

LAGRANGE COLLEGE TUTORING CENTER

HANDBOOK FOR TUTORS¹

2018–2019

Dr. Stacey L. Ernstberger, Director

¹Originally based on a former Writing & Tutoring Center Handbook for Tutors, written by Dr. Laine Scott.

1 Location and Contact Information

The LaGrange College Tutoring Center, a facility designed to assist current LaGrange College students with their classes, is open during the semester from 5:00 pm until 10:00 pm from Mondays through Thursdays throughout each semester, and will operate during the week of final exams. The staff office is located in Lewis 221, which is in the Moshell Learning Center in the Frank & Laura Lewis Library.

- Tutoring Center information:
 - Phone: 706.880.8958
 - E-mail address: tutoring@lagrange.edu (checked by the Director)
 - Website: <http://home.lagrange.edu/tutoring/>

- Director information:
 - Name: Dr. Stacey L. Ernstberger, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
 - Office phone: 706.880.8016
 - E-mail address: sernstberger@lagrange.edu

2 Mission Statement

The LaGrange College Tutoring Center is a place where students of all levels and abilities across the curriculum can work with their peers to improve their academic work. Designed to provide individualized service to students, our facility is available to anyone who wishes to engage in constructive discussions about all academic subjects. Our tutors strive to help their peers prepare for exams, work on homework and other assignments, and feel more confident in their grasp of their coursework. The Tutoring Center is another way that LaGrange College is challenging the mind and inspiring the soul.

The Tutoring Center is manned by a director and a staff of students who have shown themselves to be especially proficient in their respective academic subjects.

3 Tutors' Rights and Responsibilities

Basic rights and responsibilities of the tutors:

3.1 Rights

- Tutors may always expect participation and effort on the part of the student.
- **Tutors may choose not to work with someone who is taking unfair advantage of the tutoring situation.**
- Tutors may refuse to tutor at times other than the published Tutoring Center hours without being justly compensated.

3.2 Responsibilities

- **Tutors must work when scheduled** unless excused. If a tutor is unable to report to work, **it is the tutor's responsibility to find a suitable replacement from the list of other tutors in his/her field and to contact the Director and the supervisor regarding the change.** It is unacceptable to miss work without finding a replacement. Students will not seek help at the Tutoring Center if the tutors are unreliable!
 - If tutors are unreliable, such as missing work with little/no notice, arriving late, leaving during work hours, etc., their employment may be terminated.
- Tutors are to submit online summaries of each tutoring session for the review of the tutee, professor of the course, and the Director of the Tutoring Center. These session forms are located on the Tutoring Center website.
- Tutor must keep the atmosphere of the Tutoring Center focused on peer tutorials. Tutors are not to use this facility as a space for socializing with friends between tutorial sessions. The Tutoring Center is to be a professional location. Additionally, tutors may certainly work quietly on their own classwork, but **groupwork during this time is not appropriate for the workplace. Stay professional!** Do not watch movies or shows or participate in social networking **when you are actively tutoring!**
- **Tutors are not to wear headphones at work.** This makes students feel as though they are bothering the tutors when they are seeking help. Tutors may instead play music in the group study rooms or office, as long as it is an appropriate volume level.
- Tutors may ask questions and encourage the students to talk about their work. Try to maintain an encouraging, positive atmosphere during sessions.

- Tutors are only to assist those who are enrolled at LaGrange College while in the Tutoring Center – whether as an undergraduate, graduate student, or Evening College student.

Additional Notes

- No one is expected to know all there is to know about a given subject!
 - Tutors may always ask advice from the director or fellow tutors.
 - Tutors should not feel responsible for the students' grades on coursework or exams.
 - There are **available materials** for the tutors to check out to assist with the tutorials. These include textbooks for many courses, dry erase markers (and erasers), and mathematical tools (calculator, protractor, compass). See the supervisor on duty to check out any materials that you would like to use. Additionally, clipboards and paper are always available.

3.3 Compensation

In fulfilling these responsibilities, each tutor is to be compensated at the rate of \$10 an hour, through the Work Study program in the Financial Aid department. Each tutor is responsible for filling out the time sheet each day, and for signing the time sheet by the last day in each month. Payment may be collected on the 10th of each month in the Financial Aid office. However, if the 10th falls on a weekend, the checks will be ready on that Friday instead.

Alternately, a tutor may choose to be compensated through credit hours through an on-campus internship: TCHA 4492. This may be worth one to two credit hours per semester, with a maximum of six credit hours over the lifetime of the student's degree. Each credit hour is worth approximately three hours a week in the Tutoring Center. This is a Pass/Fail grade.

4 Interaction with the LC Community

A Tutoring Center consultant should have respect for students, faculty members, and colleagues in the Center.

4.1 Relationship with Students

Always treat students and their academic efforts with dignity and respect!

