

# On your tutorials

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## Abstract

This document explains how to request a tutorial. It is very important that you follow the guidelines in this document, since, otherwise, your request will not be considered.

## What tutorials are and are not

It is very important that you understand what a tutorial is. This is the definition that we use in this subject:

A tutorial is a *short* meeting in which a student asks for clarifications about something that a lecturer has taught or feedback about something that he or she has done. Tutorials may also be requested regarding any other topic regarding the subject, including bureaucratic issues. Please, note that we emphasise “short” since no tutorial should exceed 10-15 minutes.

Tutorials can be face-to-face or virtual. We strongly support the idea that face-to-face tutorials must fade away gradually and that virtual tutorials are the best choice. So, please, avoid requesting the former; make a point of providing enough context so that your tutorial can be dispatched virtually.

Make sure that you understand that a tutorial is not a meeting to ask plain questions. You are expected to have worked on your questions and to provide alternatives, analyse their pros and cons, and to have made a decision. Note that this applies to every tutorial, including tutorials whose goal is to clarify a bureaucratic issue.

Neither is a tutorial a meeting to plead for a solution to a problem, to fix your computer, or your project. Please, do not drop by your lecturers’ offices and cry out: “I’ve got an exception and I don’t know what to do!” You must know what to do: review the lectures carefully and find where you made a mistake. We guarantee that the materials that we provide are correct; if we find a mistake, we immediately inform our students and provide a patch if necessary. Our experience proves that 99.99% of the problems our students have are due to the fact that they did not study the materials that we provide or that they did not follow our guidelines carefully.

Neither is a tutorial a meeting to complain about your weaknesses and your inability to meet the goals of this subject. Many students before you have passed this subject, and many of them got honours! If you feel unable to meet the goals of this subject, please, identify your weaknesses, prioritise them, and tackle them one at a time. It may be the case that you do not have a good command of Java; that means that you have not practiced enough; practice! It may be the case that you are not fluent at reading technical documentation; that means that you have not

read enough technical documentation; read more! It may be the case that you do not have a good foundation because you did not pass the previous subjects; pass them!

## **When to request a tutorial**

Your lecturers have to pay attention to a hundred students. That means that you should not expect an on-line answer from them.

Answering a request typically takes from one to two working days. That means that if you send your request on Monday, you're likely to get an answer on Tuesday or Wednesday; if you send your request on Friday, then you'll get your answer the week after, on Monday or Tuesday. The exception might be a week in which Monday is a bank holiday, in which case you might get your answer on Tuesday, Wednesday, or even later because email accumulates in your lecturers' mailboxes during non-working days.

It is very important that you carefully plan on the work that you have to carry out on each deliverable. You know the subject's work plan and you are strongly advised to create a personal work plan that minimises the chances not to comply with the deadlines. Please, take into account that requesting a tutorial takes time.

## **Your email message**

We expect that you request your tutorials by email. Make sure that you follow the following guidelines before you send your request:

- Use your USE's email account, which is your corporate email account regarding this subject. Mail that comes from services like Gmail, Outlook, or Yahoo! (just to mention a few examples) is flagged as spam and discarded automatically.
- Make sure that your email system is configured so that it shows your real name when your messages are received. Exchange some test messages with a partner to check this.
- Do not request read receipts since they do not guarantee that the recipient has actually read your message. Delivery receipts are ok since they guarantee that the recipient has got your email messages.
- Send your message to just one lecturer, who must be your theory or laboratory lecturer. Include the other lecturers in the CC box to keep them informed.
- If you refer to other people in your message, then include their email addresses in the CC box so as to keep them posted regarding your comments.
- Make sure that the subject of your message is formatted according to the following pattern: "[D&T] Short description". Make sure that the short description provides an overall idea of your request. Avoid subjects like "[D&T] Book a tutorial" or "[D&T] I need help".
- Make sure that you are including all relevant details required to understand your request. Generalities typically lead to confusion and unnecessary backs and forths.

## Etiquette rules

We expect that your requests be formal enough for a professional context. Please, follow the following etiquette rules:

- Write your request in either formal English or formal Spanish.
- Start your message with a formal salutation like “Dear lecturer”, “Dear Rafael”, “Dear Prof. Müller”, “Good morning, Patricia”, “Hope this finds you well, Inma”, or the like.
- Conclude your message with a formal closing sentence like “Regards”, “Looking forward to hearing from you”, “Thanks in advance”, or “Have a nice day”.
- Make sure that your text doesn’t include any emphasisers, including fancy fonts, font styles, emoticons, uppercase words, exclamation marks, and the like.
- Use a factual style of writing. Avoid humour, personal assessments, generality expressions like “everyone knows”, and the like.
- Don’t send workspaces, projects, databases, Astah models, and the like. If you need to attach a document, PDF is the preferred format. Make sure that your attachments are reasonably sized: a couple of MiB is OK, but 10 MiB is not OK.
- Don’t use patterned backgrounds or colourful templates. Black ink on a white background is great.
- If you have to reply to a message, please, quote the passages to which you refer in a proper context.
- Proofread your messages with the help of a colleague.
- Spell check and grammar check your messages with the help of an automatic spell-checker or grammar checker, respectively.

