



Attending Office Hours Tip Sheet

Instructions

This tip sheet is intended to prepare students to participate in office hours with professors and teaching assistants. Consider preparing for office hours by using some of the suggestions below, whatever is most helpful and relevant to your context. These suggestions were developed in collaboration with the Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning, Student Success Centre, and educators from Arts, Social Work, Sciences, Law, and Nursing.

What are office hours?

Office hours are dedicated blocks of time that occur by appointment or at pre-scheduled times throughout the term. Office hours are offered by teaching assistants and professors and are a great resource for students to connect with the teaching team outside of class. Most importantly, office hours are for students.

Why should you go to office hours?

Office hours can be a great opportunity for students to connect with members of the teaching team. Some possible discussion topics include:

- Clarification on course concepts.
- Seeking feedback on an assignment.
- Checking understanding of an activity.
- Talking about a grade received.
- Reviewing a thesis statement draft.

How to access office hours

The schedule for office hours is generally included on the course syllabus along with other course details, such as the class schedule and the professor's contact information.

Set schedule

If office hours have been pre-scheduled, there will be a statement such as "Office hours are held on Thursdays at 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. in room (location) or on Zoom (link)." Consider this to be a standing block of time for all students, so other students may be present during this period. If you would prefer to meet with the professor one-on-one, you will need to contact them directly and ask for an appointment.

By appointment

If office hours are by appointment, that means you need to contact the professor to schedule a time to meet. It may be helpful to ask who will be offering office hours, such as a teaching assistant, so that you contact the right person to schedule a time.

Before you go to office hours

- Have you checked to see if you need to schedule an appointment for office hours?
- Have you set up a time to meet?
- Will you be going by yourself or with a group?
- Have you read the course outline thoroughly?
- Is the answer to your question or issue in the course outline?
- If yes and you are still unclear about the answer, what do you need to know from the professor?
- Has the question been asked or answered in D2L?
- Have you talked with your peers or done as much work as possible on your own to answer your questions?
- What do you hope to learn from going to office hours?

Make the most of office hours

- Write down your questions with as much detail as possible, such as which parts of the assignment are unclear to you and what you have done independently to get clarification.
- Create a plan for the meeting with some strategies about what you plan to do to address the questions or issues that you have.
- Be clear about what you need.
- Don't say you want to review the exam if you want to discuss your grade.
- If you are there to chat, that's okay, but make it clear from the beginning so that the professor knows what you are expecting.
- Send an email to the professor with your questions in advance.
- Take notes during the meeting.

After office hours

- Were all your questions answered? If not, follow up with an email to request another meeting or get clarification via email.
- Review your notes and start working on the tasks you identified.
- Follow up with the professor or teaching assistant to confirm your take-aways from the meeting, next steps, or ask clarifying questions.
- Share what you learned with your peers as appropriate.