
Social Interaction Policy of Roskilde University Tutoring

Aims and target groups

The Social Interaction Policy aims to ensure a good Intro period for everyone involved, both the new students and the volunteers. An Intro period where everyone is welcome and included, regardless of background, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, political beliefs, etc. and where nobody is discriminated against. This means that the new students and volunteers should strive for avoiding situations, behaviours and activities that contradict RUC's study environment strategy as well as RUC's policy on transgressive behaviour.

The Social Interaction Policy should make it possible for the volunteers to navigate their work under Tutoring as well as practice the ideals that are described above. The Social Interaction Policy thus covers RUC's expectations for behaviour and work in the context of Tutoring.

This paper covers the following:

- *Values of social interaction*
- *Expectations for the volunteers*
- *Guidelines for activities and events*
- *Complaint procedure and individual cases*

Values of social interaction in Tutoring

RUC expects all the new students and volunteers to be treated with respect, dignity, acknowledgement and with room for difference. This means that Tutoring should be a "safer space" in both social and academic contexts. To this end, we expect that all students put an effort to create a safer space for others, ensuring that activities can accommodate the whole community rather than simply creating alternatives.

It is important to emphasise that RUC does not tolerate sexism, racism, discrimination, bullying or other forms of boundary crossing behaviour. We must be aware that we cannot avoid boundaries being overstepped because it is a condition of human interaction. This means that anyone can behave in an excluding and/or boundary overstepping manner. When that happens, it is crucial that we use dialogue as our key tool. We must talk about difficult things in order to allow the community to learn. In this way, we achieve a better interpersonal understanding while at the same time creating a more inclusive environment – one conversation at the time.

Tutoring is a close community and those involved tend to interact with one another in social and academic setting. Thus, it is a good idea to keep in mind the values of social interaction in Tutoring, especially in the context of gossip, putdowns, or rumour spreading. It is especially important when you or others are talking about people who are not present. Remember that rumours, putdowns, or gossip can have a damaging effect on those involved. It is, of course, alright to have feelings about

situations where you are not directly involved. However, we recommended to consider what effect your words may have on others directly or indirectly. Regardless of it being intentional or not, spreading rumours and gossip may also make others uncomfortable. As such, we encourage you to not engage in rumour spreading that has a damaging effect on both the Tutoring community and the people involved. In addition, if you are in a situation which you consider as rumour spreading, you can actively contribute to stopping them: speaking up and/or not spreading those rumours further are some of the things you can do. Remember that you can always talk to the Student Council representatives or the chairpeople of Tutoring in case you encounter specific situations involving gossip and/or rumours and if you want to share your experience with someone who is ready to listen.

Expectations for the volunteers

Students who hold a position of trust in connection with Tutoring have a special responsibility towards the new students. With the position of trust also comes a certain form of a power relation: the new students regard the volunteers as their closest comfort persons, but also as the closest authority. It is therefore important that the volunteers are particularly aware of the asymmetric power relationship between them and the new students. This awareness enables the volunteers to create a space where they and the new students are all treated with acknowledgement and respect, which are central not only to Tutoring, but also to the entire RUC community. RUC expects everyone to respect each other's boundaries and act based on consent in their dealings with other volunteers and the new students. This is not always easy to discern. If you are in doubt as to whether the other party has given consent, it is recommended that you explicitly ask, thereby creating a dialogue about the other party's boundaries. It is your responsibility to act based on consent. All of this applies both social interaction in person and online.

Tutoring is a dynamic community, and it is important to facilitate an inclusive environment where all volunteers, old and new, feel welcome. It is thus important to consider if the inside jokes you may use in your communication are excluding others. If you are in doubt, you can always keep the internal jokes between those persons who know it or try to include others, so they understand the joke.

It is also a good idea to get permission if you are taking pictures of your friends or others. This is especially important if you want to publish those pictures online. If you make memes about certain occurrences or a friend, remember to ask if the people concerned agree to you sharing those memes. This way we ensure that we do not unintentionally overstep someone's boundaries.

Guideliness for activities and events

Official activities that occur within Tutoring should be seen as activities that encompass volunteer education as well as planning and implementation of the intro period for the new students both on campus and outside of campus. As such, all activities should be designed taking the activity compass¹ into account:

Activity compass

- Does the program allow space to take a break/recharge/take it slow?
- Can everybody be included and, potentially, who is excluded?
- Is alcohol consumption a premise for participating in an activity? If so, how can you adjust the activity, so it is no longer the case?
- Does the activity involve stereotyping and/or ridicule? If so, what purpose does that serve? Could it be offensive to someone?
- Does the activity entail humiliation, boundary crossing behavior, something that can have adverse physical/psychological effects?
- Who will find the activity fun and are there people who might not find the activity fun?
- What are the goals of the activity? And does the activity and its implementation reflect and help to achieve those goals?
- Does the activity support community building? Does it include those who are new?

The activity compass should help all volunteers to actively work with inclusion and to facilitate community building in a constructive way.

Besides the activity compass, two things should be underlined: at no time may nudity or the consumption of alcohol be encouraged. This ensures that the new students and volunteers do not find themselves in a situation where they cannot speak up, but also to ensure that nobody is excluded and/or offended.

It is important to consider how students and/or volunteers are divided into teams in different activities. For example, if you divide the people based on sex (male and female), then there may be students who do not feel like they belong in these categories. One way to work with this can be a random division into groups. For activities where overnight accommodation is involved, efforts to accommodate different sleeping preferences should be made, so that everyone is comfortable with overnight stays. This is important in the context of rustrips.

Note that it is not the responsibility of volunteers to ensure that the new students stay in the rustrip location during the rustrips.

¹ The activity compass is developed in collaboration with Awake Consulting, <https://awakeconsulting.dk/>

Complaint procedure and individual cases

In general, inquiries in connection with the intro period go to the Student Council, who are bound by confidentiality and are not bound to act, or the chairpeople of Tutoring, who are also bound by confidentiality. In contrast, inquiries about boundary crossing or transgressive behavior go to Take Care. You can find contact details and information about what happens when you contact Take Care [here](#).

If you need to talk your case through before contacting Take Care, you can contact Stine Floutrup from Study and Career Guidance who will ensure that you can have a conversation about your situation with a student advisor. Student advisors are bound by confidentiality and all information about your situation will remain confidential unless you yourself decide to proceed with a case. They can listen and help you with clarification and getting an overview of the options available for you. You can find the contact information [here](#).

Depending on what your inquiry is about, there are different procedures. Regardless of you being unsure about what consequences your inquiry may have and even if you think that your inquiry is not “serious enough” you are always welcome to the Student Council, the chairpeople of Tutoring and/or Stine Floutrup. Together we can find out how to move forward.