Tutoring can be much more beneficial if the student seeking help is the one to do all the writing. Starting with their existing notes is a great idea.

Instead of telling the student what to do or making the change for him, try to ask questions that guide the student into making independent changes.

- Tutors may now help students with their WebAssign homework, but the students really need to have attempted the problems first, on paper. Additionally, it will be helpful if the tutors create similar problems to work on instead or in addition to the problems which are causing difficulties. This is often easiest achieved by just looking in the textbook and working odd problems (with answers in the back).
- Sidenote: When I help students on an individual basis in my office, typically there is a pattern to the assistance process. First the student shows me the problem they are struggling with, and I have them start to work it out. When I determine where the student is stuck, I isolate that part of the problem, and give them a shorter, simplified version of just that issue. Then we work with that issue with a series of examples that increase in difficulty until we reach the level of difficulty of the problem.

At the end of the session, close on a positive note. Encourage the student to come back, and suggest what the two of you might work on in subsequent visits. With patience and perceptive listening, tutors can provide a means by which students can gradually improve their study habits.

4.2 Relationship with Faculty

Just as the Center's relationship with students is always professional, so is the relationship with their professors. **Tutors must never criticize, evaluate, or second-guess the faculty.** Professional ethics demands the highest standards of behavior:

1. Please do not say or indicate anything negative about a specific instructor's personality or methods. If a student complains about an instructor, redirect the student's attention back to the work at hand.
2. Try not to disagree with a grade or attempt to estimate the grade an assignment might earn.
3. When giving summaries via e-mail, avoid making suggestions to the professor about possible changes in teaching style or anything else. The professor is copied on the e-mail as a courtesy only, and instead direct the comments entirely toward the student.

It is often challenging to keep from giving personal opinions about the professors, but keep in mind that each professor is doing his/her best to do what is in the best interest of the students!

5 Day-to-Day Operation of the Center

Every day at the Tutoring Center, the following list of activities should be completed:

1. Upon arrival at the Tutoring Center, the staff office (Lewis 221) should be unlocked. **This is the responsibility of the supervisor, but whoever arrives first may check out the key from the front desk at the library and unlock the office.** As soon as the office is unlocked, the key is to be returned to the front desk.
2. **Each tutor should check in with the supervisor and sign in on the financial aid time sheet. The supervisor will then tell the tutor which group study room to occupy. Before going to the tutoring location, the tutor should get his/her name tag from the office and wear it for the entire shift.**
3. While in the Tutoring Center, do not take a nap or socialize with friends or engage in long phone conversations – because you don't want a student to feel uncomfortable by having interrupted you. The Tutoring Center is an excellent environment for completing your own homework assignments. However, when a student arrives who needs help, you must put away your own work.
4. Length of tutoring sessions: typically a one hour maximum session is reasonable, with a 30 minute maximum when there is another student waiting for help. Be sure to treat students with care, and leave them with enough help that they can then continue working on their own.
5. At the end of a tutoring shift, each tutor should put his/her name tag back in the Tutoring Center office and fill out his/her time sheet for that day.
 - Be completely honest on the time sheet! Do not leave early or arrive late. Students can still show up looking for help at the last minute.
 - On the 15th/31st, the time sheet will be complete, and each tutor will need to add up the total hours worked and sign and date the bottom of the sheet.

6. The last person to leave the Center (typically the supervisor) is responsible for checking to see that all the computers in the staff office and Group Study rooms have been logged out. Additionally, the staff office door should be pulled shut and locked. It should be set to lock automatically, but this should be checked nonetheless.

Keep in mind that there is a separate Writing Center at LaGrange College, located on the lower level of the Lewis Library. It will be open each semester roughly from 6-9 p.m., Monday through Thursday. If a student needs assistance with writing in any discipline, please direct them to the Writing Center.

Also, tutors should check their LC e-mail accounts daily to look for incoming messages pertaining to their service in the Tutoring Center.

5.1 Documenting the Tutoring Sessions

Each time a student visits the Tutoring Center, he/she should go directly to the supervisor in the Tutoring Center office to pick up a Tutoring Center form. The supervisor will then direct the student to the appointed tutor, where the student will fill out the following information:

- the student's name and LC username
- their classification (year in school)
- the date and time of the visit
- the course and instructor
- the tutor's name.
- whether they are on a sports team (if they want to include their coach on the e-mail)

Upon completion of each tutoring session, the tutor is to type that information as well as additional comments into the **session form** on the Tutoring Center website. Comments should include what happened during the session (preparing for a test, working on exercises, etc.) as well as suggestions for the future.

Upon submission of the form, the student, instructor, and any relevant coaches will each receive e-mails with all of the information included. The e-mail will be from tutoring@lagrange.edu' in order to protect each tutor from any individual contact from the student or the professor involved. The Tutoring Center will also receive a copy of the e-mail, as well as the identity of the tutor.

