

U3A BRISBANE TUTOR GUIDELINES (City Campus)

Introduction

U3A is a worldwide self-help, not for profit organisation promoting low cost educational opportunities in a friendly, social environment. U3A or University of the Third Age was established in Brisbane in 1986 and currently has more than 4000 members, with more than 280 classes every week. Our target membership is the over 50s as we recognise that we don't stop living and learning as we age. We retire from work, not life!

Our sole purpose is to provide members with the stimulus of mental and social activity, and the satisfaction of a continuing contribution to society. We are a modern community of learners, but one catering for those in the third stage of our lives, that operates without reference to qualifications or awards.

What Qualifications do I need to become a Tutor?

Tutors are vital to U3A. Without them, we would not exist. In general, tutors have a passion for their subject which they share with their class. They do not need to have formal qualifications in that area but an expertise which they are willing to impart. A tutor is anyone willing to run a class on a voluntary basis and who has the qualities that enable them to develop and present interesting lectures and talks on their given subject. The only areas where qualifications are required are those of nutrition and health where information given in class must follow mainstream practice so members are not put at risk.

Guidelines for Acceptable Types of Classes

A set of procedures has been adopted explaining U3A policy, as follows:

- No class, or class-associated activities, should be used to advertise goods or services in which a tutor or class member has any financial interest.
- Where religion is involved in the subject-matter of a course, the only acceptable treatment is through comparative religion. There should be no classes that advocate a particular religion or ideology and there should be no proselytising.
- The only classes dealing with health or nutrition that can be accepted are those run by people with recognised formal qualifications in those fields.
- Classes on alternative or controversial subjects should be examined by the Management Committee or its appointed representatives before being allowed.
- Any tutor who, in the judgment of the Management Committee, causes concern with class content will be required to submit a plan setting out the subject to be taught and how contentious issues will be addressed in class. This should go to the Management Committee for consideration and approval.

What Classes do we Operate?

A huge variety of classes are conducted. Members are part of our diverse community and have wide ranging interests. Reference the current Class Schedule to view the varied types and topics of courses. We welcome new topics and areas of study. We do, however, have a system of oversight of new courses. If the Tutor Liaison officer feels unsure whether your course meets our requirements, she will pass the outline over to a subcommittee of Management Committee members who will make the final decision on its suitability. See *Guidelines for Acceptable Types of Classes* in the tutor section.

How do I Start?

You will need to contact the Tutor Liaison Officer at tutors@u3abrisbane.org.au to discuss your ideas with her. She will ask for a course outline. If satisfied, she will then ask you to complete a *Tutor Application Form* which can be downloaded from the Tutors area on our homepage or alternatively, you can collect a copy from our Creek St office or arrange to have it mailed to you. The completed form is to be forwarded to the Tutor Liaison Officer who will then contact you to discuss your proposed course content, any prerequisites such as level of knowledge/skills required and your preferred day/time of the week. Every effort is made to schedule your class at the times requested but this will be dependent on classroom availability.

There is no requirement for tutors to become financial members unless you also wish to enrol in courses conducted by other tutors – as it is a requirement that all class attendees be financial members.

Getting Started

New tutors will be invited to an orientation which will give you the opportunity to inspect your allocated classroom and receive a briefing on the audio visual equipment and the programs in place to assist you. It is strongly recommended that you attend this session.

The *Tutor* and *About Us* pages of the website provide some useful links, information and downloads. Go to our homepage and see the heading options along the top of the page.

Tutors have the freedom to develop the content and format of their classes but it is expected that they will be conducted in accordance with adult learning principles, enabling respectful participation by all students and accommodating a variety of learning styles. You are to refrain from any comments/actions that could be seen as promoting your personal business or ideology or placing members in a vulnerable situation financially, physically or psychologically.

Tutor Log In

In order to manage your class efficiently, your usage of the applications available through our computer system is essential. Although it may seem difficult for some at first, practice will allow you to completely control your student enrolments and communication. It is worth seeking extra assistance to master this important tool.

Managing your Class

Attendance records are kept for all classes. At Creek St, the Attendance Sheets are collected from Reception. It is the duty of the tutor to tick the names on the list and collect the class levy. The form and money are then returned to Reception. Please ensure that all attendees pay. You may wish to appoint a member of your class to undertake this duty for you.

