



Swiss International
Institute Lausanne

TUTORING AND MENTORING GUIDELINES

Swiss International Institute Lausanne - SIIL

Approved by:	Quality Assurance Unit, HR
Date of Approval:	01.09.2021
Date of Next Review:	01.09.2025
Owner:	Student Office
Contact:	a.isanina@siil.ch

EFFECTIVE TUTORING AND MENTORING GUIDELINES

Swiss International Institute Lausanne - SIIL

Table of contents

I	GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR TUTORS	3
1.	Tutoring principles	3
2.	Tutor-Student Relationship	3
3.	Structure and Routines	4
4.	Working Towards Independence	5
II	TUTORING AS MENTORING	5
1.	Tutor-Student Relationship	5
2.	Setting boundaries with social interactions	6
3.	Make it Fun and Make it Friendly	6
4.	Communication & Active Listening	6
5.	Trust-building	7
III	CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS	7

I GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR TUTORS

The role of a tutor is to help students learn the process for problem solving and build their confidence and content knowledge. The tutor may feel pressure because he/she has the ability to influence a group of students, and he/she wants to do well. If a tutor is doing his/her best to tutor students, they will see that and respect the tutor for his/her effort.

1. Tutoring principles

Here are some basic principles for working with students:

- **Communicate:** Communication is one of the keys to success. Nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal, so be aware of your posture and body language even if you are communicating via zoom or other tools. Avoid crossing your arms, leaning back in your chair, tapping pens, doodling, fidgeting, zoning out, or ongoing looks of frustration. Nod and smile appropriately to let your student understand that you support him/her. Be sure to make appropriate eye contact. Your behavior is a model for your student, and this is a great way to show you are listening and engaged.
- **Be sincere:** Students care if you are real with them. If you feel relaxed, open, confident, and comfortable, students will feel this way, too. Chit-chatting before and occasionally during the tutoring session allows you to relate to the student and to better understand the most effective ways to teach them.
- **Share your experience:** We all have stories about having difficulty with particular subjects/topics. Sharing these anecdotes helps students to know they are not alone. If your students know that they are not alone, they will feel like the trouble they are having in school is a part of the learning process.
- **Make the process transparent:** Teamwork and communication are really important parts of tutoring. In order to maintain a successful programme, we need all the tutors to act as transparently as possible. Set clear boundaries and make a plan that meets both your expectations and the student's. Communicate openly and often.
- **Talk to your Student Office and the Faculty:** They may be able to provide helpful information about the students' lives and can give you tips that you may have not considered. Tell the teacher what is going on with students' behavior and progress (for example, what issues they are having); they may have strategies/ideas to improve your next session with that student.

2. Tutor-Student Relationship

Helping students take ownership of their learning is a critical step in the process of education, and as a tutor you will have the ability and the responsibility to guide these students to be empowered learners.

- **Make students do the work. Never give them the answer.** In the long-run, you are doing them a huge favour by teaching them how to learn the materials at hand.
- **Have students prioritize their work.** Students can then make choices about what they want to work on during their tutoring sessions. For example, ask: “Which work should you do first? Why? What should we do now?”
- **Ask questions!** You may begin by saying something like: “How would you begin solving this homework problem?” Be sure to ask questions your student is able to answer, as well as harder ones.
- **Acknowledge students who are waiting for help.** A good way to have them understand is by saying something like “I see you; I’ll come to you next.” Students will then tend to move on by themselves to another problem.
- **Acknowledge your student’s hard work and accomplishments.** You can do this throughout the session, but make sure to reiterate this at the end of each session.

3. Structure and Routines

The goal of tutoring is to teach students an efficient routine to complete homework on their own and to learn how to effectively seek answers. Thus, be sure to structure your time effectively and establish these routines. A few ways to show students that you are committed to being their tutor is by showing up on time and being available and present for all tutoring sessions.

- **Set goals and establish specific, measurable objectives.** This will allow you to set a diagnostic to the progress of your students and programme. Speak with other members at your programme to see what is already in place.
- **State objectives before you start the one-on-one or a group activity.** Let students know what to expect from the tutoring session. Always keep in mind that you want to have direction when working with your students. Before you begin any activity, state the objective and what it would mean for them to grasp the concepts.
- **Have a time-based outline of a plan for each session.** It is important to have a plan of what you are going to be doing throughout the session, whether it is with a group or one-on-one. While it is not necessary to have a written timeline, learn how much time routine activities take, so you can more effectively plan lessons.

- **Be consistent.** Make it a point to **be patient, encouraging, and flexible each session.**

Students' lives may be filled with many inconsistencies. You want to be a consistent and positive role model in their lives. This will help you gain their respect and trust. Show up on time and ready to work!

4. Working Towards Independence

As a tutor, you should help facilitate a path that would allow students to seek knowledge for themselves. These tips will help you find out new ways to help students learn how to do work on their own.

- **Reinforce progress and aim for student independence.** Move from experiences where the student is fully supported to experiences where student is fully independent.
- **I do, we do, you do.** At first, you will be the one aiding with problems. The session will then get to a point where you and the students do problems together. In the end, you want the students to be able to do it successfully themselves.
- **Adjust the plan if the student is frustrated.** There are many ways to teach a student the same concepts or lessons. Try not to get too focused on teaching the student a concept only one way. Be prepared to adapt to the way the student learns by teaching the material in a way that best helps your student grasp the concept.

