

# Peer Tutoring Handbook

Academic Support Center  
Castleton University  
Castleton, Vermont

2019-2020

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Welcome to the Peer Tutoring Program! All of us here at the Academic Support Center are thrilled that you have chosen to share your time and knowledge with your fellow students. Tutoring not only looks great on résumés and graduate school applications; many students consider it the most rewarding job they have ever held.

As you start your new position, we hope this handbook will prove useful. We've tried to assemble all the materials you'll need to report your hours, get paid for your time, and make a difference in students' lives. Finally, because students may occasionally require more assistance than you can provide, this guide includes a list of resources you can refer them to for additional academic or emotional support.

Again, thank you for joining our talented tutoring team. We look forward to working with you!

Warm Wishes,

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## **The Tutor Match Process**

Here's how we connect tutors with students:

- 1.) A student submits a request for tutoring in a specific course. This form is available on the Academic Support Center's website.
- 2.) We check our roster to see if one of our current tutors is qualified to tutor that course. If not, we approach faculty to see if they can recommend a prospective tutor. In order to tutor a specific class, students must have earned at least a B in that course – that said, most of our tutors have earned at least an A- in the classes they tutor. They should also have a good overall G.P.A: generally, at least 3.0.
- 3.) If we are hiring a new tutor, we interview the student and wait until Human Resources approves any employment paperwork.
- 4.) Once we have a willing and qualified tutor, we introduce them to the student via campus e-mail. Generally, we e-mail the student and include the tutor's e-mail address in the CC line so that the student can contact the tutor directly to arrange the first meeting. They may meet in the Academic Support Center or a mutually convenient, neutral spot on campus: for example, the library, campus center, or Coffee Cottage. We discourage students from conducting sessions in campus or off-campus housing.
- 5.) After that, it is up to the student and tutor to schedule appointments. However, both should feel free to get in touch with the tutor's supervisor (Deborah Jackson or Doe Dahm) if they have any questions or concerns.

## **Tutoring: The Bureaucratic Side**

Here's how to keep your supervisor satisfied – and make sure you get paid for your time!

- 1.) Document each encounter in our Student Access database. Instructions appear on page 8.
- 2.) Complete your electronic timesheet every other week. Generally, your supervisor will send you an e-mail to remind you when one is due. Be sure you submit your timesheets on time: if you do not report hours, we cannot pay you! (See page 10 for electronic timesheet instructions.)
- 3.) Be punctual for your appointments with students. If a student does not appear for a scheduled meeting, wait fifteen minutes and give yourself credit for this time on your timesheet. Your time is valuable, too! Afterward, follow up with the student by e-mail or phone to see if they would like to reschedule. If a student “no shows” twice, notify your supervisor.
- 4.) Even if you did very well in the course you are now tutoring, you may need to review the material – i.e., notes, textbooks – before you meet with students. Give yourself credit for “Prep Time” on your electronic timesheet. We ask that you limit yourself to a half hour of prep time per week. If you need more, please speak with your supervisor.
- 5.) Get in touch with your supervisor if you have any questions or concerns about your position.

## Tutoring: The Human Side

Here are some tips to keep your sessions enjoyable and productive.

- 1.) Develop a rapport with students. Make a little small talk at the start and ending of sessions and try to get to know them as human beings and not just criminal justice or accounting students. They will be more likely to attend, enjoy, and benefit from your sessions if they feel comfortable with you.
- 2.) By the time students request a tutor, they may be extremely frustrated with the material, the class, their instructor, and perhaps the college as a whole. Some may question their academic abilities; others may blame their professor or the institution for their struggles. If students express frustration, resentment, or discouragement, show empathy, but gently redirect their attention to more productive channels. Here are some sample dialogues between frustrated students and reassuring tutors:

**Student:** I'm really sick of this class. My teacher expects us to memorize all these lists and facts, but I'm really bad at memorizing things. I don't know how this semester's going to go; the first test didn't go well.

