

The First-Year Tutorial Program at Grinnell College¹

Mission

The first-year Tutorial encourages students to become engaged, active learners and initiates students into the Grinnell community of learners. Taught by a faculty member who also serves as the students' adviser, this small, writing-intensive course introduces students to the skills they will need to succeed at Grinnell and in their future lives.

Objectives

To introduce students to

1. College-level writing forms and expectations; tutorial is a writing-intensive course.
2. Critical reading skills.
3. College-level oral communication skills.
4. A librarian and library resources.
5. Academic honesty policy and practices.

To advise students until they declare their majors.

Specific Requirements

The tutor will

1. Plan and teach tutorial as a writing-intensive course. Writing intensive courses require frequent writing (almost weekly, although all writing need not be graded); regular feedback from the instructor; opportunity to revise; written expectations and criteria for grading writing assignments; and writing as a significant part of the overall course grade.
2. Select a course topic and choose readings that invite students to read critically and discover methods of inquiry through analysis, interpretation and evaluation.
3. Provide classroom opportunities for the development of oral expression of ideas through class discussion, formal presentation, or both.
4. Acquaint tutees with a librarian and library resources appropriate for first-year coursework. Research is an optional component of tutorial. Tutors including a research assignment should work with a librarian to plan an information literacy session appropriate to the goals of the course.
5. Discuss the rules for proper citation of both direct quotation and summary or paraphrase and provide opportunities for tutees to practice applying these rules in written work.

¹ This document, approved by the Tutorial and Advising Committee on April 8, 2013 supports and expands a motion passed by the faculty of the College on February 18, 2013 regarding the objectives of the Tutorial. It replaces the document "Objectives and Guidelines for the First-year Tutorial," dated April 4, 2003.

6. Work with tutees to construct an individualized selection of courses that reflects both student interests and a breadth and depth of study consistent with Grinnell's understanding of a liberal arts education as outlined in the *Catalog* and *Adviser's Handbook*.

Course Planning, Support, and Evaluation

1. All tutors will submit a short written description of the tutorial topic for approval by the Dean or Associate Dean of the College toward the end of the spring semester preceding their tutorial.

2. The tutorial topic should be appropriate for entry-level learning and small group instruction. The topic should invite students to read critically and discover methods of inquiry through analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

3. The topic normally does not duplicate any regular course in the curriculum, although the Tutorial and Advising Committee may permit exceptions.

4. Faculty development and support for those teaching tutorial is provided through spring luncheon discussions, summer faculty workshops, a morning workshop on the Friday before classes begin and scheduled lunches with other tutors during the fall semester. Tutors are encouraged to attend as many of these as possible.

5. The Dean's Office will provide a list of academic and non-academic resources available on campus that tutors may use to help students as they transition into the Grinnell community (e.g., Wellness Program, Career Development Office, Writing Lab, Reading Lab). Although tutors may choose to address specific student developmental needs, such as time management, wellness, academic socialization, and relationships with peers, inclusion of these elements is optional and is not included on end of course evaluation form.

6. Tutors typically greet parents of their tutorial students at the Saturday reception before the start of classes, hold their first tutorial class on Sunday afternoon, and meet with students in advising sessions during the Monday and Tuesday before classes begin.

7. Tutorial end of course evaluations are aligned with course objectives. The tutorial end-of-course evaluations consist of parallel six-point Likert scale responses (with an additional Not Applicable/Don't Know option) and space for comments. The evaluations will be divided into three sections that address:

i. The success of the tutorial sessions in helping students develop their ability to write effectively, read critically, and communicate effectively and to understand the College's expectations for academic honesty and to become acquainted with a librarian.

ii. The success of the instructor in helping students develop their ability to write effectively, read critically, communicate effectively and to understand the College's expectations for academic honesty.

iii. The success of the instructor as an adviser in helping students think about course selection, academic program, and liberal arts educational goals.

Administrative Practices

1. Each tutorial has a target enrollment of 12 students in order that its chosen topic allows for small-group instruction.

2. As the Tutorial is the only required course in the curriculum, normal drop/add procedures do not apply to this course. Only rarely may students change from one tutorial to another. Such changes are permitted only within the first two weeks of classes and only with the permission of the Dean for Student Success and Academic Advising and the new tutor.

3. By Fall Break, tutors must place in each student's file the Student Declaration of Understanding and the Faculty Certification of Basic Citation Competence, both of which are printed in the back of the Academic Honesty handbook.

4. The tutorial normally does not include exams, including final exams. All formal work should be completed before the end of classes.

5. A student must complete the tutorial with a grade of C or higher to meet the tutorial graduation requirement. Any student earning a grade of D or F in the tutorial will receive a warning from the Committee on Academic Standing. He/she will also be required to complete an appropriate course as determined jointly by the Associate Dean and the Dean for Student Success and Academic Advising. This course must be completed with a grade of C or higher during his or her next semester at Grinnell. Only after the completion of this course and removal from probation, the student will be eligible for a "plus 2" or independent study project (297, 299, 397, 399, and 499).