



# **OPPORTUTORING**

**Expanding the horizons  
of refugees and displaced  
people.**

Annual Report 2020

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Annual Report 2020

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## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

## Number of Tutors

▲ +77

120 tutors  
(2019: 43 tutors)

## Number of Students

▲ +23

37 students  
(2019: 14 students)

## Number of Hours Taught

▲ 150%

5,000 hours  
(2019: 2,000 hours)

## Number of Chapters

3

Montreal  
London  
Beijing

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 was an extremely exciting year for Opportutoring.

We reached the important milestone of having 100 members as part of our community. In light of this, and in efforts to maintain strong and consistent growth, we have decided that now is the perfect time to start documenting our progress and plans for the future. We hope that this will provide our members with an increased sense of involvement in the community and to ensure greater accountability and professionalism, without losing the familial spirit that makes being a member so special. This report is the first of what we hope will be many annual reports in Opportutoring's bright future!

Lara Andrews

Amber Rignell

Varun Vassanth

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O T L O N D O N

Eman Alali

Dilse Kaygisiz

Kenz-Ali Boubekour

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O T M O N T R E A L

Raniya Reja

Daniel Harrington

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O T B E I J I N G

## BACKGROUND

Opportutoring was set up back in 2015 at McGill University by a group of students who wanted to contribute in a meaningful way to the refugee crisis. They decided to provide English tutoring via video calls to two Syrian refugees who needed to take an English proficiency exam (TOEFL or IELTS) to apply to Concordia, an anglophone university in Montreal. They were at a school in Turkey on the Syrian border, directed by the Montreal-based Syrian Kids Foundation. After more than 6 months of online tutoring, both students passed the exam, and were accepted to Concordia in August 2016.

Following the success of the project in McGill, a growing network of students committed to furthering the impact of this project by setting up their own chapters at their respective institutions. It now has branches at McGill University, University College London, University of Waterloo and the Western Academy of Beijing, with members from the Montreal area, Beijing, and across the United Kingdom. Opportutoring will be looking to set up new chapters in other campuses and schools soon.

## GOVERNANCE

Opportutoring is a registered social not-for-profit organisation. [Corporation Name: 10778915 Canada Foundation, Corporation Number: 1077981-5]

Opportutoring is a student-led organisation, run entirely on a voluntary basis offering free educational support to refugees. The organisation has three branches: Montreal, London and Beijing, who meet on a quarterly basis to coordinate initiatives and ensure a cohesive approach.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Directors collaborate with members in determining growth strategy, forming partnerships and running initiatives to maximise impact.

Executive and Administrative team members handle recruitment, socials and independently-led initiatives. [See Volunteer-Led Initiatives pg. 8]

Community Managers and Team Liaisons provide an open communication channel between tutors and students, and gather insights for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

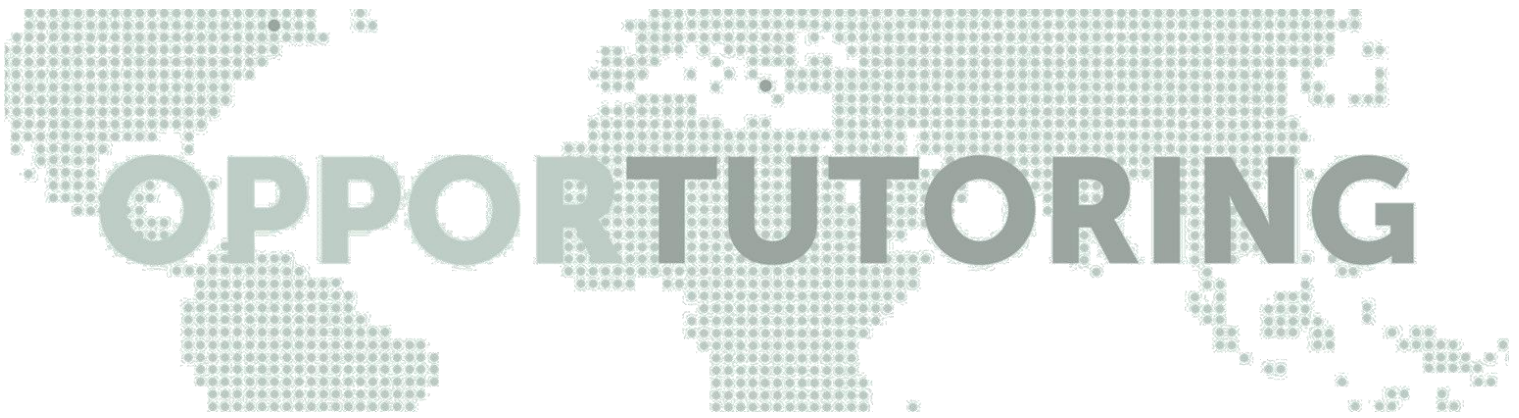
Tutors provide tailored one-to-one online English lessons to one student on a weekly basis, planning lessons with the support of their colleagues.