You can allow someone to attend your class on a one off basis if they organise this with you before class but do not allow walk ins without prior consent.

At Adelaide St, the Office volunteers check off the names and collect the money before the students enter the classroom.

The Login section on the right-hand side of our homepage will give tutors individual details of your course and includes secure facilities on how to manage class lists, send bulk emails to students, change subject details and much more. It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with this section as it will assist you in managing your class. By registering on the website using the *Website Registration* menu option you can access this information.

Class Enrolments

Members seek to enrol in classes either online or directly with the tutor. The office does not take enrolments. Tutors receive an automated email when members apply online. Members may assume their enrolment is accepted by you if they don't get a reply to the contrary. It is imperative that you check regularly for the enrolment notification emails and reply to them promptly. It is a bad look for you and the organisation if students don't hear from you. It also means the office receives calls about enrolments which they cannot help with.

Before accepting an enrolment you should ensure that the member is currently financial, and, if not, advise that attendance cannot commence until the beginning membership dues are paid. By logging on you can access this information.

Do not enrol more students than your classroom can comfortably accommodate on the assumption that a larger room will be available. There is a limited number of classrooms and the probability is that a larger room will not be available. Consider maintaining a Waiting List

if your course is oversubscribed. That way you can replace students who have cancelled out of your class.

U3A is keen to ensure that members have fair access to classes so tutors are encouraged to create opportunities to open up classes to new enrollees by:

- i) adhering to the policy of accepting enrolments on a first in – first served basis;
- ii) not carrying whole class enrolments forward from one term to the next to the exclusion of prospective new attendees;
- iii) telling students that if they attend on an ad hoc basis or only occasionally, their place will be offered to someone on the waiting list
- iv) offering a second class.

Class Timetable

Our academic year is based on the Queensland State School term dates starting in late January and finishing in early December. It is divided into 4 terms. Each term has a new timetable.

The Class Schedule is published and can be viewed online or in the printed version approximately 2 weeks before the end of the previous term. The courses available are advertised and details given on the enrolment procedure. Students will then begin contacting you to enrol. You will be asked by the Tutor Liaison officer quite early in each term to give her the details for your course in the following term for publication. It is essential that you check carefully to ensure that these details are correct. Often tutors forget to change the new term's course name or content. Updated contact details must also be maintained.

The class timetable is formulated as much as possible in consultation with the tutors and every effort is made to meet your needs. However, in such a large organisation with limited resources, it is inevitable that everyone's needs cannot always be met. There are instances where, for various reasons, it is necessary to change classrooms. Tutors will be advised in advance if this becomes necessary. The Tutor Liaison Officer oversees all aspects of the timetable and room allocation and can be contacted at tutors@u3abrisbane.org.au for any queries or requests. This job is a huge undertaking and is done by a volunteer just like you. It is expected that all communication with this person is polite and respectful.

Each day is divided into 4 sessions commencing at 9.00am, 10.45am, 12.30pm and 14.00. The duration of each class is 75 minutes. As there is a break of only 15 minutes between classes, tutors are asked to be prompt in finishing your class and vacating the room to leave time for the next tutor to configure the room and set up so they can commence on time.

Managing your Students

A great majority of time, students are respectful, polite and engaging however there are times when conflict arises. If possible, resolve any issues privately one on one. You can remind the person that U3A Brisbane has a *Code of Conduct* on our website which will be adhered to. If you strike unacceptable or intransigent behaviour, report it to the office where you can complete a short form detailing the incident/s and the person/s involved which will be passed on to the Management Committee. The Management Committee receives reports from students from time to time about tutors so it is in your best interest to report a problem immediately to the MC so the matter can be dealt with in the early stages.

If the MC does receive a complaint from a student about you, a member of the MC will approach you to discuss the problem.

