

A photograph of three children wearing black Batman masks with pointed ears. They are standing outdoors next to a light-colored wooden building. In the background, a red car and a grey van are parked on a street. A building with a sign that says "Keräilytarvikkeet" is also visible. The text "TREY's Guide for" is overlaid on the image in a white box.

TREY's Guide for

International Student Tutors

2021-2022

Sisällys

Welcome to tutoring!	3
Two types of international student tutoring	5
Tutors' role	7
Leading a small group	10
Support for tutoring	14
Guidance and current matters	18
Study guidance	18
Sisu	22
COVID-19 and tutoring in 2021	23
Quarantine on arrival	24
Tutoring in practice	25
Tutor meetings	25
Communicating with your tutees	31
Tutoring after the first weeks	32
Tips for tutor meetings with a twist	32
Contact info	34
Useful links	35

Welcome to tutoring!

Flashing on your screen is the Guide for International Student Tutors for the academic year 2021-22! Usually around 1000 student tutors are selected to help new students through their first days at Tampere University each year. The tutor is often the first person the new student, a fresher, meets at the university and Finland, in general. The new surroundings and the barrage of information thrown at the freshers can be overwhelming, so we would like to thank you for participating in helping get the new students through their first weeks and months here.

In addition to being of great benefit to our freshers, tutoring is supposed to be a useful experience to you, as well. By guiding the new students, you will get to practice your skills in public speaking, organising your own work, and advance planning and scheduling. When you graduate, you will hopefully be able to go back to your tutoring experiences and realise that they have been very beneficial to you. This guide has been produced to help you in your tasks as a student tutor. The first section of it is dedicated to going through the basics of international student tutoring and the learning aims of the tutoring course, as well as some notes on guiding a small group and the support structure around tutors.

Tutors are often described as experts by experience of student life. This is correct in that there are no better guides to our student community than its active members. This expertise does not require you to know everything, however. More important is an open mind and a willingness to help the freshers find information. The second part of this guide is dedicated to presenting those services that support the new students.

The third section contains some useful tips on how to plan your tutoring and how the first days and weeks of new students will go once they arrive in Finland. Each

tutor plans and executes their work their own way, and you can find all sorts of tutoring traditions all over our large university community. Remember, however, that successful tutoring relies on the needs of the new students. Our own experiences have taught us that asking what the new students need and being flexible in planning tutoring will make the activity more useful, easy and fun. So go ahead and ask what sort of assistance and information the freshers hope, and if there are any special needs they might have. For example an international student who has lived in Finland for many years might not require the same assistance as a student who has never been out of their home country before.

So use this guide to help you with tutoring and also familiarise yourself with the other materials that are available through Moodle and the tutors' mailing list. Even though COVID-19 will continue casting a shadow of uncertainty over the university community, there will still be new students who will be needing your assistance getting going in their new place of study.

Thank you again for participating in important work!

Miska Puputti

Board member; Health, welfare, tutoring

Annina Kipponen

Specialist in tutoring

Student Union of Tampere University – TREY



Basics of international student tutoring

Serving as a student tutor is an important task, where you represent your subject association or guild, field of study and Tampere University as a whole. The freshers you have been assigned, or your tutees, will rely on you in many cases. At times your duties can seem overwhelming, but your role has boundaries which should be respected. You have many duties, but always remember that you don't have to be alone with them nor should you solve all problems by yourself. By respecting your own limits, you will ensure your own well-being and successful completion of all the required tasks of a student tutor. This section presents the two types of international student tutoring and discusses the role of student tutors.

As many tutors are on board for the first time, this section also presents the course attached to international student tutoring. You can only get the credits once, but the 50€ compensation can be sought once in a semester, if you successfully complete all required tasks. It is important to remember that tutoring offers something for the tutors themselves. One of these things is experience in leading a small group, the basics of which will be discussed later in this section. Finally, a short introduction of the support structure around tutors will be provided.

Two types of international student tutoring

The basics of student tutoring are pretty much the same everywhere and in all situations: Helping new students, sharing your experiences and integrating the freshers into the student community. In Tampere University, international student tutoring is divided into two: international degree student tutoring and exchange student tutoring. Here is a short overview of their differences.

Degree student tutoring

International degree students are students who will come to Tampere to complete a degree, often a Master's degree, but Bachelor's degree programmes are also available. They will stay in Finland for at least two years, and many students wish to stay in Finland even after their graduation. Degree students who come from outside the EU/EEA are subjected to fees, so they are paying for their studies and thus have quite strict limits on their study time and lofty grade goals. This does not mean that international degree students don't want to be active in the student community, but it is useful to remember that many of them have a different situation than, for example, a Finnish degree student. Overall, however, Finnish and international degree students are pretty well comparable.

The student selection for degree programmes in English is much earlier than other selections. This means that the tutors will get to know their tutees already during the spring.

