

Q and A for Tutors

1. Why is the project open to only under-privileged students? Many students need tutorial service after school to catch up. Some can pay for it and some do not have the financial resources. We aim to help the latter group and the need for public assistance is therefore used as a criteria for selection of such students.

2. Why are Forms 2 to 4 selected? This selection is done after consultations with local social workers and principals. Students in Form 1 are not yet mature enough whereas those in Forms 5 and 6 are already occupied with the preparation of DSC examinations after school. They may not be able to squeeze time to come to our lessons. Moreover, most tutors are not professional teachers and they will find it less demanding to teach lower forms.

3. Why is only English subject chosen? Since English is the medium for instruction in many academic subjects, it is widely accepted that if the English level of a student is improved, he will be able to do better in other subjects too. Moreover, it is easier to find English tutors. We hope to cover other subjects like Chinese and Maths. as we move along.

4. Why are Caritas and Pui Shing Catholic Secondary School chosen as partners? They are two of the many organizations in TSW which we have contacted and are willing to offer us free venue, staff resources to support the project and help with recruitment and screening of students. However, our service aims to cover the entire TSW.

5. How many students will the project serve? We aim to recruit around 100 students and hold 10 classes at different levels. However, it will depend on the response from students needing our service and the number of tutors we can recruit.

6. How many students will be in a class? Depending on their level of English, we aim to group the weaker students in a smaller group of four and the better students in a bigger group of not more than 20.

7. Can you let me know the Form I shall be assigned to teach and the exact date and time of lessons? We will try to match you with a class you feel comfortable to teach at a time you are available. However, not until we know how many students have enrolled in our project and the level they have attained in the admission test, we

cannot determine the number of groups and classes we are going to form. We shall let you know your assignment and seek your agreement asap after the deadline for recruitment of students.

8. Shall I be assigned a specific class and group of students or I shall meet a different group every time? If you are available same time every week, we shall assign a specific group(s) and class(s) to you. However, if you can only be available on an ad hoc basis, you will serve as a substitute to cover other tutors who have to take leave. We shall seek your view and agreement on this.

9. What is the duration of the project? We plan to have eight lessons for each class and they are to start after the Easter holidays (we cannot start during these holidays because many students are new migrants from China and their parents normally take them back to their home towns during this period) from mid-April to late June (before school exams. begin). Some tutors may not be available during Easter holidays too.

10. Why do lessons have to be conducted between 5 to 8 pm on weekdays and also Sat. morning? It is easier to retain students if lessons are to start immediately after school, otherwise extra travelling costs may be required for students if they have to come from home and some may choose not to join because they cannot pay for them. Remember, they live on public assistance and every dollar counts. Some lessons have to be conducted in Sat. morning to tie in with the availability of tutors and venue.

11. How many lessons does a tutor have to undertake per day/week? Except for substitute tutors, we expect a tutor to teach two lessons, each of one hour, per visit to TSW.

12. Do tutors have to join the Opening and Closing Ceremony? It is all up to you. We hope to introduce you to the students at the Opening Ceremony (which will be held on a Sat. afternoon) so that you can break the ice with and know better your own students before lessons are to start. If you find the project most enjoyable and want to celebrate its success with the students, you are welcome to come to the Closing Ceremony where certificates of completion will be given to all and awards to those who have made significant improvements. This serves as an incentive for students to come to our lessons.

13. **What training will be given to tutors?** In the morning of the Opening Ceremony, we shall hold two lectures, one to provide you with some teaching skills and the other some skills to handle kids in TSW whose parents are receiving public assistance and therefore behave differently. We shall also tour the rooms and facilities designated for the project and discuss any problem you have in mind or may encounter. Lunch boxes will be provided on that day.

14. **How will travelling allowance be claimed and paid?** We will have a log sheet showing the dates and no. of lessons a tutor has delivered and will accordingly pay those who wish to claim travelling allowance in one go after completion of the project in June.

15. **What teaching materials will be used?** Online pre-selected scripts with answer sheets appropriate to the level of the students of each class/lesson will be made available to tutors well before the lessons are to start. Sufficient hard copies will be deposited at the reception counter for tutors to collect for use in class.

16. **Should any homework be assigned?** According to the principals, teachers and social workers we have met, it will be best that we do **not** because students are already over-burdened with assignments from their schools which they may not be able to finish. We should aim to create an atmosphere in which they enjoy coming to our lessons where immediate guidance will be given to them to overcome any difficulty in their classroom assignment rather than leaving them feeling helpless at home with more academic problems which they cannot solve.

17. **Should tutors teach students exam. skills?** This is the selling point for many private tutorial centers but for our project we adopt the Wah Yan holistic approach and aim to improve not only the basic academic fundamentals of students but to build up their self-confidence and own character.

18. **What should tutor discuss towards the end of each lesson?** For the first few lessons, we hope tutors can spare around 10 minutes or so to tell the students about their own upbringings from childhood to adult, highlighting the problems they faced and efforts they have put in their studies and work to achieve their own goals. Be sincere and do not overdo it (e.g. my rich parents helped me all the way) to create resentment from the students. Mention more the things you did by yourself and emphasize that they can do it if they persist. This serves to break the ice with the students and win their trust to tell you their own problems. In the subsequent

lessons after bonding has been established, you can invite and listen to the immediate problems of students and advise them the ways to resolve them since they normally lack support and advice at home. If there are bigger issues, please refer them to the social workers in Caritas. If they run out of family issues or are unwilling to disclose them, invite them to talk about their own education/career goals and use your own personal experience to advise them the approach they should take to reach them.

19. After I have been assigned a class and if I am unavailable on a certain date what should I do? You can either cancel the lesson and inform your students (the project co-ordinator and the venue management too please) of a deferment or we can ask a substitute tutor to stand in for you. We have therefore left a window of one to two weeks for such a purpose before the Closing Ceremony.

20. Should I speak English only in class? No, you are encouraged to use Cantonese to communicate with the students since most of them have problems with English. After you are confident that most if not all students understand the teaching script, then you can conduct the class in English to test their understanding. For the last 10 minutes of the class, only Cantonese should be used.

21. Why am I required to register as a volunteer of Caritas? Until and unless we are registered as a limited company and later a charity when we can purchase insurance, we need to serve under the umbrella of Caritas which can provide tutors with liability and personal injury insurance coverage as well as access to and permission to teach within a school premise without police vetting.

22. What happens after completion of all lessons? We shall seek the feedback of tutors on the project and, if positive, we shall continue to hold similar lessons in TSW during the summer holidays and perhaps extend the scope to cover also Chinese and Maths.. Moreover, we would also ask tutors to identify motivated and promising students to provide them later with a one-on-one mentor system to further guide and assist them to achieve their own education and career goals.