Information for Casual Tutors
School of Mathematics and Statistics

Contents

1 Introduction

This document provides general information for casual tutors taking classes in the School of Mathematics and Statistics. Please note that specific instructions from lecturers and/or class co-ordinators may override the guidelines given here.

The School of Mathematics and Statistics relies on casual tutors for a substantial number of its tutorials. Tutorials are a very important part of the School's teaching program. Surveys show that students generally rank these classes as more helpful than lectures or assignments in helping them to understand the work. As a casual tutor, you are responsible for helping the students in your class to learn. This is a serious responsibility, and we expect you to approach the job in a professional manner, and make every effort to ensure that your tutorials are positive learning experiences for the students. The availability of casual teaching helps to support post-graduate and honours students financially, and to provide them with teaching experience. These benefits are of secondary importance, however.

2 Communication within the School

Much of the communication between people in the School is done electronically. As a casual tutor you will need a School email account. If you do not already have one, contact Bruce Janson (mike@maths.usyd.edu.au, room 826) or Paul Szabo (psz@maths.usyd.edu.au, room 639). This will give you a School email address, allow you to read the School's electronic news bulletin "scnews" and also allow you access to various of the School's databases. Once you have a School user name, please make sure that you have an entry in 'scwho', and that the entry is up-to-date. Type `scwho -u` to update your entry.

There are group pigeonholes for 4th year students in the School's mailroom, room 728. Post-graduate students should ask one of the admin staff to arrange an individual pigeonhole if they do not already have one.

It is extremely important that you regularly check your pigeonhole and your email, and read `scnews`. If necessary, have your School email forwarded to an email account that you look at every day.

The Student Services Office

The Student Services Office is Carslaw room 520. You will be asked to collect various things from the office from time to time, and also to hand in certain things there. It is also the place to which you should send students if they have any questions of an administrative nature that you are unable to answer. The administrative staff in the office are Chamreun Cheen (the Student Services Manager) and Lucy Kennedy.

3   Allocation of classes

Only those people on the School's eligibility list can be allocated classes. However, the supply of work is sometimes much less than the demand, and some eligible people may miss out completely.

Once your name is on the eligibility list for a particular semester, you will receive a form asking you for your preferences for classes. If you will be away near the start of a semester, get someone else to look after your interests. The allocation has to be done in a short time.

The allocation process takes into account, apart from your preferences and eligibility:

- the needs of particular classes;

- teaching experience and ability;

- whether or not you hold a scholarship;

- likely absences during the semester;

- any special circumstances.

It is expected that the work available for casual tutors will be almost entirely with the large first and second year classes.

Casual tutors who are not able to be present for the whole semester will in general receive much lower priority.

Allocations to classes (both your own and the entire School-wide allocation) will be available on the School computer network via the `scttable` command, and paper copies will be placed on noticeboards. In particular, your own personal timetable showing your allocated classes is available via the command

`mytt`, which brings up a Ghostview image which can then be printed. The allocation is generally finished on the Thursday before a semester starts. Most tutorials start in the second week of semester, but some, including some first year tutorials, begin in the first week. **You must find out what you have been allocated before the start of week 1.**

Any enquiries relating to the allocation should be addressed to the casual tutorial timetable co-ordinator.

Swaps and substitutions

Permanent swaps

Once the allocations have been made, you may swap permanently (that is, for the whole semester) with someone else teaching the same unit. You must notify the tutorial timetable co-ordinator, and Bruce Janson, who maintains scttable.

A permanent swap with someone not teaching the same unit must be negotiated with the tutorial timetable co-ordinator.

If you swap after some tutorials have been held, you must ensure that your tuteroll (see section 8) is up-to-date before informing the tutorial timetable co-ordinator.

Temporary substitutions

Once you are assigned to a class, you have a responsibility to it. Temporary substitutions are unsettling to the students, and should be arranged only if absolutely necessary. If you cannot take your class, it is your responsibility to arrange a substitute from amongst the other tutors teaching the unit.

Temporary swaps are not permitted, as they disrupt two classes.

Substitutions of more than two weeks' duration must be negotiated with the tutorial timetable co-ordinator. Substitutions of only one or two weeks' duration must be notified to the Student Office as well as the First Year Director and/or the lecturer(s) concerned.

