

The SC&D Professional Tutor Program

Procedural Guide

Background Information

The Professional Tutor Program provides SC&D students with special research interests an opportunity to work with professionals in specialized areas such as education and development, women's issues, and technology and development. An SC&D tutorial is not to be confused with SAIS work-study or an internship, as the tutorial is guided by the student's needs, not the expert's.

Given that the SAIS curriculum of courses cannot cover every topic in which an SC&D student may have a special interest (such as fisheries, urban public transportation, water supplies in urban slums, etc.) the SC&D Professional Tutorial program was created to allow SC&Ders who are already well-focused on a particular topic (often from prior experience) to take advantage of the Washington D.C. area's wealth of development specialists, who collectively have experience in almost any sub-field of development that an SC&D student may choose.

Tutorial Content

Each student works with a tutor over a 13-week period, and either:

- produces a major paper, the research for which usually includes conducting interviews with specialists on the topic concerned. The tutor helps the student arrange such interviews.

or:

- carries out a project and writes a paper summarizing the project's results. (For example, one student developed a junior-high-level curriculum for environmental studies that could be used in schools in developing countries. Another student developed an inter-active web site that NGOs could use to keep up with new developments in the area of housing for the poor - projects, legal changes, etc.).

The student presents her/his findings in a roundtable discussion at the end of the semester to SAIS students and faculty. The tutorial program project counts for the student as one SAIS course credit toward the minimum of sixteen SAIS courses required for graduation.

The Student's Role in Developing a Topic and Finding a Tutor

Tutors are professionals with a Ph.D. or with 10- 15 years experience in a particular field who can commit 26 hours to tutorial instruction during a single SAIS semester. Students must interview prospective Tutors carefully to make sure that the Tutor's expertise fits the student's research interests --not the other way around.

For the student, the process of developing a topic and finding a Tutor usually takes about two months. (The process can be rather labor-intensive and time-consuming, depending on the topic and the resources on it available in the D.C. area.) The process of locating a Tutor in itself helps the prospective student to learn more about the field concerned, and to refine the particular topic for the tutorial.

The I-Dev faculty will help the student make contacts with experts in the field concerned. The student must discuss his/her interests with at least five such experts (not all of whom need be prospective Tutors.) At the end of this exploratory stage, an I-Dev faculty committee selects a Tutor from among the prospects the student has identified.

The Application Process:

Once the choice of Tutor is approved, the student should work out with the Tutor what is to be included in the research proposal. Tutorial topics should not be those covered in SAIS courses, but they may spring from such courses when a student wishes to go more deeply into certain aspects of a course already taken. The student's tutorial application consists of a two-page proposal, a tentative 13-week outline of discussion topics (designed in discussion with the Tutor), a preliminary bibliography, and the proposed professional Tutor's curriculum vitae. SC&D students can obtain from the I-Dev office a sample tutorial proposal that they may wish to use as a guide in developing their own proposals.

Because of the time required for the SC&D faculty and the I-Dev office staff to review the proposals and contact the proposed tutors, proposals must be received each semester at least two weeks prior to school registration. **The SC&D program has funding for only a limited number of Professional Tutorials each semester, and the application process is thus competitive.** When an application is received, the SC&D faculty will review it and discuss it with the tutor before notifying the student if he or she is cleared to register for the course. Students register for the Professional Tutor Program like any other course at SAIS, but identify Dr. Grace Goodell as the instructor

The Course Process:

Tutorial sessions occur in two-hour weekly sessions; however, a mutually convenient schedule can be negotiated between students and Tutors as long as instruction time equals 26 hours. Students are expected to devote 8-to-10 hours per week to the course, outside the tutorial meetings. Tutors are required to attend an end-of-the semester roundtable discussion at SAIS. SAIS pays each Tutor a \$500 honorarium, offered as a modest symbolic material expression of the SC&D program's gratitude for the tutor's contribution.

Contents of the Final Paper:

The final paper should include an overview of the field (or, often, fields, given that many topics are cross-disciplinary) within which the course topic falls, putting the project in its theoretical, as well as real-world, development context. It should explain persuasively why the topic was worth studying in depth.

The paper should be clearly written, and the oral presentation at the end of the course well-organized. The paper should spell out the solid theoretical foundations (or conceptual

framework, or methods of inquiry) on which it is based, demonstrating that the student is well versed in them. It should present both sides in the major debates in the field (or fields). In both the paper and the final oral presentation, the student should be able to defend the policies or practices he or she recommends in the paper, defending them both on empirical grounds (whether they have worked in some places) and on theoretical grounds (why we would expect them to work), and showing why they are better than the policies the paper rejects.

Grading:

The course grade is based solely on the final paper (both in courses in which the paper is the major activity in the course, and those in which the student conducts a project and then writes about it in the final paper).

Final grades will be determined through consultation between the Tutor and Dr. Goodell, with Dr. Goodell, as the SAIS faculty member responsible for the project, making the final determination of the grade, should consensus not be reached.

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