Students receive up to four hours of free English tutoring per week.

## PROGRAMME OF ACTION : 2020

With an increasing number of volunteers joining our organisation, Opportutoring maintains its commitment to cultural sensitivity and duty of care to all members.

In order to ensure a high level of quality in education service provision, our Executive and Administrative Teams have worked in developing our programme of action in 2020. This section highlights the key initiatives that have aided our rapid expansion in the past year.



### RECRUITMENT

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In order to ensure all of our tutors encompass the values of Opportutoring and to maintain a commitment to cultural sensitivity, we deliver a tailored induction session to all new joiners prior to their first lesson.

The session covers guidelines for tutors on how to approach initial interactions with their student so as to put them at ease from the very beginning and create a supportive environment for their learning process from day 1. It also includes tips and pointers on planning a lesson, finding resources and coordinating with fellow tutors for cohesion across lessons. The session is delivered by a member of the Executive or Administrative team, and at least one existing tutor attends the session to share their own advice and answer any further questions about the volunteering experience.

The content of the induction session is also summarised in a starter pack, distributed to volunteers so that they can refer back to it at any point.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Beyond helping refugees access better opportunities, Opportutoring also aims to foster dialogue and a deeper understanding of the refugee crisis. A strong community is crucial to achieving this by creating a space that facilitates the exchange of multiple perspectives.

Opportutoring has deepened its community of volunteers by organising regular socials in a variety of formats. The socials have enabled tutors across different teams to meet and discuss their own experience of tutoring and how it has led them to think about the refugee crisis. Alongside this, it is also a way for members to meet new people and make lasting friendships.

In 2020, we hosted dinners, trips to art exhibitions and in the wake of COVID-19, we have run online events including documentary viewings and academic discussions, alongside socially-distanced picnics!

In one particularly successful example, we ran an online social in which attendees were asked to watch '[Escape from Syria: Rania's Odyssey](#)', a short documentary available on YouTube detailing the experience of a refugee, Rania, carrying out the treacherous journey from Kobane, in Syria to Austria. The attendees were divided into groups of 5-6 people to discuss the content with a few open-ended prompts. This gave everyone a chance to participate and have insightful discussions. All groups then came together to share any interesting thoughts that had arisen within their breakout rooms. We have seen a huge shift in the culture of our membership through these socials, as our tutors engage more in the representations of refugees and surrounding discourses.



## VOLUNTEER-LED INITIATIVES

A key intention of the Opportutoring model is to empower young people to create positive social change and in doing so, create organic growth. In 2020, we had a number of fantastic initiatives launched by our members. The genesis of this very report stems from the suggestion of Manon J., an International Development student who recently joined the London Chapter as a tutor. This section outlines just a few of the many amazing things our volunteers have been up to.

### SIDNEY J.

Sidney has been a tutor with Opportutoring since November 2019. In the wake of COVID-19, having spoken to her student about the lack of medical relief provisions in conflict zones, Sidney set up a fundraiser with the intention of providing much needed medical supplies to those in the Idlib region of Syria. Her efforts alongside Dr Shajul Islam helped to raise over £1500 going towards ICU drugs, other medication and COVID-19 test-kits.



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### MÉLINÉE D.

Having been a tutor since April 2020, Mélinée has grown a strong friendship with her student and the rest of her team. After hearing about the difficult personal circumstances that her student and their family were going through, Mélinée launched a GoFundMe to help them make ends meet. When our tutors take their role further than just teaching English, it is great to see the positive tangible impact they can achieve.

