

A-L.E.C. Tutor Manual

Spring 2011

This tutor manual is designed as a reference handbook regarding basic policies and procedures of the A-LEC tutoring program as well as an introduction to sound tutoring techniques. In addition to becoming familiar with this manual, A-LEC tutors are expected to participate in orientation and training sessions. Tutors will also be provided with a CD containing supplemental information on including study skills in tutoring sessions. The CD also contains observations on the craft of effective tutoring from Dr. Ben Thomas, former Associate Director of the A-LEC. We are very pleased to share with you the guidance of the person whose work is commemorated with the Ben Thomas Award for Excellence in Tutoring.

We are excited that you have joined the A-LEC tutoring staff and look forward to working with you.

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Part I – Policies and Procedures

A. Dependability

Keep your commitments to be here reliably and on schedule. Be here and be here on time.

We must be able count on you to be here when you have scheduled to work. Students often come right at the beginning of your tutoring times because they imagine that they'll get here first and won't have to wait. If a tutor arrives late, the person at the front desk spends that time telling many students, one after another, that we don't know where their tutors are but we hope they'll be here soon. The students then stand around wondering what's happening. They lose valuable time, and they are understandably frustrated.

Moreover, students have a negative impression of the A-LEC when they have been told that you will be here, and then, when they have come down here to work with you, we don't know where you are or when you will be here. As a result, we fail to connect with students, often at exactly the time when they're feeling tentative about who we are and whether we can help, and perhaps at a time when they *really* need to connect. We risk losing their trust.

if you can't make your scheduled shift, give us enough advance notice that we can arrange a replacement. If, at the very last minute, you find that you're running late, call us to let us know what's happening.

How to let us know: Call the front desk at 214.768.3648 **AND** either Adreana Julander at 214.768.1044 or Grace Okoro at 214-768-6725.

B. Recording Contact Information

Record contact information correctly and immediately!

"Contact sheets" are the record you keep of your contacts with students you tutor. Each sheet asks for:

Date
Name
ID
Course name and number
Time in and time out

When you begin tutoring, get your lanyard name tag and tutor folder from the black file cabinet at the front desk. When you leave at the end of each tutoring shift, put your contact sheet in your tutor folder and leave the tutor folder on the top plastic shelf at the front desk. **Do not** return it to the file box, even if you did no tutoring. **Do not** take the folder with you. We need your contact sheet information on a daily basis.

The data on these sheets are entered by LEC staff into a large database which we use in a number of different ways. **Please be extremely, compulsively conscientious about recording this information correctly and immediately!** It's *your* job to get it straight! **At the end of the evening, look over your contact sheet before turning it in, making sure that all the information is filled in completely and correctly.**

Here are a few comments about the particular data fields involved:

Put your name on the top of your contact sheet!

Date should be recorded on each line, not just once at the top of the sheet or the beginning of the day.

You may want to ask students to print their **names** in "name" field. Make sure the name is legible.

We need **SMU ID numbers** in case we can't read a student's name or if the student uses a nickname.

Time In means the actual time students start working with you.

Time Out means the actual time you finished work with the student. If, at the end of a tutoring shift, you realize you haven't filled out the "time out," please estimate it as best you can and add it in.

Course and **Course number** need to be the official version used by the University: MATH 1338, not "Calc II."

Write down most of this information at the beginning of each student's tutoring session. At that time, all the information except "Time Out" is already available. Moreover, as the student writes her or his name on the contact sheet, you have an opportunity to learn the name—and say it out loud!—and to tell the student your name as well.

If you lead a workshop or review session, be careful to keep contact information. Get a form for this purpose from the LEC front desk, and pass it around at the session, asking students to write their names and ID numbers (legibly!) on it. If you forget the form, pass around a piece of paper and ask for the same information. Record a single "Time In" and "Time Out" that applies to the whole session.

C. Working with Night Managers

The night managers' job is to be constantly aware of the state of the overall system: who's waiting, what they're waiting for, how long they've been waiting, and what will be needed to make everything work. Their attention to these details frees you to concentrate on your work with a particular student.

When other students are waiting for you, night managers will ask you to limit to about thirty minutes a session with a particular student. Having to break off a session like that may strain your patience and that of the student you're working with. Despite this, please respect the night managers' requests. If the student you're working with wants to "get back in line" and work more with you later, that's fine. And if no one is waiting, feel free to go for as long as the student needs or can stand to.

In cases when a number of students come for tutoring in the same section of the same course, the night manager may ask if you could work with several students together or add a student to a session with another student. In the case of a student adding to a session that's already started, ask both the new student and the already-started student if they're willing to share the session. Usually the answer will be yes. When it's not, there's usually a good reason. At times a student may prefer to wait longer to work one-to-one with a tutor.

Tutors vary as to how comfortable they are with multiple-student tutoring situations. Some are good at it and thrive on it. Others feel that they really do better work one-to-one. If you find that you can work effectively with more than one student at once, there will be times when we're very glad that you can. However, sometimes tutors have gotten overly-enthusiastic about tutoring multiple students in parallel, and the students they worked with felt shortchanged.

In some cases the night manager may ask you to leave early. The night managers decide whether, late at night, we're likely to have little or no business in a particular subject area. If it's a dark and stormy night, no one's coming to be tutored, and every math professor gave a test the day before, we may not want to have five math tutors between 9 and 10 PM. Thanks in advance for your cooperation with this strategy!

