

A photograph of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, leaning over a desk to help a young boy with his homework. The boy is wearing a plaid shirt and is looking at a spiral notebook. The man is pointing at the notebook. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

figtree.

experts in education

# Meet The Team



**Ariana Azad**  
Founder

An experienced solicitor and long-term mentor, Ariana founded Figtree Learning in 2017 with a vision to bring the best out in every student. She is responsible for new business, overseeing the smooth running of the company and is also Figtree's safeguarding lead.



**Lizzie Dixey**  
Operations Manager

With a background in the fast-paced world of advertising, Lizzie keeps Figtree's day-to-day operations on track. She is your first port of call for any questions or concerns – be that client queries, TutorCruncher support or finances.



**Misa Zahar**  
Strategy Director

Misa draws on her commercial and consultancy background to shape Figtree's wider strategy and ensure best practices are met. She oversees our tutor interviewing process and is also Figtree's resident university application expert.



**Camilla Gordon-Finlayson**  
Operations Executive

Camilla has over 17 years of administrative and marketing and experience. Having worked in the Registrar's office of the Dragon School, Camilla brings in-depth experience in the private education sector and ensures that matters relating to our school consultancy and relocation clients run smoothly.

# First Steps



## Becoming a Figtree tutor

Congratulations – you’ve succeeded in your interview and are on your way to becoming a fully-fledged Figtree tutor. You should have received a Figtree Welcome Email which will take you through the sign-up process, so now it's time to get to grips with TutorCruncher.

We will add you to the TutorCruncher system – and this will be your one-stop tutoring profile with Figtree Learning. You will need to set up a Stripe Payouts Account to be paid automatically upon settlement of an invoice by a client. Along with holding all the information we need to pitch your services to clients, you'll need to log all your hours here in order for you to be paid for the session. We will also send out available jobs via TutorCruncher Broadcasts, which land directly in your email inbox.

All of our tutors are required – by law – to have a full, UK Enhanced DBS check in place. If you don't have one already, we can arrange this for you. The check is run by a government-approved DBS service, and there is a £66 processing fee. We pay this for you upfront, and then invoice you for the fee once you have received your certificate. Once your certificate arrives in the post, please send us a scan / image via email, and upload a copy to your TutorCruncher profile.

Please ensure you add all the following information to your TutorCruncher profile so we can get started:



Stripe Payouts Account



Full, detailed biography, including:

- i) educational background with GCSE and A-level results, university degree, result and institution
- ii) specific teaching / tutoring experience and successes and
- iii) tutoring approach and relevant professional experience



Subjects you teach, and at which ages and levels



Contact details, including a mobile number



CV



Enhanced DBS check (if you already have one)

# Getting A Tutoring Job



## How we assign roles

When we have a potential role in mind, we'll send you the job details in one of the following ways: via TutorCruncher Broadcast or email, by WhatsApp, or a direct phone call. We'll share a brief overview of the client and student, dates and times, location and rate.

Jobs advertised via TutorCruncher Broadcast are allocated on suitability, and on a first-come, first-served basis. So if you're interested in a role, please get in touch with the team as soon as possible. If you do miss out, we'll keep a note of your interest and will endeavour to allocate you another appropriate role, when one becomes available.

**“While jobs are circulated across channels, with over 250 tutors on our books we’re relying on you to be proactive too.”**

If you have availability and you haven't heard from us – or seen anything suitable via Broadcasts – please let us know. We have over 250 tutors on our books so we're relying on you to be proactive.

Once you have confirmed your interest in a role, we will propose your profile to the client. And should they agree to go ahead, we will help you schedule the initial session.



# Scheduling The First Session



## The process at a glance

1

First, we will introduce you to the client. Please 'reply all' to this introduction email, saying you are pleased to meet the family, and looking forward to the first session. If the session is online, please include a link to this – the majority of our tutors use Zoom.

2

Where applicable, please ask the client if there is anything in particular they would like you to prepare for this initial session. Take this opportunity to find out about exam boards and any specific topics they would like to cover.