If two individuals (from the same class, with issues regarding the same content) seek help from a tutor at the same time, the tutor needs to fill out and submit only one form. List additional names and e-mail contacts on the back of the form. When the online form is submitted, the tutor can then use the **group session form**.

In the past, forms have been submitted full of errors! Don't be sloppy! Check **dates**, **course numbers**, and make sure that you have the **correct professor**. Put the **students' full (first and last) names** in! It is **embarrassing** to have to send apology e-mails to professors with corrections about things that the tutors have submitted erroneously. Be professional! Send those forms with care!

5.2 Online Course Accommodation

The Tutoring Center has a policy to accommodate online courses as needed, detailed in the following manner:

The Tutoring Center staff is committed to helping all LaGrange College students, whether enrolled in traditional, hybrid, or fully online courses. We recognize that this means that the students enrolled could potentially not be located on or near campus.

If a student from an online course needs assistance during the regular posted hours of operation, then the student can call the Tutoring Center number: 706-880-8958, to speak with a tutor and receive assistance without an appointment, just as though they were seeking help in person.

If the student needs help and is not available during the regular tutoring hours, then the student can make an appointment through the website, and a tutor will work out a time to meet with them through a phone appointment at the Tutoring Center extension.

The tutor assisting the potential phoned-in student must verify that the student is indeed in an online course. Additionally, the tutor should still fill out a conference form, and note very clearly in it that it was conducted over the phone.

5.3 Tutoring by Appointments

Often there will be students who would like to use the Tutoring Center, but who cannot come for help during the regular operating hours. We can accommodate these students, but we will use the following policies:

- **All appointments must go through the form on the website.** Then the director will forward the information on to the tutor, and the tutor will then work out an acceptable time to meet with the student.
- There is a one hour maximum time per session – beginning at the agreed-upon time, with no more than one session per day (per student), and no more than two sessions per week (per student).
- The tutor will get compensated for a minimum of 30 minutes for an agreed-upon time (when the request has gone through the website). This means that if the student does not show up, the tutor will still get paid for the efforts of showing up and waiting. However, a tutor needs to wait only fifteen minutes before leaving, if the student does not arrive.
- If a student misses an appointment, that student’s appointment requests will no longer be honored for the duration of the semester. If the student has a valid reason for missing the appointment, he or she must first speak with the director in order to have any further appointment requests honored.
- All by-appointment sessions must take place in the Tutoring Center office.

5.4 Supervisor Duties

Whenever the Tutoring Center is open, there will be an appointed student to serve as the supervisor. Each supervisor is a regular tutor, who may have a lighter tutorial demand than the other tutors on shift. This student has several responsibilities beyond that of the regular tutors. Additional responsibilities include:

1. Unlocking/locking the staff office upon arrival/exit. See the list above for more information on this. The supervisor will typically stay in the office during his/her shift. This means that if a tutee arrives in his/her field of expertise, **the supervisor will assign the student to any other available tutors in the same field.** If no other tutors in that field are available, the staff office will be used for the tutoring session.
2. Clearing out the Group Study rooms in the Moshell Learning Center for the usage of the tutors. During the hours of operation of the Tutoring Center, those rooms are reserved for tutors.
3. Verifying that each of the tutors arrives on time, and stays for the entire duration of the shift.

4. Greeting each individual who approaches the Tutoring Center, giving him/her an information form, and identifying which tutor can best help. Additionally, the supervisor should walk the student to the appropriate group study room.
5. Keeping the information forms stocked. Notify the director if additional forms are needed.
6. Answering the phone in the Tutoring Center staff office, and contacting the director with any problems that may arise.
7. Giving additional support to any tutors who encounter difficulties. This might include trouble from a student who is seeking help, or it might be that the tutor is having difficulty getting friends to leave the group study rooms. Regardless, the supervisor should step in if there is a problem and lend support.

5.5 Absences

If a tutor is absent without reason and without warning, the tutor must speak with the director. This may result in the dismissal of the tutor from the Tutoring Center. If tutors are regularly tardy, then this may also result in a similar situation.

If a tutor is ill, has a sporting event, or is otherwise unable to show up for his/her assigned hours, then **it is the tutor's own responsibility to find a suitable replacement from the list of other tutors in his/her field and to contact the director and supervisor regarding the change.** It is unacceptable to miss work without finding a replacement. Remember that students will not seek help at the Tutoring Center if the tutors are unreliable!

6 Concluding Thoughts

Please keep in mind that this is all a work in progress! If any tutors have suggestions that might improve the effectiveness of the Tutoring Center, please share your thoughts with the director. The common goal for everyone at the Tutoring Center is to help students succeed!

Thank you for being a valued member of the tutoring staff!