We ask all tutors to leave at 9:30 if no one is working with them at that time. Let the night managers know you're going, and then make your escape if they don't object.

Night managers may also occasionally ask if you are willing to work a little later than 10:00. If you are, do. If you aren't, say no. No apology is needed.

D. Ethical Responsibilities

- 1. Please make yourself carefully aware of the Honor Code as it relates to your work as a tutor.**

You can find it at

http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_05_HC.asp

- 2. The LEC has additional explicit ethical expectations of tutors, going beyond the issues addressed in the Honor Code.**

- **Be aware of the expectations and ethical practices of the field you tutor, checking with your supervisors in case of doubt.** Universities take very seriously the issues connected with taking ownership of your own work and with not presenting others' work as your own. However, the specific expectations differ somewhat from course to course. For instance, in a math course in which homework counts insignificantly into the final grade, it may be perfectly fine to give a student substantial help with an assigned problem, if that helps her or him to understand other problems of the same kind. On the other hand, in a writing course, a well-meaning tutor who says, "let me show you how you could rewrite this sentence," is committing an honor violation.

- **Tutors should not work with students for whom they have any kind of grading responsibility.** If you work as a TA for a course and help grade homework or tests for that course, don't also tutor those students at the LEC unless you have made specific arrangements with Adreana and the professor for whom you TA.
- So that there is not even the appearance of improper conduct regarding **work with student athletes**, if you are or have recently been a student athlete, do not tutor other athletes in your sport while you are working at the LEC. And, if you have an athletic scholarship, please talk with a supervisor to make sure that working for the LEC doesn't constitute an NCAA violation. See Part III – Special Topics in this manual for more specific details.
- **Keep any information that you may have regarding other students' academic situations in strict confidence.** Students should know that whatever they tell you will not be repeated to anyone.
- **Maintain a professional relationship with the students you tutor.** We ask that you not work as an LEC tutor with students with whom you have, or may be about to have, a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship. If you come to be in a relationship with someone you have been tutoring, stop tutoring them.

It's impossible to write up a set of rules to cover every possibility; we depend on your good judgment. We once had a male night manager who was noticed by many to be more friendly to female students. Even though he wasn't *unfriendly* to males—and might have thought that there were therefore no grounds for complaint—it seemed that women got a different kind of attention from him. Both men and women students were bugged by this behavior. He should have exercised better judgment.

Remember that your work as a tutor is done in a *public*, not a *social* context—an important distinction! When you come into the LEC to work as a tutor, you need to check your personal likes and dislikes at the door.

- **Do all LEC tutoring at the LEC**, unless an LEC staff member has made an explicit arrangement otherwise. And please don't use the LEC for tutoring that you are doing under other arrangements.

- **Do not use your role at the LEC to initiate tutoring relationships that you later convert to tutoring-for-pay.** Tutoring relationships that begin in the LEC context should stay in the LEC context; tutoring that you do for pay on your own should be with students with whom you initiate contact.
- **Your conduct** in any academic situation, whether working at the LEC or not, should be honorable.

E. Pay Procedures

Grace Okoro is your go-to person for everything that has to do with paychecks, Kronos machines, timecards, work-study, and other aspects of getting paid. When necessary, contact her at 214-768-6725 or GOkoro@smu.edu. She offices in 202P.

Most LEC tutors “swipe in,” using their student ID card and a Kronos machine, when they begin tutoring, and “swipe out” when they leave. **Note:** In the beginning of the fall term, when we redo the payroll paperwork for all tutors, we will probably ask you to use a time card until the Payroll Department has had time to activate you in the system. Then we’ll ask you to switch to “swiping in” with your ID card. Please pay attention to these requests and act accordingly.

Swipe in when you start work, not before you start. If you’re scheduled to start tutoring at 7 PM and arrive at 6:40 with a sandwich, don’t charge us for the time you eat your sandwich. Wait until 7 to swipe in.

Swipe out when you stop working, not after you stop. If you and two other tutors hang around and have a 40-minute private conversation, that’s fine, but swipe out first!

If you stay late working with a student, that’s also fine. The LEC will pay you for it. Swipe out when you’re done. Send Adreana an email, or put a note under her door, to let her know you did. (She's in room 202Q or ajulande@smu.edu.)

If the LEC is not your “primary employer,” use a timecard to record your work hours. Please make your timecards accurate and turn them in promptly. **Please stay current!** Untangling the issues presented by late or incomplete time cards can chew up an amazing amount of time.

F. How to Act Here

We want both to be friendly to students and to maintain enough of a sense of order that people feel comfortable and respected.

While some noise is to be expected when pairs and groups of people are talking to one another, do your best to keep noise to a minimum. Don't shout across the room to another tutor.

The A-LEC has a no cell-phone rule. You are expected to abide by this rule and to remind other students of it.

Keep the tutoring area physically in decent shape; when you finish work, make sure you leave the table ready for someone else to work there, with no stray papers lying around and the chairs back at the table. If the students you worked with have left debris behind, clean up after them—but feel free also to ask them to clean up their own debris before they leave.

To help keep carpets and upholstered chairs intact, we're asking students who come for tutoring not to bring food with them. Drinks are OK if they're in closed, screw-top containers. Please help us to make sure students know about this expectation.

Tutors may use the kitchen and conference room (202L and M) as a place **(the only place!)** where it's OK to eat. Use it, and clean up after yourself! (Don't help yourself to food or drinks that you find in the LEC kitchen: these belong to someone else, who will miss them if they disappear.)