## Your questions

Use the following template to make your questions:

- Question:
  - Please, state your question in simple terms. The easier to read your question, the easier to understand your problem.
- Context:
  - Provide the context required to understand your question, e.g., the slide, the problem, the document, the requirement, or whatever it refers to. Do not hesitate to attach the documents that you require to provide enough details.
- Alternative 1:
  - Explanation:
    - Explain the first alternative that you propose.
  - Pros:
    - Analyse the pros of your alternative and make it explicit why you think that they are good.
  - Cons:

- Analyse the cons of your alternative and make it explicit the problems that you have found.
- Alternative 2:
  - Explanation:
    - Explain the second alternative that you propose. Just one alternative is not generally enough. At least two alternatives per question are necessary. If you have many more alternatives, please, make a point of filtering the simplest ones out.
  - Pros:
    - Analyse the pros of your alternative and make it explicit why you think that they are good.
  - Cons:
    - Analyse the cons of your alternative and make it explicit the problems that you've found.
- Proposed solution:
  - Select an alternative and assess it globally.

## Sample acceptable requests

The following are sample acceptable requests. They all are based on actual requests that our students have made, but they are anonymised.

### An organisational question

This is a typical organisational question. Please, note that the students are not asking for a solution: they have tried a solution, but they have not succeeded and they are then presenting a solution that requires an approval by a lecturer. Note that they are contacting the lecturer in Spanish, which is not a problem.

#### **[D&T] Sobre la formación de grupos**

*Estimado profesor:*

*Soy Arturo García y formo el grupo 123 con María Gómez. Por favor, le ruego que considere la pregunta que le planteamos a continuación y nos dé su parecer sobre cuál es la forma más adecuada de proceder.*

*Gracias por adelantado. Arturo.*

#### **Contexto:**

*- Queremos formar un grupo de al menos cuatro personas para repartir mejor la carga de trabajo de la asignatura, pero no conocemos a ningún otro estudiante.*

- Hemos revisado el material de la asignatura y no hemos encontrado ninguna información al respecto. En el syllabus simplemente se indica que los estudiantes deben formar grupos de trabajo, nada más.

**Pregunta:**

*¿Cómo podemos encontrar otros estudiantes?*

**Alternativa 1:**

*Explicación:*

- Poner una noticia en Enseñanza Virtual.

*Pros:*

- Es una alternativa muy simple y rápida de llegar a todos los estudiantes de la asignatura.

*Cons:*

- El mensaje puede pasar desapercibido a los estudiantes interesados dado que todos estamos en muchas asignaturas y en estos primeros días estamos recibiendo muchos mensajes.

- La hemos ensayado y, por desgracia, no hemos recibido respuesta. (Esto es lo que en parte nos motiva a ponernos en contacto con Usted.)

**Alternativa 2:**

*Explicación:*

- Presentarnos en clase y tomar nota de los estudiantes que se interesen para poder entrevistarnos después con ellos.

*Pros:*

- Es una alternativa simple.

- El mensaje llega a los estudiantes de nuestro grupo, con los que entendemos que puede haber más posibilidades.

- Nuestra necesidad no pasará desapercibida para los demás estudiantes de clase.

**Cons:**

- Necesitamos al menos un minuto al comienzo de la clase para poder salir a la tarima y comentar nuestro problema.
- Si todos los estudiantes lo hacen, entonces nos comemos la clase con este tema... pero no creemos que esto vaya a ser un problema grave realmente.

**Solución propuesta:**

Creemos que la alternativa 2 puede ser adecuada en este momento. Si muchos estudiantes optan por la misma, entonces se podría perder mucho tiempo, pero, honestamente, no creemos que eso vaya a ocurrir puesto que nuestra experiencia es que a los demás estudiantes les cuesta mucho trabajo presentarse en público. Así que creemos que puede ser una buena solución para nuestro caso particular. (Necesitamos que nos conceda el tiempo al comienzo de la clase pues es cuando llegan casi todos los estudiantes.)

#### **A procedural question**

This is a procedural question: the students do not know how to proceed because they wish to do something for which there is not a standard procedure. Please, note that they analyse a couple of alternatives and that they make a decision that requires a lecturer to assess it. The message is written in English, which we strongly encourage.

#### **[D&T] On documenting changes**

Hope this message finds you well. My team and I have a doubt regarding the next deliverable. Please, find further details below. Thanks. Laura.

**Question:**

How should we document the changes to our conceptual/domain model? How are these changes typically documented within a professional context?

**Context:**

The model that we produced in deliverable D03 is OK. However, we're now working on deliverable D05 and we have realised that it has some problems regarding displaying shopping carts (Requirement 11.2). We have gone through the lecture notes and document "On your deliverables", but we haven't found any tips.

