IST Peer Tutoring Program
Participation Guidelines – Fall 2014
(rev. 9/24/14)

A message from the program coordinators...

Welcome (or welcome back, for some of you) to the IST Peer Tutoring Program! We’re excited to be starting another semester as co-coordinators and we look forward to learning and growing with you all this fall.

Based on discussions with the IST faculty as well as feedback we received from past attendees, we decided to establish a set of guidelines for the program to help us maximize the value of the time we spend together as members of this learning community. Upon your first visit to a tutoring session this semester, you will be asked to review and sign these guidelines as an affirmation of your understanding of the University’s policy on academic integrity, as well as the expectations we hold for our tutors and tutees.

If you have questions or concerns about the contents of this document, you may contact either one of us at any time:

Justin Roth          Cassie Juzefyk
justin.roth@psu.edu   czj5062@psu.edu

Please also note that we are both here as resources for you in the event that you feel a member of our learning community (particularly a member of the tutoring staff) is treating you unfairly or otherwise not adhering to the guidelines we’ve set forth. Alternatively, if you don’t feel comfortable speaking with one of us, you may contact Dr. Lisa Lenze of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (llenze@ist.psu.edu) to discuss your concerns.

Thanks for your cooperation, and here’s to a productive and successful semester!

-Justin and Cassie
**What is the IST Peer Tutoring Program?**

The IST Peer Tutoring Program is a centralized academic support resource for students in the College of Information Sciences and Technology at Penn State. We’re a student-managed program funded by the College, and we provide one-on-one coaching to help students practice and reinforce concepts in the IST curriculum. Our subject-specific tutors and the LAs and TAs who help staff our sessions maintain partnerships with members of the IST faculty, so that we are aware of what instructors are teaching and assigning each week. The tutors’ job is NOT to re-teach course material. Rather, the tutoring team will aid students in their learning by helping to clarify unclear concepts and by supporting students as they practice skills and apply new understandings.

A schedule of which courses are supported on which nights is available at [https://learning.ist.psu.edu/Learning/Tutoring](https://learning.ist.psu.edu/Learning/Tutoring).

**What can tutees expect at our sessions?**

Our tutoring sessions are **open forums held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7:00pm to 10:00pm in 206 IST**. No appointments are necessary; any IST student can simply walk in and ask for help.

Please note that tutors will NOT be working with students directly on graded assignments in programming courses. By request of the teaching faculty, and in an attempt to help students develop a long-term understanding of the concepts of computer languages, we will not explicitly discuss the content of any programming problem set that is to be submitted for credit. (This applies to students in IST 297D, IST 297J, and IST 240.) What we are able to provide is discussion and explanation of concepts that are unclear and assistance on supplemental exercises designed to help students practice the skills required on graded exercises.

While participating in our sessions, tutees can expect the following from the tutoring staff:

- Tutors will demonstrate professionalism and respect for their peers at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining a positive attitude and a supportive demeanor when interacting with students in an official capacity.
- Tutors will promote a culture of hard work and integrity.
- Tutors will not provide unethical or unfair advantages to any student or group of students.
- Tutors will follow the University’s equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policies at all times while on the job. (The full text of Penn State’s disability access statement and AD-42 policy is included at the end of this document.)
What do we expect from our tutees?

Above all, we expect that you will come to our sessions ready and willing to be an active participant in your learning and a positive contributor to the IST learning community.

We expect that students will:

- Review course notes and lecture materials BEFORE coming to tutoring so that they are better prepared to engage with tutors.
- Regularly attend the course(s) for which they are seeking support. (Attending tutoring is NOT a substitute for attending class!)
- Respect their fellow students’ time by not “monopolizing” tutors. Our sessions can get crowded, so please understand that you may need to ask just one question at a time and then allow your tutor to attend to other students before asking him or her a follow-up question.
- Demonstrate a concerted effort to understand course material and/or problem sets before asking for help. We’re here as a resource for you and we’re more than happy to assist you, but you won’t get the maximum benefit from attending tutoring sessions unless you first think through the material yourself.
- In general, be considerate and respectful to fellow students; and treat our classroom and the equipment in it with care.

Being a positive contributor to the IST learning community means that, while your focus may rightfully be on your own learning, there’s much to be gained from helping one another. Appropriate helping strategies include:

- talking with another student about a course concept to gain a better understanding or to work through misunderstandings;
- working together on supplementary practice problems (i.e., NOT problems that are assigned for course credit); and
- reviewing notes from class together.