3

We work closely with the family to confirm all the logistics you'll need to set up the first session. You'll receive a placement confirmation in advance, which will include the address, phone number, name and details of the student, as well as their school, and any other practical information you may need to get started.

4

Most Figtree clients like to have a regular slot, which we will confirm with you in advance.

5

After you have delivered your first session, please report back to Figtree within 24 hours, to let us know how it went, and if ongoing sessions were confirmed.

6

We strongly suggest that you log your hours accurately and promptly on TutorCruncher on the day of tuition after each session (you will be prompted to 'raise an invoice' once you have logged the session). This will help ensure client invoices are sent and paid promptly. Once the client has settled their invoice, funds will automatically be transferred to your Stripe Payouts Account. Please note, this can take three days to complete. If the initial session was arranged as a 50% off trial session, please log it as 30 minutes.



# The First Session

## Key points to remember

- Always remain polite and attentive. If your client asks you a question you cannot answer, please advise that you will check with the Figtree office and come back to them.
- If you smoke, or are planning on cycling to a client's home, please make sure you freshen up before you arrive – it's imperative to present a professional, pleasant appearance at all times.
- If at any time you feel unable to meet the needs of your student during a session, please talk to the parent or guardian to explain your concerns and contact Figtree to discuss.

## How to prepare

Figtree will provide you with as much information about the tutee as possible in advance, most notably the age and year group, school, subject and examination board, if relevant. The [Figtree Forum Resources Page \(accessed via Tutorcruncher\)](#) includes many independent school entrance exam papers that you are welcome to use. These, and GCSE and A-level papers, are often readily available online. If you require any guidance, please ask on the Figtree Forum or email the team.

Sometimes we need to offer clients a 50% discount on their first session. If this is the case, we will let you know in advance and ask you to log 30 minutes for the initial session.

We don't always have a complete picture of the student. Please use the first session to connect with the family and your tutee, find out more about their needs and expectations, and incorporate some actual tuition. You should look on this as a discovery, planning and tuition session.



# What You Should Cover



## The importance of a good first impression

The first session is your chance to introduce yourself to the tutee and their family, make a good impression and establish expectations. Setting the right tone will help break down any barriers so that the student feels comfortable to share their difficulties honestly.

For older students, aim to spend a large part of the lesson alone with them, to identify their objectives without parental bias. If you are working with a younger student, you will need to balance time spent with the parents or guardians to build as full a picture as possible.

An hour isn't long to familiarise yourself with your tutee, their learning needs and to conduct a short assessment – so be selective with the questions you ask. The aim is to identify their learning style preferences, what works for them at school, and the studying activities they find most helpful.

Often, students won't have identified what works best for them, so it's your job to unpick this. Similarly, when trying to establish blockers, one useful question that can help you to distinguish whether they struggle with knowledge retention or understanding is:

“When you are being taught a new concept in school, do you understand it at the time but struggle with homework and end-of-term tests – or do you struggle to understand it at the time?”

**“From learning expectations to current level, there's a lot to cover in your first session, so preparation is key.”**

By the end of the session, you should have a clear list covering the student's current standard, where they aspire to be and the obstacles they perceive to be in their way. This will allow you to address their needs and concerns directly, giving them greater satisfaction throughout their time with you.





# What You Should Cover

## Assessing the student's level

Come prepared with a variety of materials to test knowledge, exam technique and the ability to write coherently, as well as speed and timing.

It's important to assess the student's ability to work independently, to observe how they respond to feedback and to worksheets with a range of difficulty levels. This will not only determine their current knowledge but also demonstrate how effectively they apply knowledge to an unfamiliar question. This is a common weakness in otherwise bright students, and may highlight an area of focus for ongoing tuition.