### LYDIA K.

Lydia joined as a tutor in March 2020, quickly becoming a Team Liaison in the London Chapter. Having taken a TOEFL teaching course, Lydia has initiated the Skillshare Sessions to help tutors build their teaching skills. These sessions have become part of our regular scheduled programming and have really benefitted our tutors and brought together the community across our different chapters.

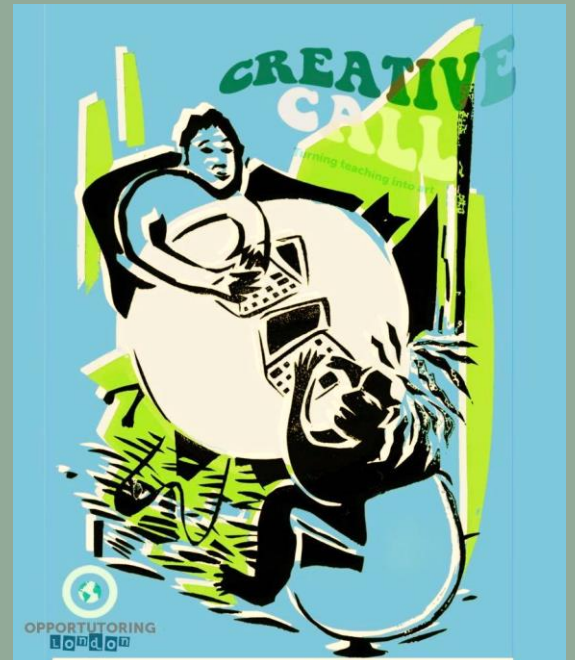


## JODIE C.

Part of the intention of building our community is to share knowledge and perspectives on social issues. Jodie, a member of Opportutoring since January 2020 started a Book Exchange for tutors in the London Chapter. This initiative saw each volunteer choose a book that caught their attention from the publishers 'Verso Books', and once they had finished reading it, pass it on to another member of the group. This became a lovely way of sharing interests and some really interesting perspectives on a variety of social issues. The book exchange is ongoing!

## ZOE A. & ANUSHKA G.

With the aim of increasing awareness about Opportutoring and its mission, Anoushka and Zoe decided to launch a creative call to encourage students and tutors to produce pieces inspired from their experience being a part of Opportutoring.



## LARA A. , LAURE M. & ZOE A.

To date, three of our volunteers have written some incredible pieces (linked below) derived from the exchanges they have had through tutoring and how this has changed their perspective and how they view other people.