A Note of Caution

While we encourage discussion and collaboration among students on activities not directly associated with graded assignments (with the exception of those labeled ‘group work’ by the assigning faculty member), we neither advocate nor facilitate unauthorized collaboration on individual assignments. It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of your instructors’ policies for how and under what circumstances you are expected to complete your assignments. If you are found to have knowingly committed an academic integrity violation at one of our sessions, do know that we may be required to report it to the appropriate faculty member(s) and you may face disciplinary action. We take academic integrity seriously, so we ask that you do the same.
Penn State policies on academic integrity and nondiscrimination

As mentioned above, we adhere to the following University-wide policies on academic integrity and nondiscrimination. If you feel we’ve somehow violated any of these policies, please let us know so that we can address the situation and rectify it as quickly as possible.

Academic Integrity

According to the Penn State Principles and University Code of Conduct: Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Penn State University, allowing the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. In accordance with the University’s Code of Conduct, you must not engage in or tolerate academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person, or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Any violation of academic integrity will be investigated, and where warranted, punitive action will be taken. For every incident when a penalty of any kind is assessed, a report must be filed.

Plagiarism (Cheating): Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT examples of plagiarism. Taking someone else's words (published or not) and calling them your own IS plagiarism. Plagiarism has dire consequences, including flunking the paper in question, flunking the course, and university disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances of the offense. The simplest way to avoid plagiarism is to document the sources of your information carefully.

Disability Access

Americans with Disabilities Act: The College of Information Sciences and Technology welcomes persons with disabilities to all of its classes, programs, and events. If you need accommodations, or have questions about access to buildings where IST activities are held, please contact us in advance of your participation or visit. If you need assistance during a class, program, or event, please contact the member of our staff or faculty in charge. Access to IST courses should be arranged by contacting the Office of Human Resources, 332 IST Building: (814) 865-8949.

Students with Disabilities: It is Penn State’s policy to not discriminate against qualified students with documented disabilities in its educational programs. (You may refer to the Nondiscrimination Policy in the Student Guide to University Policies and Rules.) If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-863-1807 (V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site at http://equity.psu.edu/ods/.

In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation (see documentation guidelines at http://equity.psu.edu/ods/guidelines/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments
with your instructor as early in the course as possible. You must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of each semester.

**Statement on Nondiscrimination & Harassment (Policy AD42)**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. You may direct inquiries to the Office of Multicultural Affairs, 332 Information Sciences and Technology Building, University Park, PA 16802; Tel 814-865-0077 or to the Office of Affirmative Action, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

For reference to the full policy (Policy AD42: Statement on Nondiscrimination and Harassment):

http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD42.html

**A note about the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs...**

The mission of IST’s Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (which oversees the Tutoring Program) is to enrich environments for learning in the undergraduate program. We do this by 1) assisting instructors in their efforts to design courses and curricula that encourage meaningful, long-term learning and 2) creating opportunities to support learning in IST/SRA courses and engaged scholarship outside of classes.

Services of this office include:

- Consultation with individual faculty members who are creating new courses
- Support of curriculum initiatives (e.g., First-year Engagement, updates to majors/options)
- Assessment of undergraduate curriculum
- Planning for classroom research
- Supervision of Learning Assistant Program
- **Coordination of college-wide Tutoring Sessions**
- Support for Honors education

The Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs is another great resource for you as an IST student! To learn more about the LA Program, the Tutoring Program, or Honors work at Penn State, contact Dr. Lisa Lenze (Director) at llenze@ist.psu.edu.
This is an affirmation of understanding which all students will be required to sign upon their first visit to an IST tutoring session. By signing below, you affirm that you have read – and that you understand – the expectations set forth in the ‘Participation Guidelines’ document, last revised on September 8, 2014. Your signature on this document, along with your attendance at our sessions, indicates your commitment to abiding by these guidelines and upholding the University’s standards for academic integrity. Your signature also affirms that you are aware of who to contact in the event that you have questions or concerns about the program that you wish to bring to the attention of the staff. This signature sheet will be kept on file in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and referenced as necessary throughout the semester.

_______________________________________
Student Name (Print)

_______________________________________
Student Access ID (e.g. xyz1234)

_______________________________________
Student Signature

_______________________________________
Today’s Date

(rev. 9/24/14, JGR)