Exchange student tutoring

Many international students come to Tampere University on an exchange. This means that they are students who will spend one or two semesters here and then return to their home universities. Exchange students don't complete a degree and they are limited to the study plans attached to their learning agreements with the University. The majority of exchange students come to Tampere University from European countries through the Erasmus+ and other programmes. In addition, the university has several bilateral agreements with foreign universities around the world which bring students here on exchange. Unlike degree students, the short period the exchange students spend in Finland has some obvious consequences for tutoring. For example, they might be over here more for international experience than hard studying. Nevertheless, the incoming exchange students still need your help in getting to know

the student community and student life here in Finland.

The information on the incoming exchange students is sent to tutors in the summer. On the Hervanta campus, the process of coordination is under development: ESN Into international student club wants to be more involved in tutoring and we are creating a new model of coordination here. On the city centre and Kauppi campuses, the student associations coordinate the exchange student tutoring with the help of the faculties and International Mobility Services. Unlike degree student tutoring, where tutors and tutees study the same field, it is possible that your tutees in exchange student tutoring study a different subject. This is not a big problem, as the needs of exchange students usually revolve around getting to know Finland, integrating into the community and the basics of Finnish university studies.

Tampere University has announced that exchange students will not arrive in the autumn semester 2021. A small number of exchange students will study remotely from their home countries in the autumn semester 2021.

Tutors' role

The tutor's task is to introduce their tutees to Tampere University, studying in Finland, on the tutor's and tutee's study field, if they are the same and the student culture here. Each tutee has their own needs, but generally your duties include:

- Helping introduce study practices in Finland based on your own experiences
- Answering tutees' questions or finding answers if cannot answer yourself
- Introducing tutors to student culture by, for example, bringing them along to subject associations' events. Tell them how the associations work and how your tutee can join

- Touring your tutees on the campuses and showing them the crucial services and locations
- Introducing your tutee to other students
- Keeping in touch with your tutees throughout the academic year, helping with any problems and in the case of exchange students assisting in departure arrangements

The most important thing is to be there for your tutees. Sometimes, unfortunately, international student tutors forget their tasks which leaves their tutees in a very difficult position. You are important to the new students, please respect that. Throughout tutoring, encourage your tutees towards independence, and you will see that the acute need for tutoring starts to disappear. Remember also to leave room for the students' own questions and worries, even if you have a lot to say yourself. By working the problems together you will get the most out of tutoring.

Often, tutors can be seen as people who can be given all sorts of jobs. You should respect your own limits and those of your role as a tutor, however. By taking on more duties than planned, you risk being overwhelmed, even so much so that you are not able to do your basic tasks. If you are being given more tasks you can handle, you can contact the international organiser in your student association or us at the Student Union. Here are a couple of examples of things that are not your responsibility as a tutor:

- Planning studies for your tutee
- Making course or minor subject selections for your tutee
- Housing your tutee
- Paying for any expenses on behalf of your tutee
- Attending all events and student parties
- Hosting parties
- Generally taking care of your tutee's personal affairs, such as getting them around Tampere or setting up their bank account

Most likely you have applied to be a tutor because you want to help new students. Indeed, this is an important task, but always remember that you do not need to know everything. With an open mind, a willingness to help your tutees and a positive attitude, you will get far. You can always ask your fellow tutors, your subject association or guilds, TREY or the common guidance & counselling services if you cannot find answers to questions.

The tutoring course

International student tutoring is also a course available to all students in Tampere University with dedicated learning outcomes and credits. Its aim is to train tutors to help the incoming international students. The tutor is required to be familiar with the services available to international students and with the administrative matters which new international students need to take care of. Besides being able to lead a small group and work as part of a network, they will have an understanding of the nuances of intercultural communication and have the ability to effectively work with students from different backgrounds. They will also understand the importance of peer support and their role in helping new students integrate into the academic community. After acting as an international tutor, the student will be able to manage a small group, work in a multicultural group and have skills in project management.

The requirements for completing the course is attending the tutor training (in 2021 through Moodle), doing the tutoring work actively during autumn and completing the reporting in the beginning of 2022 (includes reflective essay-questions and tutor feedback). In addition to the two credits (which can be acquired only once), the tutors can become eligible for a small compensation for a satisfactory completion of all their tasks. Further instructions on submitting the essay and seeking the compensation will be sent to tutors in late 2021 / early 2022.

Read more about the course on the Student's Guide. The code for the course is TAU.M.210, and the credits will be rewarded by your faculty, International Mobility Services or degree programme depending where and who you have tutored.

Leading a small group

Whether you are working with a tutor pair or by yourself, as a tutor you will have the responsibility to guide your tutees through their first weeks here in Tampere. The number of tutees per tutor depends on your subject association or guild, degree program and whether you will be tutoring degree or exchange students. However, each tutor benefits from learning a little bit about the basics of leading a small group. This section is dedicated to exploring your tutor group and its functioning. The same themes are raised in the tutor trainings, which you should go through in Moodle. Please note that while it is beneficial to organise tutor meetings as a group, with all your tutees at once, much of international student tutoring happens one-to-one, with helping your individual tutees with their problems.

