10-minute chunks.
- Make learning relevant.
- Give specific, positive feedback.
- Break down big tasks and establish realistic goals.
- Have tutee do the work.

Support self-advocacy

- Allow the tutee to lead with questions. The tutor should only be facilitating what the tutee is able to do on their own.

Know additional support options

There may be times when you feel that a tutee needs more help than you can provide. Refer the students to their instructors for extra course content help,

For other supports such as financial, academic, career or health and wellness, please refer the tutee to Learner Success Services (1st floor South Campus) or Student Services tab in BVC Central (MS Teams).

The First Tutoring Session

Your first meeting with the tutee should be less formal than the rest of your sessions. This is a time for you and the tutee to get to know each other and to understand what your goals will be for tutoring.

You want to develop a positive and comfortable relationship with the tutee and an understanding that there is a purpose for your meetings and a task to accomplish.



During your first session, you should try to achieve the following:

Get To Know Each Other

- Introduce yourself and get to know your tutee
- Work towards establishing trust and rapport

Identify The Tutee's Areas of Need

- Ask questions
- Find out how the tutee learns best
- Determine tutee Learning Style

Outline Expectations

- Discuss roles and responsibilities of tutors and tutees
- Set reasonable goals and objectives to meet (Use **S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting Worksheet**)

Plan Your Next Session

- Organize your schedules and agree on a meeting date and time. If there is a schedule conflict, let the Peer Learning Specialist know right away so the tutee can be reassigned.
- Determine what you both need to prepare for the next session.

Regular (Weekly) Peer Tutoring Sessions

Plan Ahead

Ask the tutee what material they want to work on and familiarize yourself with the material.

Review

Review and discuss what was covered in the previous session to reinforce the information before you get started. If there were any problems from the last session, this is the time to discuss them before moving on to new material.



Strategies for conducting your sessions:

- Start an activity at a level where the student will achieve success to build confidence. Break down challenging tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks. Each step of the task should be mastered before moving on to the next concept.
- Try to get the tutee involved in the learning process, most adults learn better by doing. Help the tutee by asking leading questions. Engage the tutee rather than providing them with all the answers so that learning becomes active, rather than passive.
- Encourage the tutee to learn on their own and attempt the materials independently. Resist the temptation of doing the work for the tutee. Do not over explain concepts. Remember: As a tutor it's your role to provide opportunities for the tutee to apply concepts they have learned.

Plan for Your Next Session

Recap and debrief at the end of each session.

Ask the tutee to summarize their learning from the session, and together what went well and what needs to be worked on again.

Go over your expectations for the next session. Confirm your next meeting date and time.

End the session with a positive statement. Remind the tutee of what they accomplished today. Praise something they did well during the session. This can keep the tutee motivated and help them see how they are improving.



Add the completed session information to your electronic timesheet.

Timesheet

You must **submit**/upload your timesheet **ONLINE at the end of each month**, *unless specified by Peer Learning Specialist*, using this link:

<https://bowvalleycollege.libwizard.com/f/TimesheetSubmission> Make sure to complete both pages of the timesheet. Incomplete timesheets will not be processed. All payments are made through direct deposit; therefore, a void cheque/ banking customer information is required for **initial** set up. Processing time takes approx. 2 weeks.



Timesheet for Peer Tutors

Please submit your completed timesheet at the end of each month, *unless specified by Peer Learning Specialist* to:

<https://bowvalleycollege.libwizard.com/f/TimesheetSubmission>

Sample

If you have any questions, please reach out to:

Wendy Ho-Wong
Peer Learning Specialist
RGO Library & Learning Commons, Student Services
who-wong@bowvalleycollege.ca

Peer Tutor Full Name:	Susie Brown				
Peer Tutor Student ID:	654321				
Mailing Address (Street):	123 Centre St				
City, Postal Code:	Calgary, T2N 4M3				
Tutee Full Name (Example: Susan Miller)	Course Code (Example: MGMT 1201)	Date (Example: May 28)	Hours (Actual Time; Example: 1.hr)	Platform (MS Teams, In person)	Will peer tutoring continue? Yes / No
Bob Summers	ACCT 1103	Jan 13	1	In person	Yes
Bob Summers	MGMT 1401	Jan 20	0.5	MS Teams	Yes
Bob Summers	ACCT 1103	Jan 20	1	MS Teams	Yes

Effective Communication

Effective communication is one of the most important skills required to be a successful tutor. It has three main components: Verbal Communication, Effective Listening and Body Language.

Verbal Communication

In order to help the tutee understand the materials, you should explain concepts in your own words and try to repeat the information in different ways. Always turn the task back to the tutee and ask them to explain the concept to you in their own words.

When questioning a tutee about concepts, always ask open ended questions and avoid “yes” and “no” answers to encourage the tutee to make sense of the material.



Effective questioning techniques include:

- Ask open-ended questions.
For Example: “Tell me more about...”
- Begin questions with “how”, “where”, “when”, “who”, “why”, “what”, “explain”.
For Example: “What is an example of this concept?” “What happens next?” “How does this concept work?”
- Rephrase or reword the original question.
For Example: “How would you explain this to me?”

Effective Listening

Listening is an acquired skill. Slow down and concentrate on what your tutee is saying. Can they explain it easily or do they seem unsure? What is their body language saying? You must listen carefully and observe purposefully to completely understand the message that the tutee is sending.

Body Language

Good body language expresses attentiveness and makes a person feel that they are being heard. Maintaining appropriate eye contact with the tutee lets them know that you are paying attention. Nodding your head occasionally shows interest and smiling indicates openness. Avoid distracting gestures such as fidgeting, nail biting, playing with your hair or looking at your cell phone. These gestures convey the message of being nervous, uninterested or in a hurry.