## Expectation management

The parents may ask for a follow-up chat after your first session. If you're unable to speak to them at the time, please arrange a telephone conversation within 24 hours of the session. The family may be seeking tuition following poor academic performance or in advance of exams; to forge long-term academic relationships, you need to obtain tangible expectations from the get-go. For younger children undertaking general tuition, you will need to understand the parents' expectations for each subject, and identify core areas of focus that you can measure progress against.

**"The key is to find the balance between managing expectations and making what seems impossible, possible."**



# Post-session Planning



## Sharing how it went

After your first session, you should summarise your plans for the future in a comprehensive report, and submit this on TutorCruncher when you log and invoice the lesson. Please also let the team know directly via email or WhatsApp, how the lesson went and if ongoing sessions have been agreed. We can then follow up with the client effectively.

The TutorCruncher report should thoroughly detail the purpose of tuition, and what needs it will meet. Use your expertise and experience to set out priorities and, most importantly, how you will achieve them. Many parents will ask you to provide a timeline in which you will achieve their goals. This is a reasonable request, but you may need to manage their expectations.

**“Emphasise that any indicative timelines are only estimates and in no way guarantee a pass or a specific result.”**

For the following sessions, we suggest that you fill in the TutorCruncher report directly after each session in enough detail to give parents an understanding of the progress of their child. If you have any concerns with the pace of learning or the likelihood of success for an exam, please let the Figtree team know as soon as you can.

After the first session with a new client, please email the Figtree team member who arranged it to let them know how it went, and what has been agreed with the client regarding ongoing sessions. This is really important as it allows us to follow up swiftly with the client.



# The Figtree Way



## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance at Figtree. Please do not share details of your clients or students with any third party, including other clients or schools.

Occasionally you may need to contact schools or other institutions to gather information that will help you tailor your sessions to your client's needs. Unless you have written permission from a client to do so, please do not refer to a student or family by name.



## Client communication

Effective, responsive and clear communication is at the heart of our approach. Please take the time to spellcheck and proofread everything you write – from WhatsApp messages and emails to academic reports and feedback. While we are a warm and personable agency, our tone is always professional too.

You should remain courteous, respectful and polite in every engagement. And we expect the same from our families – so do get in touch with the Figtree team should you ever feel this is not the case.



## Tutor absence

If you need to miss a planned tutoring session, please make sure you rearrange an alternative session instead.

If you are away for an extended period, please offer the client the option of a replacement tutor who can cover in your absence, explaining that there would be a full handover and that the Figtree team would ensure a suitable alternative.

It takes a lot of time and energy to set up sessions, so please only cancel if absolutely necessary, in an emergency or in the case of illness. This is particularly important for the first session with a new client. Please always try to give at least 24 hours notice, and always offer clients two or three potential options to reschedule.

**“Effective, responsive and clear communication is at the heart of our approach”**

# The Figtree Way



## Client cancellations

If a client cancels with less than 24 hour's notice, then it is at the tutor's discretion as to how they would like to proceed. The Figtree advice is to consider each circumstance individually. So, if the client has given fair warning and they have encountered a situation that was unavoidable, then the tutor would probably not want to charge to show their understanding and flexibility. The tutor could offer to re-schedule a session as an alternative or simply consider it cancelled at no cost. However, if the client/student cancels regularly with little to no warning, then the tutor should let the client know that they would be incurring the full hours' fee for sessions not cancelled within the 24 hour notice period - clients have all been made aware of this cancellation policy by Figtree.