The group dynamics vary wildly during its existence. At the beginning, everyone can be a bit nervous and awkward. Don't worry, this is perfectly normal. Planning your tutor meetings helps in this, and we will give you some tips in the last section of this guide. In addition to going through the most important factual things, it is a good idea to get to know your tutees a little and have them talk among themselves, too. Ideas for 'get-to-know-you games' can be found on the web, but using them is not obligatory. Learning about your tutees' background is useful, as it helps you plan your tutoring activities further.

To support your group leadership skills, the university has produced a guidebook for leading a small group. This will be uploaded to Moodle during the spring. Use it while planning for your tutor meetings and activities, as it

contains many helpful tips.

The awkwardness eases quite quickly as all of you get to know each other a little bit. In most groups, there are tutees who are more active and talkative and they might start dominating the conversations. As a tutor you should see that even the more quiet and reserved members of the group get their say. It is also natural to befriend some of your tutees more quickly than others. This should not influence your work as a tutor, however. Each tutee should be respected and assisted as an individual. Your duty is to ensure they get the help they need at the start of their studies.

As the tutor group continues its activities, the tutees can befriend each other. In this phase you can see them often meeting and spending time together even without you facilitating the meetings as a tutor. You should continue to hold tutor meetings because this ensures that nobody in your group is left alone. It is, however, a good sign that your tutees start thriving without your help. As the autumn turns to winter, the need for tutoring decreases as they integrate in their studies and into the student community. Nevertheless, keep sending messages to your tutees and ask how they are doing through the autumn semester, at least.

The ending point of tutoring varies depending on circumstances. Exchange students have a departure date set even as they arrive in Finland, so this is naturally the end of tutoring for them. Help out your tutees with their departure process if you can! Degree students stay here for longer, and you are not required to continue their tutoring indefinitely. The reporting for the tutoring happens around the end of the autumn semester, but it is good to keep in touch with your tutees through the spring semester, as well. It is perfectly fine to send messages to your tutees even after their first year of studies. Helping and listening will not ever go out of fashion.

Tutors and students' well-being

One of the most important facets of tutoring in general is to ensure that new students get peer support in a stressful period in their lives. Often you are the first person the student meets in Finland and the university, and your cooperation will be quite intense in the first weeks. For this reason, you might encounter students who struggle with stress, nervousness and anxiety.

Different help for different needs

Remember that you should not be responsible for the well-being of your tutees by yourself. This guide introduces guidance & counselling services which will help the new students. If you worry about your tutee, it is good to talk with them privately. This is not to solve all problems, but to get help to the student. You can, for example, tell your tutees about the health services provided by FSHS. To use FSHS services, your tutee needs to be a member of the student union. Also note that exchange students are not eligible for FSHS services from January 2021 onwards. yths.fi/en

Navigaattori is a new support service for students' studies and well-being. Navigaattori makes student guidance and well-being services more easily available and provides students with low-threshold counselling related to a variety of issues that affect well-being. You can come to Navigaattori without booking an appointment to ask for advice and information about things that concern you. Experts from the University and our partners are here for you. Opening hours, locations and the zoom-links can be found on the University handbook here: Navigaattori, tuni.fi/navigaattori

Another service available to students is Nyyti ry. It is an organisation which promotes students' mental health by offering information and activities on the matter and supports students coping with everyday life while studying.

Nyyti organises support groups and chats where students get to talk about things on their minds. If needed, check Nyyti's website nyyti.fi/en and talk about it to your tutee.

While tutoring, it is good to remember that each new student arrives here from different backgrounds. Because of this we would recommend an open conversation with your tutees about their needs and wishes concerning tutoring. If your tutee has a Finnish partner, for example, their needs might be a bit different to a student who has never met a Finnish person before. Their background knowledge about Finnish culture is totally different. It is a sign of a good tutor, if you are able to tweak your tutoring plans so that each tutee gets the help they need. For more on this, check FSHS's lecture recording on Moodle which discusses these themes in detail.

Safe place to learn for everyone

It is also important to remember that the university should be a safe place to study and learn. Any type of harassment, discrimination and bullying is not tolerated in our community. TREY has harassment contact persons who you can contact if you wish to report harassment or need advice. Even if you are unsure if something unpleasant is harassment, you can contact them. If you encounter racism, sexual harassment, derogatory language or other types of unwanted behaviour inside your tutor group, it is important to get it stopped. You can send a message to the harassment contact persons to ask how to do that. You can reach them through harassment@trey.fi. All messages are confidential and the contact persons will not act upon your message if not agreed to.

The University has their own harassment contact persons and guidelines for these types of situations. You can find these on the Student's Guide. Nobody wants to encounter harassment, but it is good to be prepared. It is important that you don't try to handle difficult situations on your own.

Contact people who can help. Discussing these tough matters often brings a good result. Let's ensure together that Tampere University is a safe, harassment-free place to study.

Support for tutoring

Tutoring is often very independent work which you should prepare for through the spring and the summer. To support you, there are, however, many services and people who you can rely on before tutoring, during the whirlwind that is the Welcome Week or later in the semester. Here is a brief listing of them.

