



Covenant University, Ota

Tutorial Blueprint

Covenant University Tutorial Committee

(2014/2015 Academic Session)

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1. Executive Summary

Covenant University aims at promoting academic excellence among her students at all times. This remains one of the overarching goals of the University which has its roots in the vision 10:2022, *I of 10 in 10* prophetic verdict. The University Management has identified an effective tutorial system as a vehicle for achieving this goal. An effective tutorial system envisages a role for all in the university system.

This blueprint for an effective tutorial system in the University is a proposed working document to drive the tutorial system. It was produced by the University Tutorial Committee¹ and is intended for use during the 2014/2015 academic session on a test-run basis. The main thrust of the blueprint is how to make learning in Covenant University more effective and help all students to think for themselves independently.

There are plans to produce a comprehensive tutorial guide by the end of the academic session. The tutorial guide will address all shortcomings in the blueprint and shall hopefully serve as a tutorial policy for the University.

1.1 Essential Elements in this Blueprint

The blueprint has been carefully designed with the underlying objective of avoiding any significant disruption to the programmes already put in place by the university for the academic session. There is no intention either to exert any avoidable pressure on the budget of the university as well as the leisure time of the student. The strategy adopted in all sections of the blueprint is focused on enhancing the chances of success of the Tutorial System.

There are three core strategies in this document that are designed to ensure the success of the tutorial system: i) the production of a Tutorial book for each level in every academic programme; ii) the

¹ Please see Appendix 1 for membership of the Tutorial Committee

administration of tutorial questions on students every week and review of previous week tutorial questions by course tutors at the end of every lecture; and iii) the introduction of the tutorial-week (wholly dedicated week of tutorials) in every month during the semester. These strategies together with others identified in this document will hopefully produce the required synergy to make the tutorial system a huge success.

Some other key initiatives in this blueprint include the assignment of new roles for individuals and groups who are already a part of the existing human resource base of the University. Some of the positions created include those of the Tutorial Coordinator; Departmental Tutorial Representative; Course Tutor; and Tutorial Leader. The modification of the academic timetable to accommodate a Monthly Tutorial-Week is required. Assessment of student's performance in tutorial exercises during the tutorial-week will now be a part of Continuous Assessment of students.

2. Introduction

It is often said that acquiring an education is largely an individual matter, and that the University does not guarantee to educate a man, but instead offers him the opportunity to educate himself. There is much truth in the assertion that the foregoing is what the University does, but there is also truth in the allegation that such an attitude is often used as an excuse by University Lecturers to dodge their responsibility to the student.

While there may be no shortcuts to knowledge, the University has long recognized that tutorials can be a good crutch for the undergraduate's efforts at self-education. Ideally, tutorial can be one of the most effective teaching and learning devices available to the University. Tutorial can give the student a chance to test his or her ideas on an interested and informed mind. It can give him or her an insight into the working of the scholarly process which he or she cannot readily attain through lectures and text-books. It can require

him to articulate his or her ideas and arrange his or her knowledge with a coherence which is seldom demanded by the one way techniques of tests and examinations. Therefore, a good tutorial programme is no doubt an essential part of an effective undergraduate education.

Unfortunately, such a programme does not exist in many Nigerian Universities today. A frequent objection to tutorials is that the existing resources of the University do not allow it to fulfil its obligation to creative scholarship and simultaneously to undertake a comprehensive teaching programme through tutorial. Besides, the average university lecturer more and more needs to be a research producer as well as to fulfil his or her role as a premier teacher. Even where tutorials struggle to exist, few students or tutors regard it as an important part of their academic programme; instead, most have an unstated agreement to ignore this “additional load” whenever it grows burdensome.

In spite of the problems identified above, when good students are brought together with good tutors, no amount of widespread indifference can entirely eradicate productive collaboration. However, the problem is that, if tutorial is to realize its great potential, it must be made vitally important to both student and tutor.

3. Meaning of a Tutorial

Tutorial can be defined as an intensive course given by a tutor for one or several students, usually on a special topic. It is viewed to be a system of instructions containing exercises, information etc. to encourage individual self-study. The system is usually interactive when the individuals involved are in smaller groups e.g. 10 persons at most. Tutorial is more interactive and specific than a book or a lecture and its emphasis is always on the interactive problem solving session. Tutorials have the potential to enhance the transfer of knowledge and the learning process.

A significant proportion of the input in a tutorial always comes from the student. Part of this input by the student is a considered, thoughtful reaction to the reading and thinking that has been set for the tutorial. Part of the tutor's input, in turn, will take the form of questions and comments in response to a student's reaction. Tutorials are private events and are bound to vary greatly in quality depending on the tutor's experience and variations in the student's ability or desire to participate. "No two tutorials should be the same, and no tutor should try and make them so" (Smith, 2001: 72).

