



# OSAS Tip- Getting the Most out of Tutoring

[Requesting a UMaine peer tutor](#) through **Knack** gives you a more solid understanding of the subject, it's accessible and flexible, and it helps you to make new connections on campus. Read on for tips on how to best use this valuable resource that is available to you at no cost as a UMaine student:

## 1. Visit Early

Students often wait too long before they seek help. Sometimes this means it is numerically all but impossible to pass the course or get the grade they want. In these scenarios, tutoring can help, but it can't overcome the laws of math. That's why it's important to come for a tutoring session before your class gets confusing, at the first sign of caution – even if you have an “A” average! This will ensure that tutoring is helpful in content acquisition AND grade maintenance. Imagine that you are in a deep pool trying to swim and your tutor is the “arm floaties” that prevent you from needing a life raft later on.

## 2. Prepare

Tutoring is only as effective as the amount of effort being put in by the student. Tutoring doesn't replace other aspects of learning that need to occur—it simply reinforces those efforts. You still need to go to class, do the homework, read the textbook, etc. It's also helpful to establish questions for a session, write down concept confusion points, and identify places where the lectures differ from what you are reading. Tutoring is NOT teaching, and the work that your tutor does is not meant to replace you working through the concepts or the work of an instructor. If you've been missing classes, work that out with your instructor—your tutor is not a placeholder for that role.

## 3. Include Others

You are never the only student in your class with questions! Encourage your classmates to try group sessions because it fosters a collaborative learning environment. When you work with your classmates toward a common goal, each of you actively engages with the course material in a way that may not occur in a lecture-format class. Another student in the group may have captured something in their notes that you did not. Or, you may have a great understanding of a concept and can describe it to the group using analogies and/or examples. This technique

bolsters your learning too! If you can explain difficult concepts in your own words, it strengthens your learning as well. Talking through concepts in a group and working through challenging content together, with the help of a tutor, gives everyone in the group a chance to learn in a more robust way.

## 4. Plan Ahead

Understand that everyone, including peer tutors, are busy during midterms and finals. As such, tutoring may be harder to access. Plan ahead so that tutors can ensure availability during these critical times. Whether you have midterms, finals, or several major exams throughout the semester, schedule multiple tutoring sessions leading up to the exam so you are not cramming or hoping for a miracle too close to the end.

## 5. Manage Expectations

At the beginning of a session, you and your tutor should go over how long the session is going to be and what can be expected out of that time. Keep in mind that tutoring is not a one-way street where the student asks all the questions and the tutor answers—your tutor may answer questions with more questions to help you think independently and improve your critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Tutoring is not homework help. There are strict rules against doing graded assignments for students. Be sure to frame your questions outside of graded assignments, quizzes, and tests.

*adapted from Knack, <https://www.peertutortraining.com/>*

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