



University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine Tutoring Program

Office for Student Affairs

April 1st, 2016

Introduction

The UPR SoM offers tutoring free-of-charge to students during the medical career, especially during the first and second years of studies.

The Tutoring Program is intended to provide an additional level of academic support to students wishing to receive help with their courses outside of the classroom environment. It represents a supplement to academic support services provided by the courses. The Program includes a variety of ways a medical student can receive academic support:

- Faculty/ Academic Advising
- Peer to Peer Tutoring Services
- Review Sessions

Faculty/ Academic Advising

Faculty Advisors play an essential role in guiding students successfully through medical school. At different stages during the four years, faculty members help students maintain a balanced, long-term perspective while they are immersed in the program. Faculty Advisors can support students offering tutoring, reviews or referring them to other services such as peer to peer tutoring services.

Peer to Peer Tutoring

The program serves the dual purpose of providing an opportunity for tutors (who are also medical and graduate students) to reinforce their knowledge and critical thinking skills while simultaneously helping their colleagues achieve the same goal. Within each course, Course Directors hire very knowledgeable students to serve as Tutors. Also MSII, III and IV can apply to become tutors. A list of tutors per course and Department and the topic that each tutor can cover is available at the beginning of the academic year. AOA medical students; members of the Arnold P Gold Humanism Society; MD/PhD students; MS and PhD students and peers that collaborate with the Hispanic Center of Excellence are highly encouraged to become peer tutors.

In order to provide the best possible experience for both tutors and tutees, prospective tutors are required to undergo a brief (1 hour) training session that will help reinforce or develop their teaching skills, and encourage "active learning" during the tutoring session. Tutees should expect tutors to strongly to practice integration and application of their knowledge utilizing test questions. The tutor will serve as a facilitator of the learning process, filling content gaps as needed, assessing/modifying the tutee's reasoning and problem solving skills. Tutoring sessions will last a maximum of 2 hours.

Review Sessions

Course Directors together with the course faculty determine the topics that deserve review sessions to be offered. A schedule with the review sessions to be offered is presented to the students with the academic calendar. Faculty members, graduate students and/or upper level medical students that will offer review sessions are identified by the course director within a particular department.

FAQ About Peer Tutoring

What is a peer tutor?

A peer tutor is an UPR SoM student in, at least, their second year of medical school or a graduate student who has been selected by Course Directors. Factors that make a student eligible to tutor include but are not limited to be in good academic standing, have a strong interest in teaching, good knowledge of the subject area, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Students who have failed courses are not eligible to register as a peer tutor.

Do I have to pay a fee to have a tutor?

No. Students seeking tutoring do not have to pay.

How do I sign up?

Fill out a "Request for Tutoring" form with the course director within the department you need the service. When you submit the form, you'll be given a list of tutor/s for the course you're interested in. Tutor lists include the name, email, and telephone number of each tutor.

What if I'm not sure if I need a tutor?

Doubts are common. Try it. Some students work with tutors only once or twice. Others meet with their tutors regularly for the duration of a specific course. Scheduling is arranged between you and the tutor.

How do I make the most out of peer tutoring?

Three suggestions. First, try your best to identify areas you would like to work on. For example, some students struggle with rote memorization, or organizing large amounts of information, or have trouble understanding concepts, or need help applying their knowledge-base clinically. Second, it's best to be prepared for your sessions. Peer tutors are students as well and have busy schedules. If you have a specific need or concern, let them know. E-mail specific questions or general topics you'd like to review in advance of your sessions.

If I work with a tutor am I guaranteed to pass?

No. However, many successful students have worked with tutors at one point or another.

FAQ for the Potential Peer Tutor

What do UPR SoM Peer Tutors Do?

Peer tutors work with students individually or in small groups of up to 3-4 to clarify information, review specific course material and encourage effective study skills. Tutors are encouraged to stimulate critical thinking, foster an understanding of the "big picture," and help students become active participants in the learning process.

How do I become UPR SoM Peer Tutor?

You will be recruited by course directors if you are eligible to tutor. You will be asked to indicate which courses you feel you are realistically available to tutor. All new tutors must attend a *"Students as Teachers"* session at the beginning of the school year. In this training peer tutors will learn about the role and expectations. Encounter forms, documenting the sessions with students will need to be completed. Similarly, each student is expected to complete and encounter form on their tutor indicating how the session was helpful or where there is room for improvement.

How do I know if I'm eligible to tutor?

A student is typically selected to become a tutor if they are in good academic standing and has a strong interest in teaching and working with other students. All peer tutors must be approved by the Office of Student Affairs.

How does it work?

You're contacted by interested students by phone or E-mail. You arrange either an individual session with a student or meet with a group - it's all based on your schedule and the student's availability. Tutors are advised to limit the tutoring time to a maximum of 2 hours per session and limit their group sizes to 4 students.

What are the benefits of tutoring?

Peer tutors gain experience in teaching, which can be later added to their CV when applying for residency. Tutors benefit by reviewing basic science topics, as they prepare for tutoring sessions.

Have tutors ever been suspended from the program?

Unfortunately, yes. Tutors have been and will be suspended from the program if they treat tutored students in an insensitive and disrespectful manner. Also a tutor needs to maintain a good academic and professional standing.

This Tutoring Program service is available at no cost and any student may request a tutor for any reason. The Tutoring Program is not a curriculum substitute nor used if not attending academic activities for any unjustified reason.

Keep in mind the number of students that can be assigned to one tutor is limited. If difficulties to identify a tutor is encountered, please contact the Office for Student Affairs.