4. Purpose of a Tutorial

The primary purpose of the tutorial is to teach students to think for themselves. Clark (1955) identified the goals of tutorial education as teaching students to think for themselves and to have confidence in their own conclusions and opinions. He added that tutorials develop students' facilities to express themselves in writing, or other means of presentation. Under prompting by their tutors to engage repeatedly in self-questioning, students may learn to evaluate evidence independently, to question their beliefs, and reformulate their theories. This process is intended to bolster students' confidence in their conclusions and opinions.

A major purpose of the tutorial is also "To monitor students' working habits and learning in between the tutorials – to check up on what they've read, how they found it, any difficulties or problems encountered" (Smith, 2001: 74).

A good tutorial must serve the purpose of lowering or eliminating all emotional barriers to learning. To this end, a shared sense of equality between the tutor and the student is a necessary part of the tutorial relationship. Some of the emotional barriers a good tutorial must aim to eliminate include:

The student's fear of making mistakes, and the student's feeling of intimidation by the tutor's superior expertise. For the avoidance of doubt, the tutorial work engaged in by the student and the tutor is

both a general and a shared enterprise and its purpose is to develop different understandings of the texts in question as well as to extend individual student's work according to their particular strengths and areas for development.

Tutorials are typically seen as a chance to debate and develop arguments beyond the point which the student has reached independently. It is often worth asking students, particularly second and third years, at the beginning of the first tutorial with them what they see as the role of the tutorial and what they hope to gain from it. Some students may have a different idea of what they want to get out of a tutorial and they will really appreciate the chance to give input; it should make the experience much more valuable and satisfying all round.

The tutorial platform must therefore emphasise participatory and exploratory learning, it must go beyond solving questions and culminate in the process of engendering and gauging mastery of the curriculum.

5. Importance of Tutorials

The tutorial class as a unique aspect of educational experience offers the students a number of benefits including to:

- i. Practise analytical thinking
- ii. Practise problem solving
- iii. Ask questions genuinely
- iv. Gain a fuller understanding of the subject matter
- v. Gain fresh perspectives on issues and new strategies for handling problems.
- vi. Discuss how theories and other examples apply to reality
- vii. Try out ideas by talking them through with others
- viii. Learn from other students
- ix. Gain important group work skills for their professional lives

6. Content of Tutorials

Tutorials must never include dissemination of new lecture or instructional materials. It should strictly be dedicated to the review of already disseminated materials in order to help the student gain deeper understanding of the core issues.

Mash (2001) supports connecting the tutorial with the lectures: according to him, “In a good tutorial, after students have attended lectures, read thoroughly, and written their essays based on chewing over the material, there are two functions: a ‘topping-up’ exercise on the basics...and the tutor’s response to the essays. The latter consisting of assessments concerning the need for greater depth, relation to other topics, and where the research might go next” (p. 89).

With a bit of planning it is rare that a tutorial won’t be good. It is recommended that the course tutor constantly look for, and use, student feedback to improve content of tutorials.

7. Structure of Tutorials at Covenant University

Although tutorials are often organised differently across the University to reflect the uniqueness of each discipline, the stage of the student’s course and tutors’ own styles, elements of a common approach for the entire University are still required. A number of positions are therefore considered as vital for the effectiveness of the tutorial endeavour. Besides, a number of practices are considered essential for the success of the tutorial system in Covenant University.

7.1 Position of Tutorial Coordinator

Tutorials shall be coordinated at the School level. To this end, there shall be a Tutorial Coordinator appointed from within the University Tutorial Committee (UTC) by the Chairman of the UTC.

7.2 Position of Departmental Tutorial Representative

Tutorial Representative shall be appointed by the Head of every academic Department in the University. The Tutorial Representative shall function as the departmental tutorial liaison officer. Appointment of the Tutorial Representative shall be the prerogative of the Head of Department. However, the Examination Officer in each Department is recommended for this position.

7.3 Position of Course Tutor

Course Tutors shall be appointed by every academic Department to coordinate tutorials for each course in the University. All Assistant Lecturers (AL) teaching the course are suggested for this role. Where no AL is involved in the teaching of a course, the most junior ranked lecturer teaching the course shall be appointed as the course tutor. The higher ranked lecturer teaching the course shall provide the questions and answers for tutorial purposes

7.4 Position of Tutorial Leader

Two Tutorial Leaders (male and female) shall be appointed by the Course Tutor for each course offered in the Department. The Tutorial Leaders shall be outstanding students in the course and must be so identified by the Course Tutor. The Tutorial Leaders are also expected to be exceptionally brilliant students with strong passion for tutorials. Students are free to nominate themselves for these positions

7.5 Tutorial Groupings, Venues and Timetable

Tutorial Groupings comprising not more than 20 students shall be formed by each Course Tutor at the beginning of the semester. A roster of the tutorial groups and relevant tutorial timetable shall also be made available to students at the beginning of the semester. All tutorial group discussions shall be on the basis of the tutorial groupings.