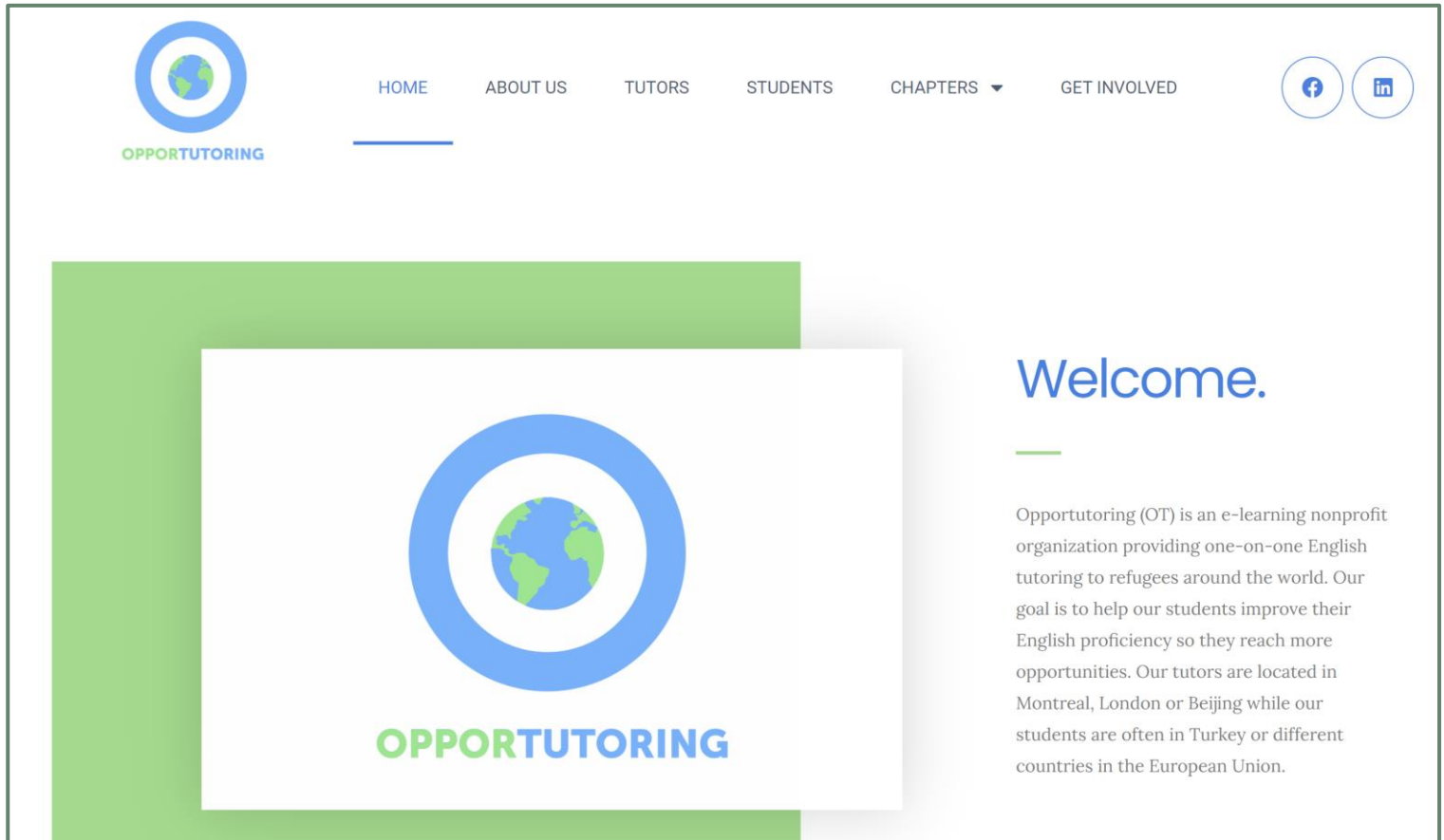
*"Humanising the refugee crisis: how tutoring a Syrian refugee has shifted my worldview"* -  
Lara Andrews

*"My Experience of Tutoring"* - Laure Mourgue D'Algue

*"Opportutoring: Not another English lesson"* - Zoe Andrews  
(not published to date)

## ONLINE PRESENCE

This year saw an update of our website to much positive feedback. We have now opened up the ability to apply directly as a tutor which will hopefully make it easier for people who are interested to get involved!



We are expanding our social media presence (linked below). OT Montreal has started a spotlight series for prospective tutors to get to know their Executive Team on Facebook.

OT London has started a creative call to encourage current members to contribute content, describing their experiences of being part of Opportutoring.



## TEACHING RESOURCES

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### SKILLSHARE SESSIONS

Opportutoring has started running “Skillshare” sessions every other month. These sessions are a chance for tutors of all levels of experience to come together and discuss aspects of tutoring, and ideas for how to improve in a friendly and supportive environment. We will generally start with a talk or presentation about one specific idea or aspect of teaching, followed by a general discussion where tutors can bring problems or questions (anonymously if they wish) for the group to discuss. So far, we have had sessions on lesson structures and planning help, and on giving useful feedback. Upcoming sessions for the year ahead include the students/tutor relationship, creative use of resources, preparing students for English exams, teaching grammar and more!

We have had some brilliant discussions involving a wide range of tutor knowledge and experience. We know time zones can make it difficult for everyone to attend, so each session will be scheduled at a different time, with the hope to make them accessible to our growing international tutor population. These sessions are open to members across the whole organisation.

### LESSON RESOURCES

The fact that Opportutoring doesn’t follow a set curriculum is one of its greatest strengths as it allows tutors to tailor their lessons to the ability of each student, alongside their interests and English learning goals (work, academia, communication/integration). However, this comes with the challenge of being able to deliver teaching content that students find valuable without our tutors feeling overwhelmed with such a task. 2020 saw the development of tools to aid lesson planning and we now have a fairly extensive set of resources for tutors to use at their disposal.

