

Part I About the tutor system

Tutors are...

Kumamoto University graduate school students who individually help foreign students who have just entered the university with their academic studies. Foreign students are able to meet with their tutors for approximately 1-3 hours per week for free.

1. Role of Tutors

Tutors provide educational guidance on an individual basis to foreign students who have entered Kumamoto University so that they can quickly adapt to their new academic environment and be able to learn effectively.

2. Eligibility Period

The role of tutors is to help foreign students adjust to their new academic environment. Therefore, tutors are not designed to help foreign students for their whole time while enrolled at the university. The length of time that foreign students can have a tutor depends on their student status (outlined in the chart below).

<i>Status of foreign student</i>	<i>Tutor eligibility period (after entering KU)</i>
• Undergraduate student	For 24 months
• Postgraduate student • Research student	For 12 months *
• Teacher Trainee Student	For 12 months
• Exchange student (Special Auditor, Special research student) • Japanese studies student	For 6 months

【Note】

* In cases where Postgraduate Students have had a tutor while being research students 6 months, they are eligible to have a tutor for the remaining six months even after they have entered graduate school.

Q&A

Q: I don't need a tutor in particular, but do I have to have one anyway?

A: No, you don't have to have one. However, please fill out the "Declination of Tutor Services" [*Chuta jitai todeke*] form along with your tutor and hand it in to your department's academic section [*gakubu kyomu Tanto*] as soon as possible.

3. Tutoring Hours

The maximum total number of hours that foreign students can meet with their tutors is 45 hours per semester (approximately a 15-week period). This equates to three hours per week on average. (Students can meet with their tutors for more than three hours in any given week if needed.)

【Note】

*Tutors are compensated by the university (not the foreign students themselves) for the number of hours they have worked. However, tutors are not compensated for any hours worked over the maximum limit of 45 hours.

Q&A

Q: About how many hours per week are other foreign students meeting with their tutors?

A: Although it depends on each individual student, most meet with their tutors for 1-2 hours per week. There are times, however, such as just after entering the university or just before having to give a presentation, etc., when students meet with their tutors for more than five hours per week.

4. Selection of Tutors

Before a foreign student enters the university, the Academic Section of the department the foreign student will belong to, requests the student's academic advisor to select a tutor.

Q&A

Q: I am concerned because things are not going so well with my tutor. Is it possible to change who my tutor is even in the middle of a school term?

A: Yes, it is possible to change who your tutor is. If you would like to do that, please consult with the International Student Office.

5. Tutor Qualifications

Usually a foreign student's tutor will be a Japanese graduate school student who is in the same academic field as the student. However, there are cases when another foreign student or an undergraduate school student is assigned to a foreign student.

6. Types of Tutoring

The role of tutors is to provide individualized instruction in a particular academic field. However, in the case that a foreign student's Japanese level is not sufficient enough, tutors may also provide assistance with Japanese needed for everyday living (for example helping with various procedures/formalities, contracts, etc.)

What tutors can and cannot do depends on the Japanese level of the foreign student as well as their field of study. The main types of assistance that tutors can provide are outlined below. Please use it as a reference.

【Academic studies】

<Undergraduate students>

- ◆ Advice regarding what classes to take and how to use SOSEKI
- ◆ Class preparation and review (how to take notes, explanation of important words, etc.)
- ◆ How to write reports
- ◆ Test-tasking strategies

<Research students / Graduate school students>

- ◆ How to search for literature and other materials; explanation of technical terms
- ◆ Correction of papers and reports
- ◆ Help with preparing for presentations (how to make handouts, how to use PowerPoint, etc.)
- ◆ Help with experiments (how to handle equipment, ordering of materials, etc.)

【Campus Life】

- ◆ Verifying relevant information on departmental bulletin boards (exemption of tuition fees, applying for scholarships, etc.)
- ◆ Information regarding university facilities (International Student Office, co-op, Health Center, library, etc.)
- ◆ Arranging documents when applying for scholarships (in the case of privately-funded foreign students)
- ◆ Communicating laboratory and/or departmental info (regarding events, meetings, rules & regulations, etc.)

【Off-campus Life】

- ◆ Help with various formalities at City Hall
- ◆ Help with how to pay various bills (National Health Insurance, etc.)
- ◆ Help with finding an apartment and/or signing an apartment contract

Q&A

Q: Doing things is inconvenient because I don't have a car. Since my tutor has a car, is it possible to ask my tutor to help me with shopping and/or moving?

A: Tutors are paid by the university to help you with your: 1) academic studies and 2) improving your Japanese language skills. Since driving a car doesn't fit into either of these two categories, you can't ask your tutor to drive you somewhere during your study time.

Part II Meeting Your Tutor

After entering the university, meet with your tutor as soon as possible and come up with a study program.

1. Who is my tutor?

In the case of graduate school students and research students, most are introduced to their tutors by their academic advisors. In the case of undergraduate foreign students and foreign exchange students, tutors are requested to make direct contact with who they will be working with.

If you still haven't had any contact with your tutor one week after you have arrived at Kumamoto University, please inquire at the Academic Section of department you belong to.

2. Making a plan to meet with your tutor

① *Decide on when and where you will meet, as well as how to get in contact with each other.*

If your tutor is in the same research room as you, you can probably ask your tutor a question anytime you like. However, tutors are also students themselves, so they are probably busy with their own school work.

Therefore, you should establish what hours you are going to meet with your tutor each week or at least decide on the number of hours you are going to meet (for example two hours per week) and then get help within that amount of time.

If your tutor is not in the same research room as you and you also don't have any classes together, you should definitely decide on the number of hours you are going to receive tutoring and then meet or contact regularly with your tutor. If you decide to just meet with your tutor when you feel that you need help instead of on a regular basis, you might end up not meeting with your tutor at all during the school year. Then, even if you wanted to ask your tutor some questions before a test, it would be a difficult thing to do because you have hardly gotten to know your tutor yet.

As for where you should study with your tutor, departmental libraries and the student's lounge ("kouryushitsu" in Japanese) in the International Student Center are popular places. Whenever possible, please avoid meeting at such places as your apartment, the dormitory for international students, etc.

Please get in touch with your tutor at least once a week. Decide what the best way (e-mail, phone, etc.) is to get in touch with each other.

② *Tell your tutor what you want him/her to help you with.*

Please think about what you want your tutor to help you with by using Part I, 6 above as a reference. Then clearly explain to your tutor what you want help with and come up with a study plan together based on it.

3. Events that you can participate in with your tutor

The following are school events that tutors and incoming foreign students can participate in together:

- ① February Foreign student study tour
- ② December Kumamoto University Foreign Student party

※ ① is an event primarily for foreign students, but tutors can come along if there is space available on the buses.

4. Consulting with someone regarding your tutor

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your tutor, please feel free to consult with someone at the International Student Center anytime. If you are unable to come in person to the International Student Center for some reason, you may also consult with us by e-mail or phone. You may rest assured that anything you talk with us about will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Contact:

International Student Office

gji-ryugaku@jimu.kumamoto-u.ac.jp