

## How to Approach Office Hours

Attending office hours is an essential part of academic success. Going early in the quarter, and often, will help you understand material, establish a relationship with your professor, and can even help you meet classmates to form study groups.

**Step 1:** Find out when each of your professors and TAs offer office hours and make them part of your weekly schedule. You should plan to attend office hours, even if you don't have a specific question.

- If office hours conflict with another class, email your professor or TA to see if there is another time you can meet. Include your availability in your email so a time can be scheduled easily.

**Step 2:** Establish a reason to go to office hours.

- Reasons include:
  - You missed a lab or lecture
  - You performed poorly on a quiz or midterm
  - A quiz or midterm is upcoming
  - You would like to know more about what your professor researches, how they got their position, or you want to know more about your area of study in general
  - You want feedback on an assignment or project

**Step 3:** Go to office hours.

- Introduce yourself with your name and what course you take. If you are intimidated, remember that the professor is there to help! Office hours are part of their job and they want students to utilize them, also, it never hurts to bring a friend along.
- What do you ask?
  - A specific question from lecture, homework, quiz or a midterm that you do not understand .
  - A general question to gain more knowledge about a topic that you want to know more about or have more clarification.
  - A general question about the format of a quiz, midterm, project or grading rubric.

**The benefits of attending office hours:**

- You'll understand the material on a deeper level and can apply that knowledge to exams, quizzes, homework, etc.
- You'll get to know your professor or TA better
- Your professor or TA will get to know you
- You may meet other students and have the opportunity to form study groups

**Examples of questions to ask during office hours:**

- "I am having trouble understanding this concept, could you please explain it to me in a different way?"
- "I received my midterm back and reviewed it, but I still don't understand what I did wrong on this problem. Could you please help me work through it?"

- “Before tests I have difficulty picking out what to study, what do you recommend I focus most on for your class?”
- “What do you research? How did you get into your field?”

*Adapted from “Back to Basics: Old School Approaches for First Generation Students” Brenna Docktor, Nancy Davis, Michael Valenzuela, UC Davis*