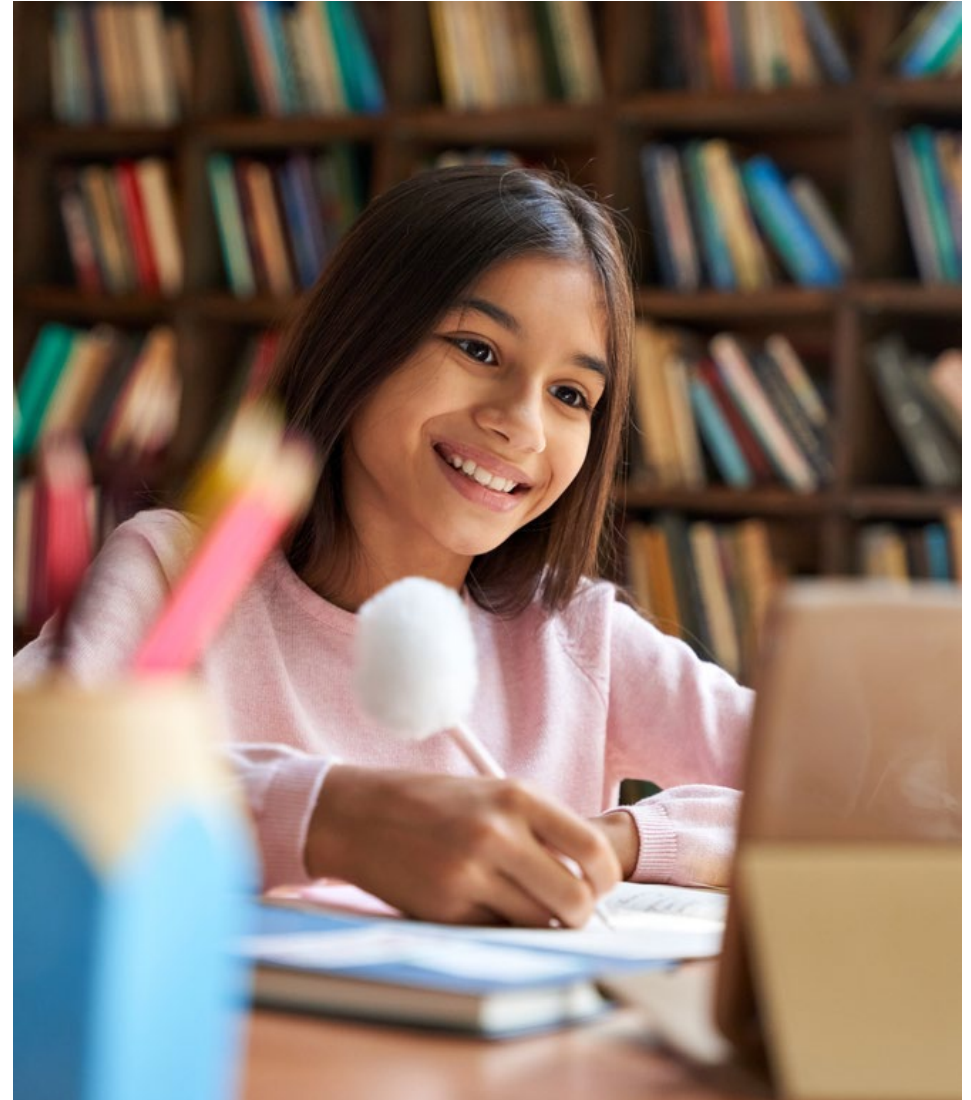
## Safeguarding

If you have any concerns regarding child welfare, please contact Ariana who is our safeguarding representative on [ariana@figtreelearning.com](mailto:ariana@figtreelearning.com).



## Referrals

Often clients are so pleased with the service they are receiving from their tutor and Figtree, they like to refer us on to friends, family or colleagues. If a client approaches you about this, please do direct them to us and we will take care of everything.



# A Final Reminder...



Always remain polite and attentive. If your client asks you a question you cannot answer, please advise that you will check with the Figtree office and come back to them.



If you smoke, or are planning on cycling to a client's home, please make sure you freshen up before you arrive – it's imperative to present a professional, pleasant appearance at all times.



If at any time you feel unable to meet the needs of your student during a session, please talk to the parent or guardian to explain your concerns and contact Figtree to discuss.



Thank you for being part of our collaborative, supportive community. We hope you will find working with Figtree a fun and fulfilling experience. Please do let us know if you have any questions on the points covered in this handbook, or need any further support over your time with us.

**The Figtree team**