International tutoring organiser in your subject association or guild

Many of the international student tutors belong to a subject association or a guild. These are associations that represent degree programmes and do a lot of important work in supporting tutors and students of that programme. There are a few degree programmes which are not directly affiliated with any subject association. If you tutor in one of these, you can contact TREY and we will help you reach an association representative. In addition, three advocacy associations are involved with international student tutoring on the city centre campus. All these associations have an organiser whose task is to coordinate international student tutoring. These organisers have direct contact with the degree programmes, faculties and TREY.

You can contact the person responsible for international student tutoring if you have questions regarding tutoring, the association's events in the autumn or other matters. Many organisers hold their own training and meetings which you should attend if possible. This way you will meet other tutors in your association.

Other tutors

Tutoring traditions vary between associations and campuses. It is possible that you will be half of a tutor pair working with new students, but you can also do the work on your own. However tutoring is organised, you will benefit from cooperating with other tutors. It is a good idea to put together a chat group for all the international student tutors from the same association or degree programme. This way you will get to ask questions and get to know the other tutors. Quick and easy messaging will become handy once tutoring begins.

Cooperation with other tutors in your field of study is often a natural part of tutoring. You will also meet tutors from different campuses, guilds and associations. They might provide you with fresh ideas, so talk with them where possible.

Degree programme, programme coordinators and education specialists

The tutors' tasks are to help their tutees with their arrival, introduce them to Tampere, Finland and studying here and integrate tutees into the university community. The degree students are themselves responsible for their own studies and study-planning. Help for these is provided by the degree programme. Each degree programme has a contact person, a coordinator or an Education specialist, who you can contact if you have questions regarding tutoring in that programme. Note that English-language degree programmes may have different contact persons than your own if you study in Finnish. You can find the contact persons from the Moodle page.

Starting from 2019, all degree students in Tampere University are given an academic tutor. This person is a staff member, whose task is to introduce the scientific and professional field to the new student and help them

get going in their studies. The academic tutors are often responsible for the PSP (personal study plan, HOPS) process. You will hopefully meet your tutees' academic tutor during the autumn!

If you tutor degree students, it is good to find out who is the coordinator in their degree programme. You may contact this person if you have questions regarding your tutees' studies or the timetables for autumn's teaching, for example..

Mobility coordinators, other exchange student tutoring staff For exchange student tutors, the most important university contact people on the city centre and Kauppi campuses are the International Mobility Services' international mobility specialists. They are responsible for the incoming exchange students and therefore any questions regarding your tutees' studies and study planning should be directed to them. Find out who is responsible for a specific study field in Moodle.

For the Hervanta campus, the exchange student tutoring is organised by the International Mobility Services. You can contact mobility.tau@tuni.fi if you have questions about exchange student tutoring in Hervanta.

International Mobility Services

The International Mobility Services are responsible for the exchange tutoring course and development of student tutoring with the degree programmes, faculties, TREY and subject associations. They, for example, coordinate the tutor lists to TOAS, indicating who is allowed to collect the incoming students' keys before their arrival.

You can reach the International Mobility Services by email at mobility.tau@tuni.fi. If you don't know your relevant programme or mobility coordinator contact person for example, the International Mobility Services can help.

TREY

The Student Union has been part of the tutoring process from January 2019. TREY's task is to organise the tutor application process, help with the tutor training and set up the tutor mailing lists. You can contact us at TREY through the spring, summer and autumn if you have any questions (we are on summer holiday in July). You can reach us by email at tuutorointi@trey.fi or by contacting us in Telegram (see more info on our website).

TREY produces tutor gear for all student tutors on the Tampere campuses. From us, you will get a tutor shirt (if you ordered it when applying for tutoring), a tutor pass/name tag and an overall patch. All these are free-of-charge for tutors, and they will be distributed in late-July or early-August. TREY will also organise the Tutors' Night on Wednesday 11 August at Tullikamarin Klubi if the exceptional measures against coronavirus have loosened. This is an event for all student tutors to relax and get together before the Welcome Week starts! More information on the tutor gear and Tutors' Night will be sent to you through the international student tutors' mailing list.

Moodle materials

All international student tutors are invited to join the tutors' Moodle course page, through which this guide and all the training materials will be available. During the spring and summer additional teaching material will be uploaded to the page. The purpose of the Moodle course page is to serve as the tutors' toolbox, a place where all the important documents and guides can be found at once. Get to know the materials available and complete the tasks to ensure you know everything that is needed for successful tutoring. Later during the academic year, the reporting and feedback relating to the tutoring course and compensation will happen through the same Moodle page. You will get more information on this closer to the reporting time.

Please note that we have two separate Moodle pages, one for tutors of degree students and the other one for tutors of exchange students.

Guidance and current matters

The university has numerous support services for the new students. This section introduces them. You can guide your tutees to contact them if they have problems and you are not able to help. We will also talk briefly about current matters that have an effect on tutoring: Sisu system and the COVID-19 pandemic situation. These will be brief introductions, so you will have to follow the university's updates on them. We will also inform students on these matters on TREY's communication channels.

Study guidance

All international students are entitled to study guidance and counseling. These services are first introduced during Welcome Week when study planning and practices are discussed. Of course, you can go over the basics of university studies in Finland with your tutees, but you are not expected to serve as a personal study counselor to them. You can always ask them to contact the international mobility services or programme coordinator / education specialist or a student counselor, for example, if you are unsure or unwilling to discuss study-related problems with your tutees.