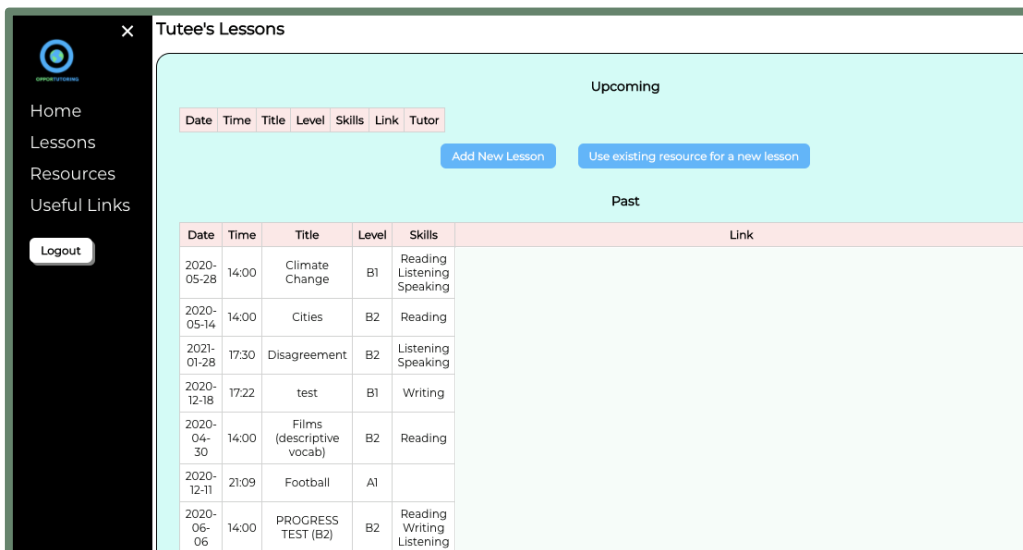
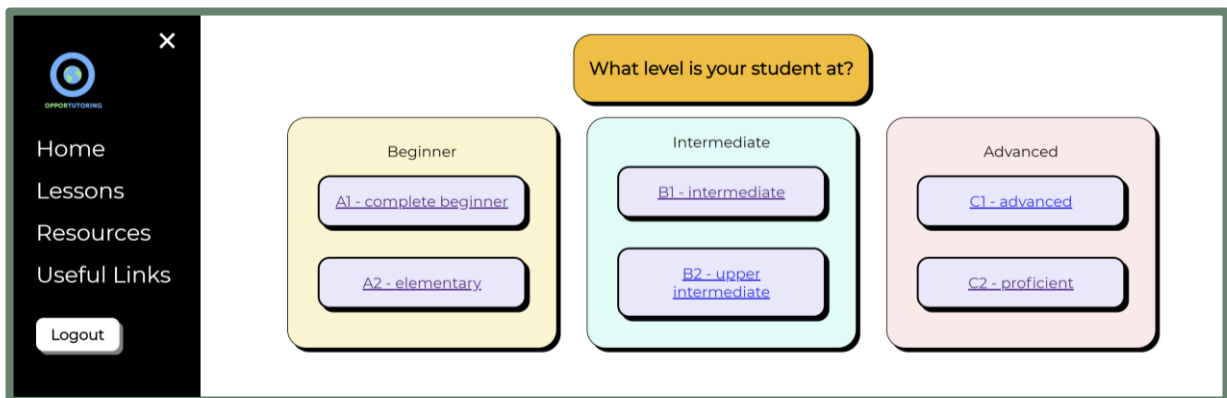
# TECH FOR BETTER

In September 2020, Opportutoring was selected to take part in the Founders and Coders 'Tech for Better' programme, with London Chapter Directors, Varun Vassanth and Amber Rignell working as Product Owners.



Over the course of one month, Opportutoring worked alongside a team of developers to design, build and test a new digital service which would allow tutors to create and share lesson plans. This platform was rolled out to two teams on a trial basis resulting in a feedback session one-month in. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and we are currently in the process of incorporating the suggestions that were made.

A huge thanks to our developers: Aishah Omar, Azizi Adeyemo, Jihyun Jang, and Lisa Cernilogar for all of their work in creating such a fantastic product!



## 2021 ROADMAP

### A GLOBAL VISION

Our long-term vision for Opportutoring is for it to exist as an international organisation enabling people of any background to engage with the refugee crisis. We hope that we will continue to facilitate language learning of refugees and expand the opportunities available to them. We strive to build a community of individuals who can come together to deepen their understanding of the refugee experience and counter harmful narratives that 'other' specific demographics or groups of people.

