

Tutorial Policy

The long-standing policy that each teaching faculty member should teach two tutorials, at least one of which must be for one of our non-honours courses, has not been effectively enforced in recent years.

I propose a strengthening of this policy, to prioritise first year tutorials, and to ensure that all first-year tutorials are taught by established teaching faculty.

The rationale is that the first year is of critical importance in establishing our students understanding. It would be relatively easy to deliver a ~cookbook~ first year focussed on optimising performance on a narrow range of repetitive examples, but we should aim, in addition, to develop a wider conceptual understanding. This requires tutors with a deep understanding of our subject. Having academic staff as first year tutors would also serve to make an early start on integrating our students into our academic community.

I can find no general Edinburgh statement on the purpose of tutorials. Oxford University's Education Committee summarises and defines the purpose of a tutorial as being to develop an individual student's capacity to think in depth about a subject area, and to operate with growing confidence within its techniques and methodologies, with the expectation that the process will promote increased understanding of the discipline for both tutor and student.

(<https://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/teaching/resources/teaching/>)

Our tutorials, particularly in first year, should have a similar purpose, and that such tutorials are most effectively delivered by our academic staff.

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