In general, degree students study according to the structure of their degree programme. Planning of their studies must be done together with a staff member from the degree programme so you may direct your tutee to contact them if they have any problems with it. The possible subjects and courses a degree student may complete depends on their degree programme. For exchange students there is more freedom of choice when it comes to choosing their courses.

However, exchange students have completed a preliminary Learning Agreement with their home university, indicating the courses which they are planning to take during their studies in Tampere. If they wish to alter that, they must contact their home university first.

The Student's Guide and TUNI user account

The most important support service for all students is the Student's Guide tuni.fi/studentsguide. By accessing the university's portion of it, you will find the new students' checklists, handbooks and curricula. The new students will receive links to the Student's Guide along with their acceptance letters. There are separate checklists and information packages for exchange and degree students. It is a good idea to browse the Student's Guide and the checklists in particular before your tutees arrive. The website is introduced to the students during Welcome Week, but you may remind them that this is the place for the most up-to-date and relevant information.

All the new students should activate their TUNI user accounts as quickly as possible. This can usually be done only after their university registration at the IT Helpdesk. The university uses the TUNI emails to contact students and inform them of important matters. All students should regularly follow their inboxes. The TUNI account is used also for the many electronic services and tools available to the students. For example Intranet and Sisu will use this account.

Guidance in degree programmes and faculties

The degree programmes and teachers offer the acutest support relating to the studies of your tutees. The teachers are responsible for their courses and teaching and they answer questions relating to the course learning outcomes, teaching practices and evaluation. Always ask your tutees to contact their teachers if they have questions about

specific courses.

The degree programmes employ staff members who are responsible for the study guidance relating to the whole programme. For the international degree students, contacting the education specialists is a good way to seek answers to questions about, for example, planning studies and recognition of prior learning.

The faculties offer guidance in many forms. There are several different titles for staff members doing guidance at the faculties, including education specialist, study specialist, student secretary, academic officer and others. For exchange students, the most relevant contact person is the international mobility specialist who is responsible for the matters relating to their Learning Agreement, for example. Overall, the faculties offer guidance for all students relating to, among other things, graduation.

Check the Student's Guide if you don't know who offers guidance in your home faculty and/or degree programme. You can also ask the international tutoring organiser in your subject association or TREY. We will help you, and your tutee, reach the right person!

Common guidance and counselling services

The university-wide guidance and counselling services help students regardless of their home faculty. They can be reached through studentcounselling.tau@tuni.fi. Here the students can book personal guidance times with the study counsellors to discuss matters which are problematic for them in their studies or their life in general. This address is also where the students should send a message if they need any special arrangements relating to their studies. On the Hervanta campus, the study counsellor guidance times can be booked through an online calendar, as well. Additionally, there is a new chat service open on select times during the week which helps students without

appointment. All students can contact the aforementioned email address if they are experiencing difficulties in their life and don't know who to contact.

The University also employs study psychologists who work with degree students who have persistent problems with their studies or other facets of their life. Usually a student is asked to talk to study psychologists by their teachers or other guidance staff. However, they can also be contacted directly at studypsychologist.tau@tuni.fi. The study psychologists help students with problems relating to, for example, study skills, stress, procrastination and motivation and offer support when they are dealing with personal and study-related circumstances that may influence their academic progress.

The Student Affairs Office helps students with, for example, university registration and official transcripts. They can be reached through studentservices.tau@tuni.fi. The Student Affairs office has offices on the city centre campus (in the Main Building) and on the Hervanta campus (in Kampusareena).

The university has several other services, as well, who deal with specific problems relating to, for example, career counselling. Their contact details and more information about all the aforementioned services can be found on the Student's Guide. These have been introduced here to emphasise the fact that you don't have to solve all your tutees' problems. Help them contact the right services, and if you don't know who to contact, send email and ask. That goes a long way!

Guidebook

Guidebook is an app which is aimed at new international degree students of Tampere University. There is a group of specialised Guidebook tutors working with the app. If you are a degree student tutor, your tutees have been invited

to the app to get to know the university and studying in Finland a little bit more.

The app runs from April to the Welcome Week, after which you will take over as a student tutor. Guidebook is not so much study guidance, rather an information source and a platform to connect with other incoming students. You don't have to worry about producing anything for the app, but you will be invited on it in case you want to see what's going on. Maybe you can even participate in the discussions on the message board! This is, however, no way mandatory.

When you contact your tutees (degree students), ask whether they have downloaded the app and encourage them to do so if they have not. This is a good platform to start integrating in the student community in Tampere!

Sisu

Sisu is an information system for all stages of your studies. On Sisu you draft your personal study plan (PSP), sign up for courses, and monitor the progress of your studies. In Sisu you can also conduct online transactions such as apply for course credit transferring, apply for evaluation of study modules or apply for the degree certificate.

One of the most important features offered to students by Sisu is the tool for making study plans. A study plan is based on information and requirements in the curriculum. Study plans form the foundation for studies and their timing at the university.

