The following generic job description is for face-to-face weekly class tutors. There may be some particular variations for part-time tutors engaged to teach on the Oxford University Summer School for Adults (OUSSA) or accredited day and weekend schools.

A detailed description of the duties of short online course tutors follows the job description for face-to-face tutors.

Part-time tutors are engaged on the basis of a contract for services; they are not employees of the University of Oxford.

Part-time tutors are paid on a sessional basis. Additional payment is made for preparing a course proposal, for marking coursework, and for attendance at induction and some staff development events.

The application process for membership of the Part-time Tutors’ Panel includes submission of an Application Form and a curriculum vitae, and receipt of two academic references. There is also an interview, normally by the appropriate Director of Studies and one other member of academic staff, if you are short-listed.

If you are called to interview you will need to bring original documentary evidence of your right to work in the UK with you. This is usually one of the following: Valid UK, EEA or Swiss passport, biometric residence permit, or national identity card; other valid passport or Home Office issued document (e.g. Biometric Immigration or Immigration Status Document showing any entitlements to enter or remain in the UK; birth (or adoption) certificate. In addition to any of these, your marriage certificate if you have changed your name. If you are unsure we can send you a full list of what is required.

Membership of the Part-time Tutors’ Panel is conferred by the Academic Board of the Department for Continuing Education, which reserves the right to remove tutors from the Panel at any time for just cause.

Part-time tutors will receive a class visit by their Director of Studies in the first year of their engagement and periodically thereafter. Their coursework assessment will be internally moderated in their first year of engagement by their Director of Studies. It will be moderated by the external examiner in their second year of engagement and on a five-year cycle thereafter.

Applicants wishing to tutor on short online courses will also be required to take the Department’s Online Tutor Training course before they start teaching. There is a detailed description of the duties of online tutors in the latter part of this document.

Membership of the Panel will lapse when a tutor does not teach a course for more than two consecutive years. Reinstatement to Panel membership may be conferred by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Director of the Weekly Class Programme following submission by the tutor of an updated curriculum vitae.
GENERIC JOB DESCRIPTION OF A PART-TIME TUTOR

(FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES)

Main Duties of the Part-time Tutor

There are four main components to the duties of a part-time tutor, viz.: preparation, teaching, assessment and administration.

A: Preparation

- Preparing a course proposal, with syllabus, learning outcomes, assessment schedule, reading list and prospectus entry, by the required deadline.
- Preparation of course of classes at FHEQ Level 4 with appropriate attention to the incorporation of assessment in the teaching and learning.
- Keeping abreast of current scholarship in one’s subject sufficient to teach at FHEQ Level 4.
- Attending a new tutor induction session on appointment to the Panel and attending at least two staff development events within the first three years of appointment. (Part-time tutors are encouraged to attend staff development events on a regular basis.)

B: Teaching

- Punctual attendance for classes.
- Conduct of classes using appropriate teaching styles for adult learners.
- Provision of teaching materials, including hand-outs, as appropriate and within budget, and with regard to copyright legislation.
- Provision of hand-outs, lecture notes, teaching materials in advance of classes (and in electronic format, if necessary) for students with special needs, as required.

C: Coursework and Assessment

- Facilitating student participation in completing the written coursework.
- Setting and marking coursework in accordance with the learning outcomes of the course and appropriate to FHEQ Level 4.
- In marking coursework, providing appropriate written feedback to students on the work and on the coversheet.
- Where students have registered for the award of credit recording on the coversheet whether it is being recommended for credit.

D: Administration

- Maintaining the Student Register for the course.
- Ensuring that contact details of any students enrolling late are reported to the programme administrator for registering and billing purposes.
- Submitting a Tutor’s Report on the course.
- Returning all course documentation, including Student Register, Tutor Report, coversheets, coursework, any coursework for moderation etc., to the programme administrator by the published deadlines.
- Familiarising oneself with the Code of Conduct for students and raising any concerns with the Director of Studies, the programme administrator or the Director of the Weekly Class Programme, as appropriate.
- Where excursions are being planned, to liaise beforehand with the programme administrator to complete an appropriate risk assessment.