Reinforcement and Feedback

Encouragement and reinforcement can help the tutee build confidence in the course materials, develop a sense of accomplishment and provide an incentive to do more.

When providing reinforcement, remember to be specific in indicating to the student where they have succeeded.



Examples of verbal reinforcement:

- "Good job on _____ !"
- "You are making great progress on _____!"
- "You have been working very hard on _____. Your efforts are paying off."

Reinforcement can also be relayed through non-verbal language:

- Facial expressions - a smile, looking excited
- Nodding your head
- High-five or thumbs up sign

When providing feedback to the tutee on areas where they have not grasped a concept or are incorrect, make sure that it is objective and presented with praise.

For example:

- "You did a great job on your approach to problem-solving. This area here could use some extra work though."
- "I see you tried different ways to solve this question. Let's review the steps you took so we can find out how you got this answer."



Always try to work at getting the right answer before moving on to a new area or question.

Using this method of providing feedback will make the tutee feel like they are progressing while also identifying the areas that the tutee needs to focus on.

Managing Difficult Situations

Below are some common situations and strategies to help you deal with them.

Always feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with the Peer Learning Specialist at who-wong@bowvalleycollege.ca

Situation	Possible Solution(s)
"I don't know the answer to the tutee's question."	<p>Don't worry. It's okay to admit that you don't know the answer.</p> <p>Let the tutee know that you will try to find the answer for your next session or point them to a place where they can find the answer.</p>
"I seem to be doing all the work during the session."	<p>Your main objective is to help the tutee become an independent learner.</p> <p>Avoid answering your own question if the tutee does not respond. Instead, give them plenty of time to answer. If there is still no response, show them where to find the answer, but don't answer for them.</p>
"When I show the tutee something, they say they can't do the work or that they will never get it".	<p>Some tutees have a low frustration tolerance, which means that they would rather not do the work than have to try hard to do it.</p> <p>Find the areas they are good at and compliment them. This shows that they do have some knowledge about the subject. Next, build on what they know. Finally, give them a lot of support. In this case, slow and steady will win the race.</p>
What if the tutee does not come prepared for the tutoring session?	<p>The tutee should come prepared for sessions with questions and/or general areas of need. You can suggest to the tutee to highlight areas during the week that they wish to review during their tutoring session. Suggest to the tutee to write a "?" next to any materials they do not understand in class, so that areas for review are easily identifiable. It also helps to use the last few minutes of your session to plan for your next session and to discuss which materials your tutee would like to cover.</p>

Situation	Possible Solution(s)
<p>“The tutee seems to be very confused with the course material”.</p> <p>The tutee may say things like ‘Nothing works’, ‘I don’t know what to do’ or ‘I study all the time and I only got a D in my course’.</p>	<p>Help your tutee get organized with their course material.</p> <p>Instead of tackling everything at the same time, which adds to the feeling of being overwhelmed, cover one topic at a time.</p> <p>The tutee may also have poor study skills. Ask if they have trouble organizing the way they study. If they do, refer them to Learner Success Services for additional support.</p>
<p>“The tutee provided very little specifics about their needs, and they are passive during the sessions. I’m not sure where to start”.</p>	<p>Reaffirm that your main objective is to help the tutee become an independent learner.</p> <p>Explain that active participation in the tutoring session will help them understand the material better.</p> <p>Ask which specific tasks they would like to focus on.</p> <p>Engage the tutee continually with open-ended questions and mini tasks.</p>
<p>What if the tutee brings a friend to the session?</p>	<p>Peer tutoring provides assistance to students on a one-on-one basis. You can suggest to the friend that they contact the Peer Learning Specialist if they need peer tutoring.</p>
<p>What if I have a personality conflict with the tutee?</p>	<p>Sometimes people just don’t connect well with each other. If the tutoring relationship is uncomfortable, let the Peer Learning Specialist know immediately.</p>
<p>What if the tutee becomes frustrated about the material we are covering</p>	<p>Suggest a 30 second to 1 minute stretch break and then come back to the session.</p> <p>You may suggest to the student to contact their instructor for further clarification on a particular concept.</p>
<p>My friend requires tutoring. Can I be his/her tutor?</p>	<p>Tutors will not be matched with friends/family unless agreed upon by the Peer Learning Specialist.</p>

Situation	Possible Solution(s)
<p>"The tutee looks bored and uninterested. They space out when I talk".</p>	<p>Find another way of showing them the same concept. You might need to attempt a few different teaching strategies before you find one that works best for the student.</p> <p>Engage the tutee continually with questions and mini tasks.</p> <p>Reinforce all activities and successes.</p>
<p>"The tutee comes to me for help on their assignments."</p>	<p>REMEMBER: It is not your responsibility to do the tutee's work. Helping them with an assignment or any work that will be graded is considered plagiarism and may have severe consequences for the peer tutor and the tutee.</p> <p>If a tutee has a question about an assignment, they should see their instructor about it.</p> <p>Review the roles of both tutor and tutee.</p>
<p>"The tutee constantly comes to me for help at the last minute."</p>	<p>Your tutee may be displaying a classic case of procrastination.</p> <p>Remind the student that your role is to help them better understand the course concepts and meeting on a regular basis will be more beneficial than cramming before a deadline. Peer tutoring is there to help them improve their academic ability.</p> <p>The tutee may also have poor time management skills. Refer them to Learner Success Services for additional support.</p>
<p>What if my own grades start to fall?</p>	<p>You must remain in good standing in order to qualify to be a tutor. If tutoring becomes too overwhelming, consider whether you should be using your time to study and concentrate on your own studies. Please give the Peer Learning Specialist sufficient notice so that your tutee can be re-assigned to a different tutor.</p>

References

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