You are not asked to be an expert on Sisu. The main responsibility on its implementation is at the degree programme.



Screenshot from the video Yet Another New Information System: Sisu (Tussitaikurit Oy / Marker Wizards Ltd)

COVID-19 and tutoring in 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously caused confusion and uncertainty about the status of incoming international students and the arrangements for safe studying all over the world. It is impossible to predict what the situation will be like in August. For this reason, it is very important to follow updates from the University. The Student Union also gathers together information and posts it to the students through our communication channels (website, newsletters, Facebook, Twitter). While the situation is in flux and the practicalities can be different from the norm, it is good to remember that the need for tutoring does not disappear as incoming international students still need help when they arrive.

Degree student tutors will receive lists of their tutees in the spring, while exchange student lists will be sent to tutors in June/July. Except in the autumn semester 2021 there won't be any new exchange students in Tampere. Some of them may study from abroad. Contacting your

tutees in advance is more important than ever due to the coronavirus situation. Many incoming international students have difficulties booking residence permit interviews and their home countries (as well as the Finnish government) have placed travel restrictions which can carry over to the autumn. Therefore the arrival of many international students can be significantly delayed. This has an obvious effect on tutoring. By being in contact with your tutees right away, you can perhaps help them with finding information relating to their studies here and offering support in a difficult situation. The students must however, follow the updates by the university themselves as you alone are not responsible for getting the important information to your tutees.

Send email to us if you have any specific questions and we will see what we can do. Although the autumn may very well be a bit different than usual, it is still good to plan ahead. Communicating with your tutees through the summer helps in doing this.

Quarantine on arrival

For the time being, Finland recommends an independent quarantine of 10 days to people arriving from countries that have a high risk of COVID-19 infection. To find out whether your tutees are recommended to stay in quarantine after their arrival, please visit [the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare \(THL\) website](#). During the quarantine period, the student is not allowed to come to University campus areas or spend time outside their accommodation. [More information on the self-quarantine is available here on THS's website.](#)

During the quarantine, and when making the way to quarantine one should avoid public transportation. Wearing a face mask and following other hygiene instructions closely on the way to quarantine is important. More

information about the face mask recommendation in Finland can be found on the THL website.

A good option for avoiding public transportation is to take a taxi from the airport to a quarantine destination. A taxi from the Helsinki-Vantaa airport to Tampere may cost approximately 300–400€. One can also consider arranging quarantine accommodation close to the airport and travel to Tampere after the quarantine. In case there are friends or relatives residing in Finland, they may also help arriving in the quarantine destination.

At the moment, it may be possible to shorten the independent quarantine by taking two voluntary tests. *Information and the conditions for this possibility are available on the THL website.*

When arriving in Finland, it is important to take the free test at the airport. For the second test, one may contact a local health centre or a private medical clinic to take the test. This link is for corona testing information by the city of Tampere and this link is for information on testing by a private service provider.

More information concerning Covid-19 guidance for arriving degree students from the Tampere University pages can be found here through this link.

Tutoring in practice

Tutoring takes many forms. In addition to the traditional tutor group meetings, you will offer peer support in student parties and other events, help out the freshers online and perhaps attend academic tutor meetings with your tutees. This section offers some tips and notes on how to plan your tutoring activity in the autumn.

Tutor meetings

The most traditional way of tutoring is to organise tutor group meetings where you will lead the discussion on some topics. These are still valid today. Plan these meetings ahead. A good idea is to link your meeting topic to something that has been discussed at a Welcome Week session. For example, if the freshers have heard from campus services, it can be useful to take the campus tour to show where these services are located. You are responsible for planning, scheduling and leading these meetings. Having done plans in advance helps you navigate the vast amount of information that the freshers will hear. Remember to also schedule time for questions and discussion. Most of the time, your tutees might have urgent questions which do not relate in any way to your planned topic for the day. Be therefore flexible, especially during the first few weeks.

Getting to know your tutees is an important part of the tutor group work. Your tutees should also know something about the other group members. A good way of getting to know each other is to have informal tutor meetings and attend some of the tens of student parties and events during August and early-September. Finnish student culture often revolves around drinking, although fortunately this has been changing in the past number of years. Please emphasise to your tutees that attending events without drinking is perfectly fine. You have to also explain many of the events to your tutees. For example, what is 'sitsit'? Their concept can be alien to your tutees. Remember also that if you go to an event with your tutees, don't abandon them or concentrate only on partying. Everything in moderation!

International student tutoring is special in that the new student must navigate a new country and culture along with new types of studying. The emphasis of tutoring is often on the first half of that. Don't worry if you cannot go through everything that you have planned, because most of the study-related matters become clear to the freshers only after the lectures and exams start. Your task is to get them

going in Tampere, and often this means just basic things that are quite mundane to you. Especially if you are Finnish yourself. Explaining why we have so many different dairy products in the supermarket might be more useful than trying to explain how the electronic exam classrooms work.