February 2016
ONLINE TUTOR DUTIES

[Revised February 2016, replaces earlier versions]

Introduction

As the tutor for an online class, you are the key person your students will interact with; much of the atmosphere and success of the course will be influenced by your online presence on the course forums.

Each student is assigned to a class, normally of no more than 32 students (maximum 20 for Study Skills and Creative Writing courses), which is the responsibility of one online tutor. The class may be sub-divided into tutor groups for some activities; if so, details on this will be provided for you in the course-specific Tutor Notes document.

Tutors are appointed to offer academic and pastoral support to students, to administer specific parts of the course, to create a thriving online community by interacting academically with students, and to provide feedback on assignments. Tutors act as the primary interface with students on the matters listed under ‘Summary of Tutor Duties’ below. Students are advised to contact their tutor as their first ‘port of call’ for all academic queries and problems. While there may be very occasional private emails between tutor and students, the majority of communication will take place via the online forums in Moodle (this has the advantage that all students will benefit from your responses, reducing the demands on your time).

Your continuing and supportive presence online is a vital aspect of supporting the students. We expect online tutors to be ‘visible’ in their class discussions and to contribute to forums regularly (and students will only know you have been there if you leave a message, however brief). This is particularly important at the start of a course, when students are new to the subject, the learning environment and each other. You will have been appointed as a tutor on the basis of your academic expertise and aptitude for online tutoring; we also offer a range of academic, administrative, and IT support to assist you (see ‘Support Contacts’ below).

There is a Moodle space specifically for tutors, The Staff Room, where you will find all the documents and forms needed for teaching the online courses, and a copy of the Department’s Effective Online Tutoring course materials. There are also forums where you’ll find (and can contribute) tips and ideas for online tutoring, both in your subject and more generally. Suggestions for other materials to add would be welcomed.

Summary of Tutor Duties

As an online tutor you will be expected to:

1. Become familiar with the course textbook(s), the course materials, and associated facilities.

2. Have access to a computer system of at least the minimum specification provided in the course details, and provide their own Internet access.
3. Be available to contribute to the online course regularly and frequently for the duration of the course. Online tutors are expected to provide eight hours of tutor support per week during the first two weeks of the course and four hours online per week for the remaining eight weeks. **Tutors should inform students well in advance if they will be unavailable for periods of 2-3 days and make arrangements with the Director of Studies to cover longer periods of absence.**

4. Provide academic, social and pastoral support to students, which typically involves:

   - Drafting a weekly message to students in their class to review the previous week’s activities and discussions and introduce the forthcoming week’s activities. Weekly messages should be posted to the ‘News forum’, so that the messages are automatically emailed to students. (**Important** - please note that students cannot reply to messages posted to the ‘News forum’; therefore the ‘News forum’ should only be used by tutors to post summaries and announcements and not for discussion topics. Copies can be posted in the Common Room to allow for student responses. The News forum should be used sparingly; generally tutors should post no more than one message a week to this forum.)

   - Initiating and guiding class discussions and facilitating group discussions. Tutors are expected to set up each thread and then, **if possible every day**, monitor their class’s forums to check for new contributions. Tutors are expected to facilitate discussions by responding to individual postings, sending a message addressing a number of postings or by ‘weaving’, i.e., encouraging students to reply to each other’s postings, as appropriate.

   - Responding **promptly** to students’ questions and providing any necessary encouragement. Tutors are expected to respond to queries sent by email or posted on the discussion forums within 48 hours. The reply may, in the first instance, be an acknowledgement of the request and an undertaking to contact the student again once an answer has been prepared or at a time that is more convenient for the tutor.

   - Resolving students’ academic problems, if necessary by consulting other tutors or the Director of Studies/Coordinating Tutor for advice, and advising students on other course related matters such as course regulations, IT issues etc., by referring them to the relevant support, e.g. the IT Helpdesk.

5. Give students advice and constructive written feedback on their assessed work and recommend for or against the award of credit, where applicable, (no grades or marks are required) within the required deadlines. The summative assessment in the online course will be coursework of approximately 1,500 words. Other written material by the students may be treated as formative assessment. More details are in documents available in The Staff Room.