Tutorial group discussions are expected to take place daily in the common rooms situated in the halls of residence as well as in lecture rooms within the academic buildings. Tutorial group discussions shall be conducted daily at such time considered most convenient by the concerned students.

7.5.1 Tutorial Groups for Large Classes

Large classes are defined here as classes with at least 200 students. In the case of large classes, each tutorial group shall comprise 20 students. Every course lecturer in the teaching team for the course shall in this case guide and direct discussions or interactions for not more than 10 tutorial groups at a time.

7.6 Production of Tutorial Book

Tutorial Book shall be produced for each level in every course programme within the University. The Tutorial Book shall comprise standard tutorial questions and model answers for all undergraduate courses offered in the academic Departments. The Tutorial Book shall be in electronic form and shall be published by the Covenant University Press with the names of all contributors duly acknowledged. The Tutorial Book shall be made available to students on the Covenant University intranet free of charge.

7.6.1 Standard Answer Template for the Tutorial Book

All model answer for the tutorial book shall adhere to the following format:

- a. A list of all theoretical and practical issues or topic area that the student's understanding is intended for testing by the question
- b. A list of all key points that the examiner expects the student to emphasise in answering the question
- c. The model answer

7.7 Monthly Tutorial-Week

There shall be a week (known as the Tutorial-Week) in each calendar month of the semester dedicated to tutorials. This shall be without prejudice to the tutorial questions given to the students at the conclusion of lectures every week.

7.8 Assessment of Student's Performance in Tutorial Exercises

Student's performance in tutorials shall constitute a part of the continuous assessment for each semester. The reward for participation in the tutorial-week shall be graded as follows:

Attendance: **2 marks**. Questions satisfactorily discussed/answered: **2 marks**. Relevant Questions initiated/asked: **1 mark**. Maximum total marks for each student per tutorial-week shall be 5 marks. This will amount to a **maximum of 15 marks** for the semester awardable to any student in all three tutorial-weeks. This reward system will hopefully encourage full and active participation of students in tutorials.

7.9 Regular Training Workshop on Tutorials

There shall be regular training workshops on tutorials. The focus of the workshop shall be on recent developments affecting tutorials within Covenant University and elsewhere. Tutorial Experts shall be invited annually to train all concerned with tutorials in the University.

7.10 Periodic Review of the Tutorial Endeavour

There shall be a periodic review of the tutorial endeavour in the University. An annual *call for proposal* to review all aspects of the tutorials shall be made. The review shall be based on a survey of feedbacks from students as well as tutors. The deliverables shall include a technical report and a commissioned paper. These deliverables shall be part of the inputs in the regular training workshop on tutorials.

8. Role of University Management

The University Management' role in the tutorial endeavour shall include to:

- i. Enforce agreed standards and practices in the tutorial endeavours.
- ii. Impose appropriate sanctions on erring Faculty and students.
- iii. Approve funds for the annual *call for proposal* for the review of the tutorial endeavour.
- iv. Approve funds for organising the annual training workshop on Tutorials.
- v. Regularly approve the timing of the monthly Tutorial-Week.
- vi. Undertake any other role deemed necessary by the Vice Chancellor.

9. Role of the Tutorial Committee

The University Tutorial Committee shall perform all roles as contained in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the committee. In addition (and for emphasis in some cases), the following roles shall be performed by the committee:

- i. Produce a Blueprint for effective Tutorial system in the University
- ii. Produce a Tutorial Guide to serve as the Tutorial Policy of the University so as to standardize tutorial processes and practices in the University
- iii. Produce a template for the preparation of the Tutorial Book
- iv. Oversee the production and distribution of the Tutorial Book
- v. Provide oversight function in the implementation of the tutorial policy of the University
- vi. Provide monthly report to University Management on the progress of tutorials
- vii. Coordinate the conduct of the monthly tutorial-week

- viii. Cooperate with relevant Units in the conduct of the annual training workshop on Tutorials

10. Role of the Deputy Deans

The Deputy Deans shall be chiefly responsible for the effective running of the tutorial endeavour in their respective schools. To this end, each Deputy Dean shall regularly perform the following functions:

- i. Supervise the tutorial process in the School
- ii. Oversee the timely collation of questions and answers for the Tutorial Books in all academic departments within the School
- iii. Work with each Head of Department in his or her School to ensure that quality of questions and answers submitted for the Tutorial Books meet the agreed standards
- iv. Handover all collated tutorial questions and answers to the Tutorial Coordinator after performing quality assurance exercises on them
- v. Serve as the primary point of reference for all cases of non-compliance by Course Tutors and other faculty concerned with tutorials in the School
- vi. Occasionally recommend to Management, disciplinary measures to be taken against faculty that do not comply with all tutorial practices and standards in the School. ***Evidence of three warning letters earlier issued to such erring faculty will be needed here.***
- vii. Work with the relevant Tutorial Coordinator to periodically analyse the tutorial monthly report for the school in order to identify areas requiring improvement
- viii. Perform any other role that may be necessary to promote the quality of the tutorial endeavour in his or her school