THE FOLLOWING ROADMAP FOR 2021 LAYS  
OUT OUR STRATEGY IN WORKING TOWARDS  
OUR GLOBAL VISION.

### EXPANSION

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Given how sustainable the Opportutoring model is, and how organically the organisation continues to grow, we hope to enable the setting up of new chapters in various locations across the globe.

We have been working hard to create a solid foundation for potential Chapter Founders to easily set up their own branches of the organisation. The end goal is to have a fully decentralised organisation, which contains the right checks and balances to ensure a proper level of service, but in which people from all over the world can join independently and start new teams, chapters and initiatives in line with our mission statement: expanding the horizons of refugees and displaced people.

## MONITORING & EVALUATION

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Over the course of 2021, we aim to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to evidence our impact. Articulating our outcomes will allow us to assess how effective our efforts are as well as highlight any areas that require improvement.

We will implement a new system comprising of monthly tests to track student progress to gather quantitative data, in addition to collecting qualitative data through regular tutor and student feedback forms. Additional time will also be set aside to learn more about monitoring and evaluation to see how we can best implement it throughout our organisation.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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We would like to understand the demographic of volunteers better and make sure that we are showing respect for all our employees and volunteers, valuing each individual's contribution, regardless of their age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership status, disability, nationality, race, religion or belief. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees and volunteers.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Targets:

- We hope to get a better understanding of the demographic makeup of our membership to help be better allies to marginalised communities, particularly with regards to representation of People of Colour.
- We will make it commonplace for all communication to include pronouns that best reflect who we are and encourage our members to do the same if they feel comfortable.
- We would like to improve the inclusion of the communities and people the organisation serves in decision making and future growth.
- Men are statistically less likely to volunteer, and this is reflected in Opportutoring's volunteers. Less than 10% of Opportutoring's volunteers identify as male. We want to increase this number within the following year.

## ANNUAL TIMELINE [LONDON]

As we continue to grow, we are making some structural changes to provide more guidance and clarity to our members, partners and those interested in working with Opportutoring London. Below is an explanation of our revamped system and there is a calendar on the following page to clearly display our annual timeline.

The introduction of check-ins come from a suggestion made by Kamal, a student, and Kate W., a tutor; both of whom highlighted the importance of managing expectations and maintaining motivation by establishing a set time to regroup and review progress.

### Recruitment Rounds

Spread the word! During these periods, the Executive or Administrative team members will conduct interviews of prospective tutors and will commence onboarding of new teams.

### Tutor Planning Week

In the last week of every second month (February, April, June, August, October, and December), tutors will take a week off from lessons and instead meet with the other tutors in their team. This bimonthly planning week will be used to catch up, assess the progress of the team's student and plan the upcoming two months.

### Check-ins

Once every four months (April, August, and December), feedback forms will be sent to tutors and students. Subsequently, Team Liaisons will "check-in" to discuss the feedback and reflect upon any potential areas for improvement. These are scheduled to take place during Tutor Planning Weeks and are the Opportutoring equivalent to University Terms. This will be used to determine whether students require a change in pace or whether it is the right time for them to move on from Opportutoring.

### Newsletter

Every four months, we intend to update our members on the progress of Opportutoring's activities. We hope that our members will contribute to the newsletter with any content they wish to share.



# CALENDAR [LONDON]

## JANUARY

Annual Report  
Recruitment Round 1  
Skillshare 1

## FEBRUARY

Tutor Planning Week 1  
Social 1

## MARCH

Mini Recruitment Drive  
Skillshare 2

## APRIL

Check-in 1  
Tutor Planning Week 2  
Social 2

## MAY

Skillshare 3

## JUNE

Recruitment Round 2  
Tutor Planning Week 3  
Social 3

## JULY

Skillshare Session 4

## AUGUST

Check-in 2  
Tutor Planning Week 4  
Social 4

## SEPTEMBER

Skillshare Session 5

## OCTOBER

Recruitment Round 3  
Tutor Planning Week 5  
Social 5

## NOVEMBER

Skillshare Session 6

## DECEMBER

Check-in 3  
Tutor Planning Week 6  
Social 6

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