6. Communicate with the Director of Studies/Coordinating Tutor, throughout the course, on student matters. At the end of the course, tutors are requested to produce a short written report to provide feedback on the running of the course and to offer suggestions for improving future courses.
7. **Use the generic tutor email address provided** – full details will be emailed to you with the student list and Register before the course starts. You may forward e-mails from that account to your private account - but you **MUST** use the tutor account for any replies. It makes it much easier for us to step in if you require any assistance - we can have access to previous messages - and it also means that, in the unlikely event of any kind of complaint from a student, we can easily provide copies of e-mails and back you up if we need to.

**Specific tutoring tasks**

Tutors are expected to guide students sequentially through the course in accordance with the course schedule. The momentum of the course helps the students know where they are each week.

**Pre-Week One**

Before the course officially starts, the tutor should make a short initial posting to each of the class discussion forums setting up the relevant thread, so that when the first student accesses the forum they are aware of what each forum is to be used for. They should also update their profile to include a photo of themselves and a brief biography.

The first post by the tutor to the ‘Introductions’ forum is particularly important as it sets the tone for communication in the rest of the course. In this posting, tutors should introduce themselves and encourage students to say a little about themselves, about their reasons for enrolling on the course and their expectations from it. (**Important** - please note that messages posted to the ‘News forum’ will be automatically emailed to students; therefore tutors should NOT post anything to the News forum until they have been informed by the Online Course Office that the course has started and students have received their access details.)

Tutors should also set the tone in the common room as a place to socialise (perhaps by offering students a ‘virtual’ cup of coffee or tea).

**Week One**

Tutors are expected to provide eight hours of tutor support during Week One of the course. This week provides students with a chance to become familiar with the structure and workings of the course and the learning environment and start working on the subject matter of the course. It is essential that tutors are available to contribute briefly to the course discussions almost every day during this week.

Specific tutor tasks for Week One include:

- Posting a message to the ‘News forum’ to welcome students to the course. The tutor should briefly introduce him or herself as the course tutor; remind students how to login to the course materials and where to get help if they have any technical problems; and introduce the first week’s activities.
- Responding to every student individually as they contribute to the Introductions activity in the ‘Introductions forum’, even if it is just a quick note such as: ‘Hello John, Aisha and Clare, welcome to the course’.
• Start a thread by posting a welcome message to the forum of the first required activity to welcome students.
• Start a thread on any other forums.
• Checking the progress of the forums, intervening and adding a note of encouragement, where appropriate.
• Providing some feedback on the discussions by posting a message to the appropriate forum.
• At the end of the week, emailing individually any students who haven’t contributed to the course discussions to check that they are OK and are not experiencing any technical problems.

Weeks Two to Ten

Tutors are expected to provide eight hours of tutor support during Week Two, and four hours of tutor support per week for the remaining weeks of the course. (Tutors of Creative Writing course are expected to provide 8 hours of support during Week 8). Weeks Two to Ten form the main body of the course, where a new topic is introduced generally every week, (details of any sessions lasting longer can be found in the course-specific Tutor Notes). Duties for tutors during Weeks Two to Ten include:

• Start a thread on each of the activity forums.
• Using the ‘News forum’ to outline required student-led group activities and, if required, call for volunteers to lead the sessions (details of the group activities are provided in the course materials).
• Moderating group discussions. This will include logging in regularly, reading messages and intervening as appropriate by way of (a) posting a reply to an individual posting; (b) posting a message that addresses a few postings at once; (c) by ‘weaving’(see the Tutor Training Course, available on the Tutor Moodle); (d) by posting a message of encouragement; or (e) by posting a message highlighting points students agree on or disagree on, or by suggesting points that students haven’t considered.
• At the end of each session, providing feedback on the required activity, giving general feedback specific to the discussion. Feedback should be in the form of a message posted to the discussion forum.
• Maintaining an online community by fostering personal interaction.

It is recommended that tutors remind students of the options for written coursework, details of which are provided in Unit 1 of the course materials. Please see your Tutor Notes for details of your course’s particular options and schedule for written coursework. More details are in documents on the Tutor Moodle.