**Tutor:** You have to memorize a lot for A&P, and it can be challenging, especially if you're taking a full course load. Let me know show you a few tricks that really helped me when I took the course.

Here's an exchange between a tutor and a student who resents having to take a particular class:

**Student:** My teacher is so picky! She expects us to explain every part of a theory in a paper. And she takes off ten points for every little grammatical error. And I don't know why I have to take Sociology in the first place. It has nothing to do with my major or what I want to do with my life.

**Tutor:** She is a pretty tough teacher; I learned a lot from her. Why don't we go over your paper for content? Then, we can discuss ways you can go into more detail about the theory. And after that, you can always take your paper to the Writing Clinic. I take my essays there, and the tutors have helped me improve my writing a lot.

In both cases, the tutor listens sympathetically, acknowledges the truth behind the gripe (yes, that class or teacher is challenging), and offers a practical solution to the student's problem.

- 3.) Remember your role. You're neither a substitute professor nor a paid homework doer. Your job is to increase students' understanding of the course material and their professor's expectations and, perhaps, their confidence. Sometimes, you may present information in a new way; at others, you may demonstrate how to apply a skill or concept. Some students may want to meet with you for friendly reassurance even if they

are doing quite well in the class, while others may require more direct instruction. Do your best to meet individuals' needs, but don't hesitate to refer students to other resources when they need more support than you can provide. (See #5).

- 4.) As a peer tutor, you represent the Academic Support Center (ASC). Your meetings with students may take place at the Library or Coffee Cottage, but your conduct always reflects on the ASC. Although we hope you will develop a relaxed, friendly relationship with students, you should maintain professionalism at all times. Only act and speak as you would if full-time ASC staff were present. That is, avoid discussing alcohol or drug use, your personal lives, political beliefs, or other potentially controversial topics during a tutoring session. If you know a student well, and they insist on ranting or raving about the latest party or romantic development, gently redirect the student's attention back to the task at hand. If that fails, explain that you are at work and you would prefer to talk about that subject later.
- 5.) Realize other resources are available to you and your students. If a tutor needs more tutoring time or support than you can provide, refer them to your supervisor. You can also suggest the student visit the Math and Writing Clinics for help with these topics. If you suspect a student has emotional, psychological, or other problems that may be interfering with the student's academic progress, share your concerns with your supervisor. If you have developed a good rapport with the student, you might also recommend they visit the Wellness Center. See page 11 for a complete list of resources.

New tutoring clients receive a copy of the document below.

### **Tutoring: Rights and Responsibilities**

- 1.) Although Academic Support Center staff will do their best to identify a tutor, I accept they may not be able to find one for me.
- 2.) While I wait for a tutor, I will check my Castleton e-mail regularly. If Doe Dahm matches me with a tutor, she will connect us via e-mail.
- 3.) Once I have been matched with a tutor, I will assume responsibility for initiating meetings. If I cannot make a scheduled appointment, I will contact the tutor before we are scheduled to meet.
- 4.) If I have questions or concerns about my tutor match, I will contact Doe Dahm at 802-468-1392 or [dorothy.dahm@castleton.edu](mailto:dorothy.dahm@castleton.edu).
- 5.) My tutor can help me understand course material or offer advice about ways to successfully approach an assignment, test, or the course itself.
- 6.) My tutor cannot complete work for me or contact professors on my behalf.
- 7.) My tutor has the right to set boundaries about how, when, and how often they can help me.
- 8.) My tutor is not responsible for my performance on any given assignment or my final grade in the course.
- 9.) If I have questions about the coursework or an assignment my tutor cannot answer, I will contact my professor.
- 10.) If I need more assistance than my tutor can provide, I will contact Doe Dahm at 802-468-1392 or at [dorothy.dahm@castleton.edu](mailto:dorothy.dahm@castleton.edu).

