



Getting the Most Out of Office Hours

Office hours are useful learning opportunities, in which you engage in personalized, one-on-one meetings with your professors outside of regular class time. Since visiting your professors can be intimidating, we're offering some tips so you feel confident about starting the conversation.

What are the benefits?

Office hours benefit you and your professor because they give you a more comfortable platform to share what's on your mind about lectures, discussions, readings, and assignments.

1. You can use office hours **for answers to any outstanding questions from class**. Since it's just between you and your professor, you have more time and space to describe your confusions and seek help on your particular questions or concerns.
2. While office hours are useful for discussing course material, you can also use them **for alternative conversation** on topics such as your interests, goals, and values. By explaining, say, your future goal of business graduate school, you can consult your economics professor to hear their advice. Conversation with all sorts of topics can develop a meaningful relationship between you two that can help you inside and outside of class.
3. Outside of helping you, you can attend office hours **to benefit your professor** too. Part of their job involves obtaining research and knowledge, so they'd love to hear your insights.

How do you schedule a visit?

Most professors include their office hour times and dates at a noticeable spot on the syllabus, which you receive in the first week of class through a paper or online format.

If you have a conflict with those times, you can email or ask your professor in class to schedule an outside appointment.



What should you bring?

For quality, organized conversation during office hours, you should come prepared.

- 1) As you read your assignments or review class notes, you may have **questions** or uncertain answers to something you're struggling with that you want to ask your professor. For example, you may have an idea about what to argue in an essay but need clarification about the assignment prompt, which you can discuss with your professor.
- 2) To spark a fruitful conversation during your session, we recommend accompanying your questions with **attempted answers**. Just like in a class discussion, your professor in office hours wants to see you actively thinking about the material. Since office hours don't have a direct relationship with your grade, you won't receive penalties for any answers you attempt.
- 3) If you don't need help, you can share **comments** with your professor. These comments can include outside material you ran into that pertains to the class, how the class relates to your personal experiences, and another lens that challenges the class's content.

In your Political Science 1 class, for instance, you can share a news article relevant to your healthcare class discussions, which can further show your professor how engaged and interested you are.

What should you do after you visit?

To continue the conversations from office hours, you can visit office hours again. For example, if you finished an essay outline with help from the first office hours visit, you can consult your professor again on another session for your rough draft.

But as a caution, don't simply rely on these sessions for answers; instead, see your professor as a collaborator who can inspire you to actively learn the material.