Week Ten

Additional tutor duties during Week Ten include:

• Reminding students to complete their written coursework and answering any student queries about the assessment.
• Encouraging students to complete the course evaluation questionnaire. This is extremely important and the tutor should remind people daily of this towards the end of the course.
• Providing the Director of Studies with general feedback on the running of the course by filling in the tutor report.

Coursework and Assessment

Students are required to submit their written coursework in two stages; the first written piece is due part way through the course, and the second is due by the end of Week 10. Exact dates can be found on each course’s Moodle calendar. Under the guidance of the Director of Studies, tutors will be expected to assess the submitted assignments, provide feedback to each of their students and where a student has registered for CATS points, recommend for or against the award of credit. The instructions for assessment and sending back comments to students are in the OUDCE Online Tutor’s Handbook available in The Staff Room (see http://portal.conted.ox.ac.uk). You should return marked coursework direct to the students concerned via email not more than 2 weeks after the coursework submission deadline.

General Advice for Tutoring Online

The following points provide some general advice and guidance for tutoring online:

1. In the group discussions, the role of the tutor is that of facilitator. The idea is to initiate discussions, by starting the thread in each forum, and then see how far students can get on their own, helping them along when they’re stuck, or when they’re on the wrong track. A well designed course should encourage students to work by themselves and with each other rather than seeking the tutor’s opinion at each step.

2. When teaching online, remember that the only way students can ‘see’ their tutor is via the messages that you post to the discussion forums. As a tutor, ensure that you regularly post messages when you check the discussion forums. For example, if student discussions are going really well and you feel you don’t need to intervene, do send quick messages telling your students how well they are doing (and why) rather than just thinking it to yourself.

3. Tutoring online is quite similar to face-to-face seminar group teaching – though many tutors say they know their students much better at the end of an online course than they would after a traditional adult evening class. There are similar tutor time constraints for online courses as for face-to-face adult classes (which at Oxford have classes limited to 2 hours per week). While online tutors have more time per week for interacting with students, and the teaching material is largely covered by the course and set books, you may still find that you cannot devote as much time to commenting on each student’s forum postings as you would like. The online discussion forums are perhaps best treated like a face-to-face group seminar, with ultimately a limited time available for the tutor.

4. Good communication skills are essential in an online course. Don’t underestimate the ways in which you can be misunderstood. Err on the side of caution, even if it means resorting to the use of emoticons, i.e., smiley faces etc.

5. Try to start every response with encouragement or some kind of positive comment.
6. This is an introductory, first-year university course, so it is important not to make the subject(s) sound too difficult in advance – reassure students that they can do it.

Support Contacts

Director of Studies

You should contact your Director of Studies/Coordinating Tutor with any academic questions about the course content as well as any general teaching enquiries. They should also be your first point of contact for any queries related to student assessment. For contact details for your subject area’s Director of Studies/Coordinating Tutor, please contact the Online Courses Office via: onlinecourses@conted.ox.ac.uk or phone (01865) 280973.

Course Administrators

The Online Courses Office should be your main point of contact for any general administrative enquiries about the course, and for any queries about your contract or payment of tutor fees. The Online Courses Office can be contacted by email at: onlinecourses@conted.ox.ac.uk or by phone on (01865) 280973.

Student Advisor

The Department has a Student Advisor who can provide students with advice on general issues including help and guidance for students with disabilities, general advice on CATS points and credit transfer, and financial assistance. You can direct students to http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/students/currentstudents/studentsupport.php which provides further information. Alternatively they can contact them directly on student.support@conted.ox.ac.uk.

IT Support Helpdesk

If you or any of your students experience technical problems accessing the course, you should contact the IT Support Helpdesk. Check their website for solutions to common problems http://onlinesupport.conted.ox.ac.uk/. Alternatively you can contact the Helpdesk by phone (01865) 280990 or email tallithelp@conted.ox.ac.uk. The Helpdesk is staffed Monday to Friday, 9.00am- 12.30pm, 1.30-5pm with the exception of Thursday, when it is staffed from 9.00am-12.00pm, and 2.00-5.00pm (UK time). The IT Support team will endeavour to respond to queries by the end of the next working day following receipt.

February 2016