If you are ill and cannot find a substitute, ring the Student Office (9351-5787), or the lecturer(s) or the School Office (9351-4533). It is imperative that you notify the School of an absence by actually speaking to someone. **It is not appropriate to notify an absence by email, nor by leaving a voicemail message.**

If you know that you are going to be away or unable to take classes for more than two weeks, please let the tutorial timetable co-ordinator know as far in advance as possible.

4 Employment details

You will be given an *Offer of Employment* as a casual academic staff member. This offer of employment provides the terms of your employment, details of the duties to be performed and the casual rates of payment for these duties. By signing the offer you and the University agree to these arrangements.

Payment

For all matters relating to payment, you should see Sonia Morr in Room 531. At the beginning of each semester all casual academic staff are required to sign an Offer of Employment and an Appointment Form. First time employees need to:
* complete a Tax File Number Declaration and bank account details
* provide a certified copy of your proof of identity (either a passport or a driver's license or a NSW Photo Card)
* provide a certified copy of your proof of residency (either a passport or birth certificate, and visa if applicable).

You will be paid fortnightly, by electronic funds transfer to your nominated financial institution account. All casual employees will be provided with access to myHRonline (the University online human resources system) so that they can submit their timesheets online as well as take advantage of other online services.In addition to being able to submit timesheets quickly and easily, you will be able to view and print pay slips, view and print payment summaries (group certificates), view employment details and amend personal contact details.

Instructions on how to submit a timesheet will be provided to you by Sonia Morr at the beginning of the semester.

Your offer of employment provides for termination of your employment by the University, and similarly you may give notice of termination to the University. While it is unlikely that we would terminate your employment, we do

occasionally have to close tutorial classes throughout the semester for various reasons. If you do lose a class please do not take it personally.

5 Liaison with lecturers

Use the computer command `scttable` to find the names of the lecturers for a unit. For example, the command `scttable MATH1002 lecture` will give you the timetable for MATH1002 lectures, including the lecturer's name. The command `scwho`, followed by a person's name, will supply that person's room number, telephone extension and login name (for email).

Lecturers are responsible for supplying you with tutorial sheets, solutions, and any special instructions. They may do this by leaving hard copies in your pigeonhole, and/or by email, and/or via the `tutsols` directory on the School network. It is your responsibility to find out the exact arrangements for the unit you are teaching.

For units with only one lecturer, introduce yourself to the lecturer and find out how he or she will communicate with you.

For the large second year units, one of the lecturers will probably be nominated as the contact person. Find out who this is, and introduce yourself.

Each Junior Mathematics unit has a lecturer-in-charge. Find out who that is, and introduce yourself. You should liaise with the lecturer-in-charge on any matter related to the content of the unit. Any administrative enquiries should be taken to the Student Office.

If you discover deficiencies in the material (including misprints), or areas where the students are having unusual difficulty, you should tell the lecturer.

6 Teaching the classes

Preparation

It is absolutely essential that you prepare properly for each tutorial. The payment for tutorials is set at a rate which includes a substantial allowance for preparation time (up to one hour for each hour taught). It is by no means sufficient to simply glance through the lecturer's solutions before taking a tutorial class.

In preparing a tutorial you are expected to:

- work through all the problems on the tutorial sheet *before* looking at the lecturer's solutions;

- read through the solutions provided, and familiarise yourself with the notation and solution methods used by the lecturer;

- look through relevant sections of any printed notes or textbooks;

- formulate a plan for how you will conduct the tutorial.

(Note: If a unit has a set textbook, consult the lecturer for information on how to gain access to the textbook. There may be printed lecture notes for a unit, in which case the lecturer may supply you with a copy.)

Tutorials in the computer laboratories

Some tutorials are held in the computer laboratories. If you are allocated such a class you should familiarise yourself with the computer system and the particular program being used. Ask the lecturer in charge how to access the program. Work through all the exercises well before your computer laboratory class. Report any bugs immediately to the lecturer in charge.

