

What to Expect from Peer Tutoring

Tutoring is a student-centered activity, and as such, the agenda for tutoring meetings is driven largely by the student's needs. However, both students and peer tutors should play an active role in establishing and fostering a collaborative learning relationship. The following expectations will help peer tutors and students get the most out of their time spent together.

Peer tutors are expected to be:

1. Approachable

Peer tutors should get to know the students in their college and help them feel comfortable asking for assistance. They should ask students about their academic interests and share their own interests with others.

2. Knowledgeable

Peer tutors should know their subject matter well and be able to coach students in their understanding of concepts and skills in that area. They should also encourage good study behaviors to help students become independent learners and develop a long-term plan for success.

3. Resourceful

Although peer tutors are not expected to know the answer to every question, they can still help students by modeling effective patterns of thinking and strategies for addressing difficult problems. They should also refer to other resources available to students as appropriate.

4. Empathic

Peer tutors should be sensitive to students' challenges, recognize that learning takes time, and understand that mistakes are a part of the process. They may share their own recent experiences facing challenges, feeling pressured, making mistakes, and learning.

5. Accessible

Peer tutors should be proactive in offering support periodically throughout the year and let the students in their college know how to reach them. They should respond to communication from students seeking assistance within a reasonable timeframe.

Students are expected to be:

1. Proactive

Students should take initiative and seek out the academic assistance they need at the first sign of difficulty. This may include visiting the professor during office hours, attending review sessions, and increasing time spent studying independently and in groups in addition to meeting with a peer tutor.

2. Prepared

Students should come to meetings having first attended class and looked over the reading assignment or attempted the problem set. They should bring all relevant materials with them, including texts, the course syllabus, and class or reading notes. Students should also be ready to "hold the pen" during meetings, meaning they are doing their own work and taking charge of their learning.

3. Communicative

Students should specify to their peer tutor the material with which they would like to receive help and where they would like to concentrate their efforts. As they work together, students should let their tutor know when they have not been clear or when they need something explained in a different way.

4. Open Minded

While students may have ideas about their best learning style, they should be open to new possibilities and willing to try strategies they may not have previously considered.

5. Respectful

Students should be willing to meet with their peer tutor in person at a time and location that is mutually convenient. They should arrive on time for meetings and respect their tutor's time. In the case of an unavoidable appointment cancellation, students should provide as much advanced notice as possible.

Peer Tutoring with Academic Fellows & Mentors

At Rice, students are encouraged to ask for help and to offer help to others. The Academic Fellows and Mentors are upperclassmen selected based on academic achievement and citizenship to enhance the academic life of their residential colleges and provide free academic assistance to their peers. They organize study groups, hold review sessions, and provide one-on-one peer tutoring. Students seek their assistance because they wish to discuss new information and concepts they are learning, review material they have forgotten, prepare for an exam, or simply obtain academic support beyond the help provided by the course faculty and teaching assistants.

Academic Fellows and Mentors will frequently reach out to students in their residential colleges through emails and events. Students should also feel comfortable consulting the Academic Fellows and Mentors contact list available at <http://oaa.rice.edu/fellowsmentors/>. If students need help connecting with the Academic Fellows (or Mentors) at their college, they can email the Office of Academic Advising at aadv@rice.edu. After submitting a request for academic assistance, the student and the Academic Fellow (or Mentor) will receive an introductory email to exchange contact information. Within 24 hours, the student should make an effort to arrange the first meeting.

To have productive meetings with peer tutors, students need to prepare. During sessions, candid conversations about the following topics will significantly enhance the collaborative learning experience:

- Personal and academic interests and goals
- Academic background and preparedness for courses
- Study habits and time management
- Course syllabus, texts, and class or reading notes
- Questions about concepts, practice problems, or written assignments
- Referrals to other resources
- Arrangements for follow-up meetings

While participating in peer tutoring, students are expected to continue utilizing the other resources available to them for academic assistance including, but not limited to:

- Professors' and teaching assistants' office hours
- Course recitations and tutorials
- Study groups
- Help with problem solving, time management, and study skills from Student Success Initiatives
- Guidance on academic planning and registration policies from academic advisors
- Support for reasonable accommodations from Disability Support Services

Students and peer tutors should let the Office of Academic Advising know if questions or concerns arise at any time.

Honor Code

The Rice Honor System was created by students in 1912. It is one of Rice's most highly valued traditions. The Honor Code, which covers such matters as plagiarism and giving or receiving unauthorized aid on exams, accompanies all student work. To function effectively, this system requires everyone's commitment and active participation.

Students and peer tutors must be especially vigilant about issues of academic integrity. During meetings, the student should be the only person using the pen/paper or keyboard/screen, and all work produced and turned in must be the student's own work. Students and peer tutors are advised to study the Honor Code at <http://honor.rice.edu/>. It is students' responsibility to gather all the information needed to obey Honor Code policies. Professors are open to answer clarifying questions about their courses. Additional questions regarding the Honor System may be directed to Honor Council Representatives at each residential college.