Introductory Academic Program (IAP)
Tutorial participation

Learning Advisers
UniSA
Discuss

• What groups are you a part of?
• What do you like about working in groups?
• When do you prefer to work alone?
• What makes a successful discussion?
What do you already know about tutorials?

- What happens in a tutorial? (e.g. the types of activities)
- What might your tutor expect from you?
- How might you participate?
In tutorials, groups of students:

- **discuss** readings, lecture notes and set questions related to a topic/key concepts/ideas
- **work together** to make sense of new and unfamiliar material
- **share** a range of views on a topic
- **debate** and **contest** different points of view

…Tutorial participation = speaking AND listening
Types of tutorial activities include:

• working independently and/or in groups
• completing short quizzes
• giving oral presentations
• performing practical exercises or experiments
Your tutor expects you to...

- have read and understood the material
- contribute to discussion
- raise questions about anything you do not understand
- respect the thoughts and opinions of others
- participate in set activities and exercises
How might you participate?

• discuss possible solutions or ideas
• give your interpretations of the concepts and ideas
• present a new idea
• ask a question
• ask for something to be repeated or clarified
• agree (or disagree) with ideas presented by others
• actively listen to your group members
What would you say to:

• start a discussion
• ask for someone’s views
• check you understood
• encourage someone to speak
• break into the discussion (interrupt)
• help defuse a disagreement
• summarise your group’s discussion
• modify your view
• help everyone get back to the topic
• avoid being negative
• disagree without arguing
How can you actively listen?

Clarify your understanding of what others say:
- Ask questions relevant to others’ ideas
- Paraphrase/rephrase ideas presented by others
- Extend on what others say (don’t just focus on what you want to say)
- Use appropriate phrases or sounds to show you are listening (e.g. “I see”, “yeah”, “right”, “mmm”, “uh-huh” etc.)

Use non-verbal cues:
- Give eye contact (without staring!)
- Use appropriate facial expressions (e.g. When should you smile? When should you look serious?)
- Use appropriate body language to show you are interested in hearing your group members speak (e.g. face the speaker, lean forward slightly, nod your head, etc.)
How can you best prepare for a tute?

- attend or listen to the lecture beforehand
- know what the tutorial topic is and read your set readings with this topic in mind
- write down points you wish to make or questions you wish to raise
- anticipate subjects that might be discussed and formulate your own responses
What can you do after the tute?

- Take notes of anything extra that might prepare you for future tutorials, essays, assignments etc.
- Research any issues or areas of interest raised in discussion
- Email your tutor or post on online forums if you require clarification about anything
- Discuss the material with your peers

By reflecting on the tutorial discussions and materials after the tute, you can improve your understanding of key concepts and prepare for upcoming assignments or exams.
What is happening here?

What impact might this have on the discussion?
What strategies could be used to improve the discussion and who is responsible?

If you’ve listened to the lecture and carried out the readings, you will be in a good position to contribute to discussion.

It is an opportunity to share your interpretations and understanding of what you have learnt.

It is also an opportunity to ask questions.

I’m no expert so I don’t think I’ll contribute.
There's no such thing as a silly question.
If you have a question, ask it, because it's likely other people have the same question.
You are all there to participate - talkative students should not have to do all the talking.

Prepare at least one or two comments or questions before the tutorial so that you have an opportunity to contribute.

I’m generally a quiet person – let the talkative people do all the talking!
• Tutors like to see healthy discussions.
• If you find yourself dominating a discussion, ask questions which invite others to contribute to the points you are making.
• By encouraging all members to speak, you may learn something new, or see something from a perspective you had never considered previously.

There are so many quiet students in my group, so I may as well do all the talking.
• Multiple viewpoints, opinions, and perspectives are valid, so don’t hold back from sharing your point of view.

Reality can be so complex that equally valid observations from differing perspectives can appear to be contradictory.
Problem-solving activity

• Your group were on a plane which crash landed 300 kms away from the nearest town before the pilot had time to radio for help.

• Your group survived but none of the crew.

• Before the plane caught fire, you were only able to grab five (5) things to take with you....
Which 5 things would you take?
Number from 1 to 5 in order of usefulness
(Be prepared to justify your choices and why they are useful)

- Torch (with batteries)
- Map
- Plastic rain coat
- Compass
- First-aid kit
- Gun (loaded)
- Parachute
- Water (1 litre each)
- Book ‘Finding food in the desert’
- Mirror
- Jacket (1 each)
- Bottle of vodka
- Pocket knife
- Salt tablets
- Sunglasses

• Now discuss your list as a group
• You have 5-10 minutes to finalise your list
Reflections

What strategies did you use to contribute to the discussion?
  – Consider both verbal and non-verbal cues.

What worked well in the discussion?

Were there any unproductive moments in your discussion?
  – What were they? How did you deal with them?

Personal goals for tutorial participation

• What are your personal goals?
• What will you do to achieve them?