Promoting your Course

The E-News and the website are the principal ways of promoting courses to members. You may also advertise your course on our Facebook page. Contact the Publicity Officer on publicity@u3abrisbane.org.au to organise this. If you choose to do a flyer or an ad for the E-News, you must submit it to the office for editorial approval. Once given, flyers can only be displayed for one month on noticeboards and must not be handed out individually. As space is limited in E-News, ads to promote classes will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Student Privacy

Tutors are responsible for ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of students' information. This applies both to personal information shared in class and contact information provided by the office. Office volunteers have been instructed not to give out personal details but will instead pass messages on to tutors to respond to directly.

Costs

When agreeing to become a tutor you do so in the knowledge that you are a volunteer and that you can make no money for yourself. You cannot gain recompense for your transport costs or incur payment for time spent on preparation of lessons. Everyone at U3A is a volunteer and no one receives money for the time or effort they put in. Failure to follow this expectation may lead to your course being discontinued by the Management Committee.

We do not expect you to be out of pocket for photocopying costs though. As a result, a system has been instituted where the first \$50.00 worth of photocopying for each of your classes will be covered by U3A and your students will receive these at no cost. If you exceed

this limit, you may charge your students 10 cents per black and white sheet and 20 cents per coloured sheet. This money is to be returned to the office if the photocopying is done there.

We strongly suggest that you do take advantage of this offer. Each tutor, upon application to the office will receive a code which you can enter into the photocopier. It will keep a record of your usage and staff will advise you when to start charging.

Provided you give them sufficient time, the office volunteers will do your photocopying for you and have it ready for your session. Last minute requests will not be accepted.

If your class needs a text book, add it to your advertised class description so students can purchase it before the start of term.

Copyright Material

U3A Brisbane holds a licence allowing the reproduction of copyright materials in class for educational purposes. There are still strict restrictions with large fines applicable to those who exceed the rules. It is essential that you familiarise yourself with detailed information available under Copyright on our Tutors tab on the homepage.

Please note that it is illegal to copy commercial CDs and music.

Fire Alarms

Compulsory evacuation is required by everyone on the premises should a fire alarm sound. The tutor is to immediately stop work, ask all students to leave their belongings behind and oversee their movement to the fire escapes. Instruct them to start down the fire stairs and to congregate at the assigned meeting point. At Creek St that is on the corner of Creek and Queen Sts outside the ANZ bank and at Adelaide St next to the statue in Anzac Square. Wait with your class until the drill or emergency is over.

Those members who cannot manage the stairs should be told to wait inside on the landing inside the fire escape well for the emergency service officers to reach them.

First Aid

First aid kits are available at each office. Some office volunteers are trained in first aid. Any accident or health incident needs to be documented at the office. If an ambulance is required, notify office staff immediately.

Occupational Health and Safety

It is expected that tutors and class participants will follow good OHS practices. Again, when an accident or incident arises during a class session, an Accident/Incident Report needs to be completed promptly. Forms can be found at the office. Anything considered unsafe on our property should be reported at the office.

Holidays and Absences

If you become indisposed or decide to take a holiday during term, it is recommended that you find someone in your class to facilitate it in your absence. This means you can retain your spot in the timetable. Otherwise you risk losing it to a new class.

Through the *Tutor Menu*, you can email your whole class about absences, changes, requests or send out lesson notes.

We also have an SMS alert system in place where the office can alert your students to an unplanned absence. Provided you notify the office in time for them to get the alert out to your students, it may save them a wasted trip into the city which promotes good relationships. This is only to be used for last minute absences.

Management and Administration

U3A Brisbane is managed by a 10 person volunteer Management Committee elected annually at the AGM each April. They are ably supported by a large team of volunteer coordinators, tutors and administration staff. It takes all of us to run this organisation. No matter how hard you think you work or how many hours you put into your preparation and teaching, I can assure you that there will be others in this organisation who are doing more. Never lose sight of the fact that we are all volunteers and we do what we do because it is our choice.

During term, our offices are manned Monday to Friday from 8.30 – 3.00 by our friendly, helpful office volunteers. During holidays, the Creek St office only opens with skeleton staff at advertised times. Notices on door and in the enews will advise you of these times. You can contact the office at mail@u3abrisbane.org.au

Thank you again for volunteering to be a tutor. Your input is much appreciated and you will find your task easier if you familiarise yourself with the various policies outlined in this document and the Tutor pages on our website. The Management Committee hopes you gain success and enjoyment from your new role.

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