## Off-site Tutoring: Entering Sessions with Students

- 1.) Before you begin the session, visit <https://castleton-sss-lca.studentaccess.com/?wid=RDBRPz8mRTlyUUpTXzRJdmZp>. You can access this website from your phone, tablet, laptop, or a desktop computer.
- 2.) In the field labeled “Id Number,” please enter the student’s id number. You may prefer to have students enter this information themselves. Click Next.
- 3.) In the next screen, find your own name in the field titled “Counselor.”
- 4.) Under reason, enter the class heading and number: “CRJ 1010,” for example.
- 5.) The next field is Advising Codes. If you are still an undergraduate student, choose Peer Tutoring. If you have at least a bachelor’s degree, select Professional Tutoring. Note that you should select only one option; this may entail “unchecking” one item.
- 6.) Click Check In.
- 7.) When you have finished your tutoring session, visit the link again: <https://castleton-sss-lca.studentaccess.com/?wid=RDBRPz8mRTlyUUpTXzRJdmZp>.
- 8.) Enter the student’s id number in the field labeled “Id Number.” Click Next.
- 9.) You will return to the Check-In screen. Make sure all the information is accurate and click Check Out.
- 10.) You are ready to begin your next tutoring session!

## **Electronic Timesheet Instructions.**

- 1.) Log in to the VSC Portal.
- 2.) Click on Ultipro in the green bar at the top of the VSC homepage.
- 3.) Once you are in the Ultipro screen, select “Menu” in the top left corner.
- 4.) Options will appear at the top of the page. Click on “ Myself.”
- 5.) In the resulting menu, select “Time Management.
- 6.) Near the bottom of the page, there will be a chart titled “Timesheet Detail.” Click on the “Add” button.
- 7.) A yellow bar will appear in the chart. Click under “Date” on the left side of the bar. From the resulting dropdown menu, select the first date you worked during the pay period.
- 8.) Next, click under “Pay Code” on the bar. Choose “Regular Hours” from the dropdown menu.
- 9.) Under In and Out, enter your start and end time for your shift. Use four digits and am or pm to type the time. For example, if your shift began at 9am and concluded at 11am, your Time In would be 09:00am and your Time Out would be 11:00am.
- 10.) Click on the “Save” button.
- 11.) The other fields will automatically populate. You do not need to complete them.
- 12.) Repeat these steps for every shift you worked.
- 13.) When your timesheet is complete, hit the “Submit” button.
- 14.) A dialogue box will prompt you to confirm your submission. Select “Yes” to submit your timesheet.

## **Further Resources**

### **Academic Support Center**

- **Math Clinic:** Free, drop-in help with math coursework. Available 11am- 2pm M-F and 5-9pm M-Th at the Academic Support Center.
- **Writing Clinic:** Free, drop-in assistance with academic writing as well as resumes, cover letters, and application essays. Available M-F 9am-2pm and M-Th 5-9pm at the Academic Support Center.
- **Additional Tutoring/Academic Support:** If your student would like more tutoring or other academic support than you can provide, refer them to your supervisor. You can also speak to your supervisor if you have any concerns about a student's progress.
- **The Academic Support Center's Website:** Offers an overview of the ASC's programs and services.

### **Other Academic Resources**

- **Calvin Coolidge Library:** Reference librarians can help students with academic research.
- **Faculty:** If a student has a question about coursework or a professor's expectations that you cannot answer, encourage them to meet with the faculty member directly.

### **Health and Well-Being**

- **The Wellness Center:** Offers nursing care and psychological counseling in the Campus Center. If you believe a student could benefit from medical attention or counseling, don't hesitate to refer them to the Wellness Center. Call the Wellness Center's front desk at 802-468-1346.
- **Public Safety:** If you have real concerns about a student's well-being or safety – that is, you think a student may be thinking of harming themselves – call Public Safety immediately at 802-468-1215.

**Note:** If you have any questions or concerns about your role or a student's situation, share these with your supervisor.