**Alternative 1:**

*Explanation:*

*Write a report in which we explain the changes and justify them. Add a "zeroth item" in which we deliver our report.*

*Pros:*

- It's very easy to implement.*

*Cons:*

- It may be difficult for our lecturers to find and assess the changes.*
- It includes a folder that is not expected by our lecturers.*

**Alternative 2:**

*Explanation:*

*Document the changes in the conceptual/domain model that we have to deliver. We'll use green notes, for instance, to make sure that the comments are not mistaken for user-defined constraints.*

*Pros:*

- Very easy to implement.*
- Very easy to find the changes.*
- Doesn't contradict the rules in document "On your deliverables".*

*Cons:*

- We can't think of any cons.*

**Proposed solution:**

*We think that the best choice is Alternative 2 since we can't foresee any cons, but we need help because we don't know if this is the usual way to deal with this problem in a professional context.*

## A technical problem

This message is about a technical problem, which are very common in practice. Note that the students do not ask for a solution; they have tried several alternatives and they have drawn a conclusion. The lecturer is requested to assess it.

### [D&T] Problema al popular la BD

*Estimado Profesor:*

*Nos ponemos en contacto con Ud. para solicitarle feedback en relación a un problema a la hora de introducir información con la utilidad "PopulateDatabase".*

*Muchas gracias de antemano. Juan*

#### **Cuestión:**

*¿Qué podríamos hacer para resolver un error a la hora de popular la base de datos que no se arregla cambiando de orden los objetos implicados?*

#### **Contexto:**

*Con lo que hemos entendido del requisito de información 3.4, la multiplicidad que proponemos entre Consumer y ShoppingCart es 0..1 <--> 0..1 (ver adjunto). Hemos escrito los objetos implicados en un orden y en el contrario, pero no se soluciona el problema. De acuerdo con el "Warning" que hay en la página 67 del tema 3, podría ser que esto fuera uno de los casos en el que no se resuelve cambiando el orden.*

#### **Alternativa 1:**

*Explicación:*

*Quitar la navegabilidad hacia Consumer, como se ve en el PDF adjunto.*

*Pros:*

- Resuelve el problema, puesto que la base de datos se genera y popula bien.*
- Además creemos que la navegabilidad entre "ShoppingCart" y "Consumer" no es necesaria.*

*Contras:*

- Hay que imponer una restricción conceptual de navegabilidad en el modelo que no se deriva de los requisitos del cliente.*



### **Alternativa 2:**

#### *Explicación:*

*Utilizar una agregación entre "Consumer" y "ShoppingCart".*

#### *Pros:*

*- La solución 2 también resuelve el problema, puesto que la base de datos se genera y popula como esperamos.*

#### *Contras:*

*- No tiene sentido conceptualmente hablando, ya que viene a mostrar en el modelo que un Consumer es una "agregación" de "ShoppingCarts"... y un consumidor es una persona, existe aunque no tenga ningún carrito de la compra.*

#### **Solución propuesta:**

*Dejar el modelo conceptual como estaba originalmente y en el modelo de dominio modelarlo (UML) y mapearlo (Java) como si fuera una agregación. Indicaríamos que se trata de un work around.*

## **Sample unacceptable requests**

The following are sample unacceptable requests. They all are based on actual requests that our students have made, but they are anonymised.

### **Don't expect any replies**

The following message shall be ignored without any replies. It's far too informal.

*Hola!! QUe día nos pds attender xa 1 tutoría? Yo pd mañana n l descanso d medio dia. Aaaadios Kike (y gracias! :P :) )*

The following message shall also be ignored. It doesn't provide a context, any alternatives, any pros or cons; the student is just asking the lecturer to fix his problems.

#### *Estimada Profesora:*

*¿Cómo se rellena la base de datos? Estoy ejecutando el "PopulateDatabase.xml" y me da error.*

*Mario*

## Global assessments

The following message requests a global assessment. You can assess your work yourself: just take into account the information in the theory lectures, the instructions in document “On your deliverables”, the check list in the statements that describes the deliverables, and your custom check lists. Your professor is not the person in charge of quality assurance in your team.

*Estimado Profesor:*

*Le adjunto un modelo conceptual para que me lo revise, por favor. Espero sus comentarios para poder seguir trabajando.*

*Pili*

## Not enough details

The following message doesn't provide enough details, it's too shallow, no actual alternatives are presented.

*Profesor, le adjunto mi petición de tutoría.*

*Gracias. Manu*

### **Question:**

*- Al poblar la base de datos, nos hemos encontrado con el problema de que al realizar la referencia entre Consumer y ShoppingCart nos aparecía una excepción.*

### **Context:**

*- Mirar modelo adjunto.*

### **Alternative 1:**

#### *Explanation:*

*Quitar la navegabilidad.*

#### *Pros:*

*- Resuelve el problema.*

#### *Cons:*

*- Ninguno.*

### **Alternative 2:**

*Explanation:*

*Utilizar una agregación.*

*Pros:*

*- Resuelve el problema*

*Cons:*

*- Ninguno.*

**Proposed solution:**

*Quitar la navegabilidad.*