Giving tutorials

Remember that a tutorial is **not** another lecture. You may remind students of the important points in the current week's material, but you certainly should not give them a lecture on it. Neither should you write all the solutions on the board, even if students put pressure on you to do so. In most units, solutions will be available to the students by the end of the week, so the point of the tutorial is not to obtain solutions. Similarly, if you do write a solution on the board, there is no point in just copying out the solution you have been given. Your job is to help the students *understand* the solution.
In most units students are expected to work through all or most of the problem sheet during the class. This means that students are expected to spend much of the hour working through problems, either in groups or individually. Spend up to ten minutes at the start of the class revising the needed theorems or techniques at the blackboard, and then spend most of the time wandering around talking to individual students or small groups, looking at their work as you do so. Try to speak to every student, as even a student

who isn't having difficulties likes to be reassured. If you discover a point that many students are having difficulty with, go to the blackboard and explain the point to the whole class. While working at the blackboard, ask questions frequently, and try to frame them in such a way as to make it easy for the students to respond. Many students are very shy and easily embarrassed, so you should be patient and encouraging. Students should feel free to offer answers that may be wrong, and to ask questions at all levels of difficulty. Never ridicule wrong answers, and never be sarcastic. Look at the students rather than the blackboard when you are talking.

In many units of study, especially first year units, short answers only are supplied on the tutorial question sheets. If these are not provided, you may find it useful to write numerical answers on the board, so that the faster students can check their work.

Some problem sheets have too many problems to get through in one hour. Consult the lecturer for advice as to which problems to cover. You will also have to use your own judgement as to which problems are the most important ones.

(Of course, if a lecturer asks you to conduct a tutorial in a way differently from that described above, then you should do so.)

The first tutorial

The aims in your first tutorial are not only to help the students solve the exercises but to establish a good atmosphere so that students will feel happy to talk about maths to you and to each other.

Introduce yourself to the class – write your name on the board. (You should write your name on the board at every tutorial.) If you have a small class in a large room, ask the students to come and sit at the front of the room near the board, so that they're in a compact group. Break the ice for them by getting them to meet other students sitting nearby. You may already have a favourite way of doing this. If not, here's a suggestion. Ask each student to introduce themself to the person beside them/near them. Get them to find out the other person's name, their degree, and what they hope to do after graduation. Then get two pairs together (they can turn round in their seats to form a group of four). Have each person re-tell all the information about their "partner" to the other pair. (If you're tutoring a unit of study which has group work, you can say that the groups of four that have been formed will work together on the group work problem later in the tute.)

The blackboard

Try to use the blackboard systematically. If the blackboards are long, divide them with a vertical line. Work from left to right if you know you will use more than one board. Practise your board writing technique in empty tutorial rooms, and try to write in horizontal lines. Your writing should be large enough to be read from the back of the room.

Write coherent mathematics and grammatically correct sentences on the board. Students will be copying down what you write, and hoping to understand it later. A list of symbols or equations will mean much more to students if you have used words as well.

Taking rolls

You should use the `tuteroll` program to obtain a roll for each of your classes. Consult the `tuteroll` section of this document for instructions on how to use the program. The roll should be taken each week in each of your classes, and your `tuteroll` file updated weekly. If the unit in which you are tutoring has quizzes, then you will have to use the `tuteroll` program to record the quiz marks.

For some units, there is a "tutorial participation" mark. Lecturers in those units will give you further information.

Giving tutorials in computer labs

Often you will be kept busy by student requests for help. If there is a lull in the requests, circulate around the class and see what the students are doing. Even if there are a lot of requests for help, try to keep an eye on everyone. Some students are too shy to ask for help and will just sit there when stuck. Also, try to help the students understand what they are doing. Sometimes they can push the buttons and get the answers without much understanding.

Consultation outside class hours

You are not paid for this, and there is no expectation that you will spend time seeing students outside class. Most units have lunchtime consultations, and you are encouraged to refer students to these, or to the lecturer. In most cases, you can find the consultation times by looking at the unit information sheet on the relevant web page. Otherwise, ask the lecturer(s) concerned.

