

Tutoring Guidelines

Making Arrangements

- Exchange contact information and agree upon a no-show policy. You should tell your student how much prior notice you require before a cancellation, and should establish a late policy as well.
- You have the right to charge for no-shows, but be reasonable in applying this policy. Your student may have a good reason for missing a session, and you want to maintain good will.
- If you need to reschedule a tutoring session, notify the student as soon as possible to find another meeting time. Last minute cancellations will have a negative impact on your relationship with the student and affect your credibility.
- The libraries on campus are likely the most convenient location for tutoring sessions, and have group study rooms available for reservation. Your student may request to meet in another location such as their home. If this is the case, make sure to establish a reasonable meeting time (perhaps before dark) and have suitable transportation to and from that location.

Safety

- Try to talk on the phone with potential tutees before meeting.
- Ask pertinent questions, and watch for inconsistencies in what you are told.
- Meet in daylight, preferably in a public place. If you have a cell phone, take it with you. If you are tutoring off-campus, tell a friend where you are going and when you intend to return.

Ethics

- Tutoring sessions must be kept confidential to protect the privacy of the student.
- Caltech's Non-Discrimination policy, other Institute policies, and Honor Code apply to your interactions with your student.

As a tutor, your goals are to help your student learn, develop effective studying habits and ultimately become more independent. Reinforce concepts from lectures and reading, provide strategies for effective learning and studying, and work on practice exercises. It can be easy to provide "too much help", be careful to maintain academic integrity. Do not complete a student's work for them. You should never directly assist a student on a graded assignment, especially on take-home quizzes and tests. If a student needs help on a homework problem, work on practice problems that reinforce the necessary concepts.

If a student asks a question that you are unsure about, be honest with them; don't give a best guess answer. Seek assistance in answering the student's questions and/or direct the student to an appropriate resource.

Not all tutors and students are compatible, and not every student learns the same way. If you feel that you are being ineffective, try different teaching styles. If you feel that you are unable to help a student after trying multiple approaches, you may need to direct your student to help elsewhere. Make sure the student seeks help from the professor and TAs. If nothing works out, you may need to recognize your limitations and help your student find a different tutor.

Maintain a professional relationship with your student. Be friendly, but maintain some distance. Avoid wasting time chatting during sessions.