11. Role of Tutorial Coordinators

The Tutorial Coordinator for each School is the tutorial anchor person in every School. The role of the Tutorial Coordinator includes the following:

- i. Coordinate all tutorial activities in the School
- ii. Work with the Deputy Dean to effectively manage the tutorial process
- iii. Inspire all faculty in the School to promptly make their contributions towards the production of the Tutorial Book
- iv. Embark on periodic visits to tutorial sessions in halls of residence and lecture rooms so as to monitor the quality of tutorials.
- v. Submit a progress report on all tutorial endeavours in each School to the Tutorial Committee every forth-night
- vi. Make a copy of the fortnightly progress report available to the Deputy Dean for necessary follow up.
- vii. Collect from the Deputy Dean, all collated tutorial questions and answers after quality assurance exercises have been completed

12. Role of Tutorial Representatives

The Tutorial Representative shall be appointed by each academic Department. He or she shall serve as the tutorial liaison officer in each Department and his or her role includes to:

- i. Coordinate all tutorial activities in the Department
- ii. Assist in the timely production of the Tutorial Book by collating tutorial questions and answers for all courses offered in the Department
- iii. Submit collated tutorial questions and answers to the Head of Department for quality assurance exercises and thereafter transfer same to the Deputy Dean through the Tutorial Coordinator

13. Role of the Course Tutor

The Course Tutor shall be the main driver of tutorials in Covenant University. He or she is therefore expected to be more engaged with tutorials than every other official of the University. The roles of the course tutor shall include to:

- i. Produce 20 standard tutorial questions with 10 model answers (using the agreed template) as contribution to the production of the Tutorial Book.
- ii. Provide not more than two tutorial questions to the students at the conclusion of lectures every week.
- iii. Set aside about **30 minutes** of lecture time for the review of the student's performance in the tutorial questions for the previous week.
- iv. Guide and direct students during the tutorial-week so as to keep their discussions within a reasonable scope.

The next set of roles for the Course Tutor are excerpts from *Oxford University Student Union* submission on tutorials.

- v. Focus on guiding the discussion, building understanding and drawing links to other concepts and topics in that paper.
- vi. Constantly get students to justify the statements they are making, this will help them to get a clearer understanding of their position and the topic
- vii. Ensure that all students have a basic understanding of the topic otherwise more advanced questions will be useless.
- viii. Bear in mind that students are not just assessed on content but also on application of knowledge and technique.

14. Role of the Tutorial Leader

The role of the Tutorial Leader is to serve as the Representative of the Course Tutor in all tutorial group meetings by students. Specifically, the Tutorial Leader's duties shall include to:

- i. Coordinate tutorial exercises in the hall of residence and lecture rooms as well

- ii. Appoint lead discussants in every group work on tutorials.
- iii. Report regularly to the course tutor on the progress of tutorials in the hall of residence.
- iv. Regularly draw the attention of the course tutor to all unresolved issues at tutorial group meetings.
- v. Carry out other tutorial related assignments that may be given to him or her by the course tutor.

15. Role of the Student

The student shall cooperate with the Course Tutor to ensure the success of the tutorial endeavour of the University. The role of the student in this regard shall include to:

- i. Participate productively in all tutorial exercises involving his or her class/group
- ii. Engage fellow classmates in regular discussion of instructional materials taught or made available in class
- iii. Regularly seek help of Course Tutors in all cases of unresolved issues arising from discussion of instructional materials
- iv. Provide feedback whenever this is required by the University authorities

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**Appendix 1: Membership of the 2014/2015 University Tutorial
Committee**

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|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. H. Okodua | School of Social Sciences (Chairman) |
| 2. | Dr. S. O. Oyedepo | School of Applied Engineering |
| 3. | Dr. F. O. Olokoyo | School of Business |
| 4. | Dr. A. A. Oluwatayo | School of Environmental Sciences |
| 5. | Dr. I. O. Ibietan | School of HRD |
| 6. | Dr. M. Tar | School of Leadership Dev. Studies |
| 7. | Dr. O. O. Ajani | School of Natural & Applied Sciences |
| 8. | Dr. E. A. Owoloko | School of Natural & Applied Sciences |
| 9. | Dr. V. E. Efeobhokhan | School of Petroleum & Chem. Eng. |
| 10. | Dr. E. Urhie | School of Social Sciences |
| 11. | Miss H. Jevwegaga | Senate Office (Secretary) |