



Office hours 101



Office hours refer to designated times when you can speak with your instructor or teaching assistant (TA) outside of class. Since every question might not be answered during class time, office hours provide you with the **opportunity** to ask for clarifications about course requirements, concepts, and assessments.



Why should you attend office hours? 🤔

It is not mandatory for students to attend office hours, but studies have illustrated a direct correlation between attendance in office hours and **high academic performance** (Guerrero & Rod, 2013). Regular communication with instructors during office hours increases students' confidence and **retention** of content.

Where can you find office hours? 📄

Most instructors will provide details about the timing of their office hours on the **first** day of class.

Some instructors and TAs have consistent office hours on a **weekly or bi-weekly** basis. In this case, you can drop by without scheduling an appointment. Others have office hours by **appointment** only. In this case, you need to send them an email to schedule a meeting.

For regular office hours, you can drop by without scheduling an appointment, during the **designated** times they have outlined.

Usually, information about office hours is also provided on the course outline.

What is expected of you? 💬

Before meeting with your instructor during office hours, it is helpful to **prepare** by reviewing your notes, skimming assigned readings, and checking other course materials. You should have a clear plan of the **questions** that you would like to ask to ensure that you are **respectful** of your instructor's time.

If you need to speak with your instructor about an issue that may take 30 min to 1 hour, it may be better to schedule a **separate meeting** with them outside of office hours. Similarly, if you would like to go office hours during a **busy** time of the semester, it is helpful to give your instructor a **heads-up** so they can give you an idea about the time they would be able to spend with you.

Instructors may ask you questions to assess your level of comprehension and **guide** you towards answering your own questions about course content. If an instructor asks you a question, do not feel intimidated if you do not know the answer; to address your **needs**, instructors must gauge your **understanding** of a topic and asking questions helps them do just that!

Many students attend office hours close to assessment deadlines and exam periods. During these times, instructors are often **overwhelmed** by students' requests and questions, and they may not have enough time to address your concerns. If you would like to go to office hours during a **busy period** of the semester, it is helpful to give your instructor a **heads-up**. However, it's better not to wait till the last minute to ask your questions!

If you are unable to meet your instructor for office hours in-person, you can also request to meet them **virtually**. McGill's Teaching and Learning Services has a great [video resource](#) that you can refer to if you'd like some guidelines about how to **write** to instructors.



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