SELECTION CRITERIA AND POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR ITAS TUTORS

Essential

Appropriate qualification in discipline/trade proposed for tutoring:

- Higher Education: undergraduate or postgraduate degree/diploma
- TAFE: Cert 3 or 4 and relevant industry or professional experience

Knowledge

Tutors need to be knowledgeable about the discipline in which they propose to tutor. This means high level awareness of the "taken for granted", valued knowledge, debates, controversies, language, conventional practices, and other critical aspects of the discipline they are tutoring. Ideally, tutors should also have a basic level of awareness and understanding of issues affecting Indigenous people in contemporary Australian society or be willing to undertake training and other activities to develop such knowledge.

Skills

Tutors should demonstrate the ability to "translate and interpret" discipline based knowledge in language that is appropriate to the student’s level of knowledge, understanding and ability as well as the ability to teach students how to understand and use the knowledge of the discipline they are tutoring, incrementally.

Attributes

ITAS tutors should be able to form supportive, professionally oriented mentoring relationships with their students. Tutors should be respectful towards and friendly with their students without being ‘motherly’ / ‘paternalistic’ or ‘authoritarian’. Tutors should be able to motivate and inspire their students to achieve increasingly high levels of academic skill and success. They need to have patience for, empathy with and good faith in their student’s ability to accomplish these goals. They should clearly expect a high level of performance from their students, without expecting them to achieve mastery at too high a level or too fast a pace.

Desirable

- Previous experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in an educational context
- Previous experience teaching; tutoring or mentoring students at undergraduate level.

NB: Preference will be given to appropriately qualified Indigenous tutors.

Contribute to the academic support, retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at RMIT University by:

Providing expert advice on the subject/course requirements

Tutorial work should directly relate to the specific requirements of the courses the students are studying. Tutors should therefore assist students to understand and meet these requirements by providing information, support, advice and assistance specific to the student’s course outline and within the parameters described below.
Identifying areas of academic support need
Some students may find the challenge of learning at university daunting, especially if they have low self-esteem and have low expectations with regard to their potential for academic success. It is vital that tutors identify student’s current strengths and weaknesses and tailor their tutorial program objectives accordingly, with the aim of supporting them to develop steadily increasing levels of confidence, academic skill and success in identified areas of need.

Tutoring for increasing levels of student autonomy/independence
Tutors should use tutoring methods and styles that put the student increasingly ‘in charge’ of the tutorial process and ultimately, to enable the development of their own, independent academic study skills and habits. Tutors should implicitly and explicitly ensure students make an active contribution to their tutorials by for example, expecting them to have a specific question, piece of written assignment work or reading prepared to discuss or review for each tutorial session.

Tutoring reading and writing for academic purposes
The ability to read and write effectively within their chosen disciplines is clearly integral to student success in the academe. Tutors can support their students to develop their ability to read and write effectively and successfully to this end by devoting a good deal of their tutorial time to explicit teaching and modelling of the following essential skills:

Academic writing
Students are unlikely to be familiar with, much less prepared for the demands of written work expected of them at University level. Tutors should devote substantial tutorial time to development of their students writing, preferably in the context of course specific writing tasks. Tutors should, however, avoid the common pitfall of modelling dependency behaviours by acting as researchers, note-takers, editors and proofreaders for their students.

Academic reading
Students are frequently reluctant to do assigned, much less additional reading. This is not always due to a lack of motivation. Rather, it may concern the student’s [self-perceived] inability to understand it or engage with it, especially in the early stages of their exposure to specialised academic language in writing. Given the critical importance of reading and the appreciation of written text to the level of student potential for success, tutors should systematically and explicitly tutor students in effective and efficient reading habits.

Tutoring information literacy, management and evaluation
Given the ever-increasing number and variety of information sources available in the ‘digital age’, students tend to rely increasingly and in many cases exclusively, on the use of internet based resources for learning. Specific instruction may need to be provided in use of ‘old fashioned’ technologies such as using the library catalogue and location of hard copy texts on shelves. Regardless of the type of text students may choose, they will frequently need to develop skills which help them to distinguish and evaluate authoritative from ‘not so authoritative’ or popular texts, as well as how to use them appropriately for study and writing purposes. Tutors should support and assist students to develop these critical skills.

Cooperating with Ngarara Willim Centre when requested to:
- Provide a written statement of tutorial program objectives within two weeks of initial allocation of students [Work Program]
- Provide a written statement of student progress and tutorial program outcomes within two weeks of the end of a tutorial contract [Progress Reports]
- Discuss student welfare / progress issues with appropriate Ngarara Willim Centre or School staff
- Attend ITAS related meetings and training events.