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## Tutors cash in on business end

EDUCATION

David Wilson

Private tutors are earning up to \$100 an hour for tutoring sessions in the two-month run-up to the October VCE exams, according to the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA), the umbrella body covering 75,000 tutors and most of the country's tutoring organisations.

The ATA says while trained teachers earn on average \$50 an hour tutoring year 11 and 12 students in various levels of English and maths at private centres, highly experienced full-time professional teachers can earn \$100 an hour providing at-home tutoring for students of wealthy parents. University students who provide a "third tier" of tutoring are paid between \$15 and \$25 an hour and many of them work online.

The president of the ATA and managing director of private tutoring company Tutoring for Excellence, Chris Druett (pictured), says August, September and early October are peak months for tutoring VCE subjects, with business currently "quite brisk" and companies "always looking out for good staff". "Tutoring companies are always looking for the right sort of people to become tutors," he says. "Many applicants for jobs are former, fully qualified teachers, many are graduates who have specific skill sets and many are students who normally have finished at least their second year with distinctions.

"Most tutors are employed on part-time or casual rates, very few tutors are employed full-time. Full-time professional teachers, who tutor outside of hours, usually work about three or four hours a week but they can earn the top money."

But would-be tutors are painstakingly assessed before they are employed and start receiving wages, Druett notes.

"As an example, Tutoring for Excellence screens out 60 per cent of people when they first apply," he says. "We then phone the remaining 40 per cent to discuss their applications ... and we screen out 50 per cent of those people. Then we do face-to-face interviews.

"These interviews are incredibly important for two major reasons. We obviously have to find the best people who can communicate properly to assist students to get the best possible results in their examinations and we have to ensure those students' security.

"We look for people who are competent, confident, articulate and well-presented."

Druett says the better tutoring companies have their own mechanisms for screening and assessing potential staff.

"If you are going to put someone into a client's house with their children you have to be very sure about that person," he says. "Aspiring tutors are fully security-assessed in the interviews and then permission is sought from them to send their details to the police for a working-with-children check."

Druett says home, private centre and online tutoring is becoming increasingly popular for year 11 and 12 students.

"There is a ready market out there for experienced, high-grade tutors and we see it growing in the future," he says. "It's not a bad little earner for qualified people." --

DAVID WILSON

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#### CONSIDER TUTORING

■The tutoring season for year 11 and 12 VCE exams is in full swing, with highly qualified professional teachers charging up to \$100 an hour to tutor students at home in English and maths. But the average fee for hourly tuition from less-qualified teachers is \$50. University students who tutor online can earn between \$15 and \$25 an hour.

■Tutors either work for tutoring companies or privately advertise for work themselves. Anyone offering coaching or tutoring services has to get a police working-with-children check before they can begin to operate.

■Most tutorials are given between 3pm and 7pm during the week and selected hours during the weekend.

Mark Ellis

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