Encourage all your tutees to participate in the tutoring activities and events during the first few weeks. Not everyone is equally talkative and social, however. They might need some time on their own. Take a leaf out of their book at times, and schedule rest days and days when you are not holding tutor meetings. Taking care of your own well-being is extremely important. By balancing activities, you will ensure that the new students feel like tutoring is useful and pleasant for them. Do not be discouraged, however, if some students do not participate in tutoring. It is their right not to do so.

First meetings

The most crucial tutor meetings are the first ones before and during the Welcome Week. This can be a stressful time for everyone, so good advance planning is necessary. Do not try to fit everything into these meetings, but concentrate on the basics. On the first meeting:

Meet your tutees when they arrive in Tampere. Be in contact with your tutee before they come to Finland to agree where and when you will be meeting. You don't need to pick them up from the airport, but it is a good idea to meet them at the bus or railway station. If you cannot make it to the meeting, please arrange for another tutor to take your place. It is not acceptable to leave your tutees alone.

Usually the tutees have travelled for hours to get to Tampere. Therefore the most important thing is to get them to their accommodation. If they are living at TOAS, you can pick up their keys from the TOAS office or from the key-picking automat in Kalevan Prisma. Then they will get to

their apartment without problems. This should be discussed in the tutor training in more detail. Note that only the named tutor can pick up their tutees keys, and any changes must go through the International Mobility Services.

Your tutee should arrange for their own accommodation, and you have no obligation of housing them. If they do not have a place to stay, take them to a hostel or hotel and ask them to stay there. Tell them that the University has given instructions concerning self quarantine during the pandemic. You can find that information from the section "Quarantine on arrival" above. Opiskelijan Tampere offers emergency accommodation. You can also ask help about housing problems from TREY's Specialist in social affairs.

Decide together where and when you will be meeting the next time. Show your tutee the closest bus stop and grocery store to their apartment, do not assume that they know their way around Tampere yet. Make sure they have your phone number.

Once they have arrived to Tampere and have a roof over their heads, the next tutor meeting should focus on a couple of important steps (read more about these on the Student's Guide):

- Payment of the TREY membership fee (optional for exchange students) by credit/debit card or SEPA payment, more info available online at trey.fi/en/membership. (International students may have paid this already in advance.)
- Activating their TUNI account at the IT Helpdesk
- Registering with the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. See more info on this on the Student's Guide
- Ordering the student card online. [See TREY's website for more information.](#)

If all this is handled during the first few meetings, you can be pleased. Remember to balance these bureaucratic tasks

with lighter ones and get to know your tutees right from the beginning. The incoming students are responsible for the beginning of their studies, but it is useful to know what they have to do (especially if you are not an international student yourself). Check the Student's Guide and the welcome materials provided to new international students. TREY has produced the Freshers' Guide for 2021-22. Checking its contents is useful, as well.

Welcome Week

As mentioned above, new international students are asked to arrive in Finland before the Welcome Week to complete their university registration and other bureaucratic matters. This is to save time for the important info lectures and other sessions which will take place during the following week 23-29 August. The Welcome Week introduces the new international students to Finnish culture, Tampere, studying in Tampere University and other basic information. The week contains sessions which are meant for all new students and sessions which are degree programme -specific.

The detailed timetables for the Welcome Week are published during the summer. You can find them on the Student's Guide. Please make sure you plan your tutor meetings so that your tutees are able to attend all the info sessions. This is especially important as they have a tight deadline for the course registrations through SisU. Do not try to cram everything in the meeting during Welcome Week because the days can be long and a lot of information is thrown at the new students. There is time to go through things later.

Campus tour

Your tutees will possibly partake in campus tours organised by the International Mobility Services and they will get

to know the most common areas of their primary study campus quite quickly. It is, however, good to tour at least the primary campus in detail with your tutees. Show them, for example:

- Student Affairs Office
- Relevant faculty and degree programme facilities
- Computer labs and printers around campuses
- Electronic exam rooms and IT Helpdesk
- Student restaurants and cafés
- Libraries
- SportUni locations
- FSHS/YTHS locations
- Subject associations' and guilds' clubrooms
- TREY's and ESN FINT's & INTO's offices
- In the case of the centre campus the recycling room

Even if your tutees' studies would not take them to the other campuses of the University, it is still nice to venture outside the immediate environment every once in a while. *You can check out maps of the campuses through this link.*

The Student Union

The new international students are represented in Tampere by the Student Union, TREY. All degree students, both Finnish and international, are members of TREY, while membership is voluntary for exchange and doctoral students.

Nevertheless, membership is highly recommended as it gives access to counselling, advocacy and other services. Additionally, paying the membership fee is a prerequisite for receiving the student card and all its benefits and functions (key card, library card). The students can get to know TREY's services and work through the trey.fi/en website. Information on how to pay the membership fee will be updated to the website during the summer.

The Student Union works at three locations on the city centre and Hervanta campuses. The service desks offer

member services to students and these are the places where students can pick up their student cards. The majority of TREY's personnel work at the central office on the Hervanta campus. Currently, TREY does not have a service desk on the Kauppi campus.

