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# Taking Advantage of Office Hours

## What are office hours?

Office hours are one of the most beneficial yet underused resources on campus. Office hours are a set time where professors and teaching assistants are available to students in their offices to answer questions or discuss course content.



## What are the benefits of office hours?

### 1. One-on-one help understanding your course content

It can be nerve-racking asking questions in a classroom of dozens or hundreds of students. Luckily, a professor's office hours give you the opportunity to have all of your questions addressed outside of the lecture hall.

### 2. Assistance preparing for assignments, tests, and exams

If you need help with an assignment or exam prep, a professor will gladly advise you during office hours. You can discuss the assignment in much more detail than in a classroom setting.

### 3. Gain study tips catered to the course

Most likely your professor will have taught this class for a while, so they will have picked up some useful study tips over the years. They may even have tricks to memorize course content that they can share with you!

### 4. Deadline extensions and further assistance

Most professors understand that you can be overwhelmed with many assignments, and if you approach them respectfully, they can help you succeed. This may be through assignment deadline extensions, or adjusting the method in which you can earn your participation grades.

### 5. Create a connection with the professor

By attending a professor's office hours, you begin to create a more personal relationship with your professor. This will be useful in the future when you need a reference for grad school or future employment. A professor will be much more willing to be your reference if you've developed a relationship with them in the past.

## 6. Possible opportunity for future research positions

Many professors conduct research as well, and may be looking for research assistants. If you've attended their office hours regularly, you may be the person they think of for the role.

## 7. Career advice

If you're having difficulty deciding on a future career, or you want to learn more about what you can do with your degree, your professor will have suggestions, as they have plenty of experience in the field.

## 8. Motivation to succeed

It becomes harder to slack off after you've been to your professor's office hours. Your professor will be more invested in your education as you've shown initiative, and this may mean that you get called on in class for participation. So, you'll want to be prepared.

# How to prepare for office hours

## 1. Review the syllabus

At the beginning of the course, your professor will provide you with a syllabus that includes assignment deadlines, contact information, and more. Make sure you review your syllabus first before seeing your professor to make sure the information you need isn't already available there.

## 2. Write down your questions in advance

Speaking to a professor can be intimidating, especially if you haven't met them before. If you write down the questions and talking points you want the professor to address beforehand, then you'll get all of the information you need without forgetting something.

## 3. Bring course resources

You should prepare for an office hour like you would a lecture. If you have questions about a certain part in your textbook, then bring your textbook so you can reference it. Have notes and comments flagged beforehand.



# What to do during office hours

## 1. Introduce yourself

Most likely, your first-year class is rather large, so your professor won't immediately know your name. Introducing yourself breaks the ice and allows the professor to get to know you better.

## 2. Discuss course content

Professors are very busy and they appreciate when you come to their office hours with your questions prepared and ready to discuss the course content. It helps you benefit the most from the time that they have.

## 3. Take notes

Write down what you discuss with your professor. This ensures that you won't forget any key points or ideas that you spoke about.

## I went to my professor's office hours — now what?

### 1. Create a plan of action

With the discussion still fresh in your mind, create a plan of action. This might mean creating a schedule to organize your work, or a roadmap to how you'll begin an assignment.

### 2. Send a follow up email

Every professor loves to know that they made a difference. By sending a follow-up email thanking them for their help and reiterating what you discussed, you're building a positive relationship with your professor.

### 3. Attend more office hours

Attend as many office hours as you like. The more you attend, the more prepared you'll feel in your course.



## What should I do if office hours conflict with my schedule?

Sometimes, your professor's office hours will conflict with your schedule. Don't worry — you can still meet with your professor! Simply approach your professor after class or send a respectful email and ask to meet at a time that works for both of you. You could also meet with the course's teaching assistant, if one is available. They have the same knowledge of the course as your professor, but they may have more availability.

Overall, office hours are an incredible resource for helping you to succeed in your education. You should take advantage of them while you have the chance!