A couple of common student problems

Students in the wrong class

Students will have been allocated a particular tutorial on their timetable, and in general should attend that tutorial. Unless your class is overfull, you should not evict students. If your class is small enough (fewer than 30 students), then you can allow students not allocated to your tutorial to join yours, and add them to your tuteroll file. **Do not allow students to join your tutorial if it makes the class size greater than 30.** In most units, attendance at tutorials is one of the factors taken into account should students apply for special consideration, so it is important to keep an accurate roll.

Students without tutorial sheets

Students are expected to bring tutorial sheets to the tutorial with them. Some large classes have the tutorial exercise sheets printed in the back of lecture notes, and students are expected to bring these to each tutorial. You should check out the arrangements for distribution of tutorial sheets to students with the Student Office or the lecturer before classes begin.

For first year classes, tutorials are posted on the web and no hard copies are made. If students do not have notes with tutorial sheets included then they are expected to get the questions from the web. You may make a few spare copies of the first tutorial to take with you to class, but please do not take spare copies after that.

Fire alarm

If the fire alarm sounds when you are teaching, tell your students they must leave immediately. You should ALL exit the building by the nearest stairs (do NOT use the lift) and move well away from the immediate area. Wait for permission from the Fire Brigade to re-enter the building. If there is time and if your students return, you should resume your class.

7   Running Quizzes

Generally two tutorial quizzes are held in each of the big first and second year units of study each semester. Conducting these quizzes is part of your responsibility as a tutor. The quizzes count towards the students' assessment for that unit; they are like mini-exams and so must be run in the same way for all students in all tutorial groups of a given unit. Detailed instructions will be given to you by the lecturer-in-charge before each quiz, and these instructions may vary a little from unit to unit. What appear here are general guidelines that you should always observe.

Before the quiz

Check that you have enough quiz papers for your class. Go through the quiz questions yourself and check that the questions are correct. Arrive at your tutorial room **early** and if necessary arrange the tables so that the possibility of copying is minimised. You will probably have two versions of the quiz on different coloured paper, so that students sitting next to one another have different versions. Tell students to put their student card on the desk. If they don't have a card, a drivers licence with a photo is OK. Desk tops must be clear of **everything** except pens, student card and the quiz paper. In some units calculators are allowed and in some units they are not – make sure you know in advance. Students are generally not allowed to use extra notepaper for working. Distribute the quiz papers to the students with the questions **face down** (if possible). Give out only as many papers as there are students.

Starting the quiz

Start the quiz at the advertised time (or as close as possible to it) – generally 5 minutes past the hour. Tell the students the time that the quiz will finish and that you will give them a couple of minutes warning before the end. Tell them that when the end is called, they must remain silent until all the quiz papers have been collected. Do not give students who come late any extra time.

During the quiz

While the quiz is in progress, walk round the room and check the photos/names on the student cards. Take your roll with you and tick their names off. If you have a student whose card doesn't match any name on your roll, see the "Problems" section below.

At the end of the quiz

Call the end of the quiz and ensure that all students have finished writing. Remind them again that they must be silent until all papers are collected. **No quiz paper is to be removed from the room.** Check that you have all papers. Unused quiz papers should be kept secure for the rest of the week.

Marking and returning the quiz

Follow any marking instructions given to you by the lecturer-in-charge. If in doubt about any matter, ask him/her for clarification. Enter the quiz marks in tuteroll (see Tuteroll section of this document). Print out a copy to keep (for your records and/or the Student Office if requested), selecting the option that shows the quiz marks, names and SIDs of the students. Make sure that when you print out the roll for the following week, you then select the option that hides the quiz marks and SIDs. Return the quiz papers in the following tutorial. **Never provide answers to any quiz question until the week following the quiz, and under no circumstances give any marked paper back before the tutorial in the following week.**

Problems

NO IDENTIFICATION: If a student has no photo ID, write on the top of their quiz paper "No ID". Tell them straight away that they MUST see you at the end of the quiz. At that time, tell them that the only way their mark will be counted is for them to bring their student card to show you at (or before) the next tutorial. When they do, check the photo and check that the signature matches that on the quiz paper.

MIGRATION BETWEEN TUTES: If there are only a few people taking the quiz who are not on your roll, and there is room, you should accept them. Check that the name and signature on the quiz paper matches the

name/signature/photo on the student card. Mark their quiz papers with all the rest. For first year units, **names of such students are NOT to be added to your tuteroll.** The quiz papers are to be given to the Student Office.