Service desk, city centre

Kalevantie 4, room E241 (Main building), 33100 Tampere
phone: +358 44 361 0210
e-mail: help@trey.fi

Service desk, Hervanta

Korkeakoulunkatu 10 (Main building, 2nd floor), 33720 Tampere
phone: +358 (0)40 713 0073
e-mail: help@trey.fi

Central office

Hervanta campus
Korkeakoulunkatu 10 (Main building, 1st and 2nd floor), 33720 Tampere
Contact information of the board and staff: trey.fi/en/contact

Communicating with your tutees

In addition to physical meetings on the campuses and around Tampere, it is good to be in contact with your tutees online or through a phone. Most students have mobile devices which let them stay in contact wherever they are. Some mobile phones bought in your tutees' home countries might not work in Finland because their SIM cards are locked to a certain service provider. Moreover, using the service from their home countries can rack up high phone bills. Therefore, a prepaid SIM is a good alternative for international students. These can be bought at R-kioskis, for example. Free SIM cards are also handed out to international students during Welcome Week by ESN sections.

Compared to the rest of the world, mobile data is cheap and works very well in Finland. International calls might be expensive, though. If your tutee needs a phone for Finnish use, cheap used alternatives are widely available through online flea markets, for example. Scams happen, so caution your tutees if they buy something from these flea markets!

Decide together with your tutees which channel you will be using to communicate. The most popular ones are Telegram and WhatsApp group chats. These are good because you will be able to contact everyone and using them is easy and flexible. Stay in contact with your tutees, invite them to events and ask questions. Even though some tutees might not be too active on the chat, they will still probably read everything. This sort of passive tutoring can be very useful to the new students.

Tutoring after the first weeks

The most active time of tutoring is naturally the first few weeks at the start of the autumn semester. Tutoring should, however, continue longer, even though the acute need for this diminishes over time. Be in active communication with your tutees through the autumn semester. A good idea is to agree to a tutor meeting in late-autumn, where you can together discuss how their studies and life in Finland has gone so far. Here you can also ask your tutees to give you feedback, which will help you reflect on the skills you have learned.

Tips for tutor meetings with a twist

A common sight in late-August on the campuses are the small circles of tutor groups sitting on the lawn going through a variety of things, led by the student tutor. While your role is to tell about studies and student life to your tutees, pure lecturing can become tiresome quite fast. Here

we have put together some ideas which you can use to change up your tutor meetings and get the new students activated in novel ways. Bear in mind that you know best how to plan your work. Remember also to be sure that the meetings are accessible so that each of your tutees is able to attend.

Get to know Tampere from a student's point of view. Most of the activities happen around the campus, but it is good to learn at least the basics of the town they live in. If your tutees happen to already have bicycles, you can go on a bike ride around Tampere!

Go to the Nysse service desk at Frenckell to get travelcards and go on a bus tour. You can head to different campuses, for example, while getting a cheap sightseeing tour.

Hold a lunch meeting in one of the student restaurants. Give tips on the busiest times and your favorite spots. Remind your tutees that many restaurants sell out food after lunch hours for cheap!

SportUni has locations on all three campuses. There you can book a badminton or volleyball court and hold a sportive tutor meeting (ask whether this is fine for your tutees). Check Sportuni's website and get to know the materials provided on Moodle!

On Friday afternoons, many of Tampere's museums are free-of-charge. How about a meeting at Vapriikki right next to Tammerkoski? Getting to know your tutees while exploring the Game Museum and the Ice Hockey Museum is a unique chance.

Use TREY's member services. You can rent Finnish baseball and Kyykkä gear from us. Get a couple of tutor groups together and start playing!

While holding a campus tour, tell your tutees about the variety of clubs and associations which organise free-time activities for students. All freshers might not find friends from their degree programmes but from the hobby associations. Make it easy for your tutees to hear about them!

Tampere is full of international events and culture, for example gigs, exhibitions and lectures. These can be spotted by browsing the web. An international stand up show is a great chance to hang out with your tutees in a relaxed setting!

At its best, tutoring is fun and useful both to you and your tutees. Even though you will go through many important and complicated matters, it must at the same time be fun to everyone involved. By scheduling free time, rest periods and relaxed meetings, you will get the most out of the experience. And remember, cooperation with your tutor group is key. Enjoy tutoring and all the experiences that will follow!

Contact info

International Mobility Services mobility.tau@tuni.fi

Admissions office admissions.tau@tuni.fi

TREY's tutoring sector, tuutorointi@trey.fi

TREY's international sector, kv@trey.fi

Email list for international student tutors, trey-internationaltutors@lists.tuni.fi

Additionally, find out who is responsible for incoming international students in your degree programme (education specialist / programme coordinators)! Check the list in Moodle. Another key person for you is the international tutoring organiser/contact person in your subject association or guild.

Useful links

Student's Guide

Information for new degree students

Information for new exchange students:

On University's website

On the Students' guide

The Facebook group for exchange students

TREY's website

Study in Finland

Visit Tampere

Information on Finland in 12 languages infofinland.fi

Arrival instructions during COVID-19



TAMPEREEN YLIOPIILASKUNTA
STUDENT UNION OF TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

