

What is a tutorial?

A tutorial is a meeting between a tutor and 10 to 30 students. All students are expected to attend and participate. The tutor may give a mini-lecture but most of the time is given to discussion or to problem solving based on lectures and readings. Tutorials are an essential aspect of almost all undergraduate courses in the Business School and most postgraduate courses. In some postgraduate courses where the student numbers are small the class combines aspects of a lecture and aspects of a tutorial in the same class.

What is the purpose of tutorials?

The purpose of tutorials is:

- to promote clearer and deeper understanding through dialogue

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Communicating in Tutorials

Many of your course assessments include a mark for tutorial participation. This mark is a reflection of your tutorial participation and whether you were perceived as an active interested member of the group. To participate fully does not mean that you have to dominate discussion; however, it does mean that you need to be prepared for the tutorial and are able to contribute to what the class is discussing by answering questions, adding new ideas or confirming what is being said.

Try some simple active tactics such as: change where you sit in a tutorial, show interest through your body language about what is happening, answer a question asked by the tutor when asked directly or to the whole group (this may be difficult but shows your willingness to contribute) and ask for clarification about what you are unsure about.

You may be nervous; however, many students are nervous about speaking particularly for the first time and with time and practice this does go away. Set yourself achievable goals for communicating in a tutorial and your confidence will develop.

What you gain from participating in tutorials

When we speak we do a different kind of thinking than when we think silently, and we also remember what we have said for a longer time. This is why discussion is so valuable. Tutorials provide an opportunity to develop discussion skills in small and larger groups, which can be an important skill in future workplace interaction. Developing confidence in listening well and speaking clearly will enhance your abilities and tutorials provide an excellent opportunity.

You may also save study time by generating questions and having them answered. You can benefit from listening to other group members' ideas and develop respect for different interpretations of a topic or issue and enjoy the interaction and learning at university that comes from sharing opinions, theories and facts.

What language functions are involved in tutorial participation?

To participate effectively in tutorials you will need to be able to:

- clarify what others are saying
- get confirmation that you have understood what someone else has said
- encourage others to continue talking
- agree with or support someone else's opinion
- express partial agreement
- express a different point of view
- offer your opinion
- give evidence to support your opinion
- ask someone else what their opinion is



Giving evidence to support an opinion

Let me give you an example....
I can explain why that is ...
The reason I think this is ...

Asking for someone else's opinion

What do you think, ...
Do you agree with that?
What about you ..., do you think that ...?

Presenting in a tutorial

The following ideas may help you; however, the EDU handout on *Oral Presentations* provides additional information which is useful for any type of presentation.

Do not prepare too much – There is a limit to how much you can say in a given time. If you are required to talk for five minutes, consider preparation to be equivalent to 120 words per minute by 5, in other words approximately 600 words. Think about the main points/reason for your presentation. Do provide a clear