OVERFLOWING ROOM: If you have no spare seats and students milling around, tell all students who are not regularly in that tutorial class to leave. If they object, tell them to see the lecturer-in-charge.

8   Using the Tuteroll Program

The `tuteroll` program was written by Mike Wilson to facilitate maintaining tutorial rolls and quiz results.

Setting up a tutorial list

1. Type   `tuteroll`.

2. A window will appear, called "Tutorials for (Your Name)".
   Click on the "Tutorial" menu item. This should show you all the tutorials you are currently taking, and you can select the one you want to work on.

   If you cannot see your tutorials under the "Tutorial" menu item, talk to Bruce Janson, room 826.

3. Click on the tutorial for which you want a roll. After a short while it builds the display, which shows names and SIDs of students who have been allocated that particular tutorial, and columns for weeks 1-13. If you scroll to the right hand end of that field, you'll see a new field with the same names and SIDs, for entering quiz marks (more on that below).

4. For the first few weeks of semester, every time you use tuteroll you should click on "Add: Merge new students from University class list". This will add any students who have recently been added to your class. In addition, any students who are no longer 'officially' in your class will be disabled and have their entries grayed out. You are not able to modify attendances or quiz marks for disabled students. Entries are

never deleted from a tuteroll because past attendances and quiz marks must be preserved till the end of Semester.

5. If you want to manually add a new name and SID to your roll, click on the menu item "Add". Then click on "Add new student to list". (Please remember that you should not add students to your class if it makes the class too large.) Type in the SID. Then press the return key. The student's full name should automatically appear. Now click on the "Add" button under the student's name. The student will be added to the roll.

   If the student's name doesn't appear, this may be because the student has given you an erroneous SID (common with new first year students). Click on the "?" to get the full class list, and find the student (type the first letter of the surname and the list will scroll to students whose surnames start with that letter). When you find the student, click on the name and then press return. The SID will be automatically corrected.

   If you cannot find the student in the full class list, then you should wait a week or so and try again. The database will be updated weekly. If you cannot find the student's name after two weeks, see Bruce Janson.

   Note that you can sort the roll either by name or SID, by using the menu item "Sort".

6. Manually adjusting a student's state : sometimes a student's presence or absence in your class does not match their official status as recorded by the TimeTable Unit. For instance, a student may simply join your class or transfer to another without going through the official process. In this case, you may want to manually disable a student or reactivate one who is currently disabled in order to update his/her attendance or quizzes. Click on the name and a popup window will appear containing some descriptive information for the student. In particular, there will be 2 buttons labelled 'Active' and 'Disabled'. Click the appropriate one to change the student's state and then click Apply.

Quitting tuteroll

Clicking on the "Quit" menu item is the only way you should exit from the `tuteroll` program. If you exit from the program in any

other fashion you not only run the risk of losing the work you have done in the current session of the program, but the file will be locked and you will have to go to the CSOs to have it unlocked. For example, do <u>NOT</u> logout of your session while tuteroll is still running.
NOTE: even if you only open a roll to print it, a lock will still be created so please close `tuteroll` properly.

Week-by-week rolls

A suggested way of using `tuteroll`: before your first tutorial, create your class roll using `tuteroll` as described above. You will then see a list of students allocated to your class. From inside `tuteroll`, click on the "Print" menu item, click on "Attendance only" and "Show Name". This will pop up a `ghostview` window. In this window, click on "Print All" and then supply the print command (something like `lpr -Pp6lw` for the 6th floor printer). Then dispose of the `ghostview` window by clicking on "File" and selecting "Quit".
The resulting printout should be taken to the next tutorial, and used to record attendance. You should not hand the roll around for students to tick. You should record the attendance yourself while you are going around the classroom giving help to individual students.
Note that the week of the Easter break in first semester, or the mid-semester break in second semester, does not count as a "week" in `tuteroll`.
For privacy reasons, rolls that are taken to class should only have the name, not the SID.
Update the roll every week and print out a fresh roll each week. Keep all the back copies.

Student Services, September 2013.