Be aware of your student's shifting workload. Constantly check to make sure the student is properly prioritizing their work and taking a more independent role in designing what this system looks like.

II **TUTORING AS MENTORING**

Even though it may not be obvious, the interactions you are having with your student are incredibly important to his/her development. **You have the opportunity to be a positive role model and a mentor for these students.** Mentors assure students that they have someone who cares about them and the work that they do. Mentors provide encouragement and help students with the challenges they may face. Below we have included some tips and strategies on how to be an effective mentor.

1. Tutor-Student Relationship

It is important to acknowledge that there is a specific relationship that you should have with your students. Think about the impression you want to make and understand that there are multiple aspects of this relationship that you must maintain. This tutor-

student relationship takes time to grow, and relies on consistency, trust, and proper boundaries.

2. Setting boundaries with social interactions

Lay the ground rules for how you will interact with your students. Gently remind your student whenever they cross that line. Be comfortable asking for help in determining appropriate behavior or if you are unsure how to breach the subject with a student.

Maintain firm boundaries in terms of email, social media, and other forms of communication such as exchanging cell phone numbers. Our world is full of newer, better forms of technology and social media. It is easy to accept friend requests on social media or answer a friendly email from a mentee. Your role is that of a tutor, not a friend, and following students or accepting students on social media platforms is strongly discouraged. Additionally, check your own social media privacy settings to ensure that you are presenting yourself as a positive role model to your students.

If there is a difficult situation that you cannot handle, do not be afraid to talk to another tutor or a faculty member. If something makes you uncomfortable, trust your instincts and tell your instructor or project leader.

3. Make it Fun and Make it Friendly

Helping your students to learn is the primary goal. This does not mean that you cannot have fun. You should build positive and friendly tutor/tutee relationships with your students. This will keep them interested in returning, learning, and succeeding.

Be positive and encourage students to give it their best efforts.

Build a good rapport with your students. Initiate a bit of small talk at the beginning of your tutoring session. Ask students how their day went, what they learned that was interesting that week, what school activities are happening at the moment etc.

Don't be discouraged if there is not an immediate connection with your students as that dynamic can sometimes take some time to establish.

4. Communication & Active Listening

In our daily lives, we are constantly listening and reacting to the world around us. Active Listening allows us to better understand students and their tutoring needs, concerns, and questions.

Below are some tips to become good active listeners.

- Repeat a student's question back to them in the form of a statement. For example, you may say something like: "It sounds like you're asking... Is that correct?" Not only does this clarify the question, but it shows your student that you are listening.

- Body language is essential to active listening. Be aware of your posture, your facial expressions, and your eye contact. Proper eye contact shows your student that you're listening to him/her.
- Ask Probing questions. Ask questions that expand conversations and learning. For example, ask questions that could help your student to gain a deeper understanding. You might ask questions like: "What do you think would happen if..." or "Could you imagine another way..."
- Allow for silence. Sometimes not talking can feel a little uncomfortable but giving your student an extra ten seconds of silence can prompt him/her to speak up, voice concerns, opinions, or ideas.
- Empathize. If a student is having a bad day, acknowledge that sometimes situations can be frustrating. Say something like "That sounds very frustrating..." or "It's understandable that you're upset about..."

When times get tough, redirect. This is a good tactic to use if your student is expressing a lot of frustration about a particular problem or subject. Move on to a different problem, or take a short break. A change of pace helps students to regroup and finish their other work.

5. Trust-building

At the end of the day, you want to provide a place where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and their struggles. Be fair, honest, and consistent with your students. With time, they will return the favor with their trust.

III CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS

Our world is vast. **While tutoring, you will probably be working with students who have different backgrounds than your own.** Our differences help to create the dynamic, exciting, diverse world that we live in. However, it is important that as tutors, we are sensitive to the differences that each of us has, and do not let this get in the way of our tutoring.

Here are some guidelines that can help you, as tutors, to be more culturally sensitive and aware:

- **Be aware of your own biases and prejudices.** We all hold cultural misinformation based on our education, history, access to information, and exposure to other types of people. **It's our job as tutors to be aware of these so that we can value diversity.** Read books, watch documentaries, ask questions!
- **Take the time to listen to your students.** Ask questions that might help you to better understand where your student is coming from.
- **Don't make assumptions.** Your student's race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status are in no way a predeterminate of their

abilities or perspective. Many different belief systems can exist within one specific culture.

- **Find common ground.** Often there are many parts of our lives that we have in common outside of race, ethnicity, culture, religion etc. Talking with students about their interests and academics is a great way to make connections and build healthy tutor/student relationships.
- **It's okay to have differences!** We don't all have to believe the same things in order to have great peer and student/tutor relationships. **Remember that no matter what the differences, we all share the common goal of helping students, which is why we signed up to be tutors.** Be aware and interested in learning about your student's background if the topic comes up.

Developing cultural sensitivities is an ongoing process. We are constantly learning and changing and growing, and it's okay to have questions or concerns. If you have worries about your belief system or someone else's, talk to a faculty member. They will be able to help.

Approved by:	Quality Assurance Unit, HR
Date of Approval:	01.09.2021
Date of Next Review:	01.09.2025
Owner:	Student Office
Contact:	a.isanina@siil.ch