

Faculty Information

We asked faculty to complete a three-question survey, and we received 84 responses (some faculty replied with more than one answer to each question). The results are listed below, but the overwhelming consensus is to have your student ask their professors how the professors would most like to be contacted. Most professors will let students know their preferred method of communication at the start of each semester and/or in the course syllabus.

The other overwhelming response is students do not take enough advantage of faculty office hours. Faculty encourages and enjoys student contact during office hours. Our recommendation to you as parents is to strongly urge your sons and daughters to take full advantage of faculty office hours to both get to know faculty and to resolve any budding issues early in the semester.

Question 1: What is your preferred means of communication outside of class?

Office hours visit – 68 responses

E-mail – 45 responses

Faculty indicated that e-mail is generally sufficient for simple questions with simple answers. Anything that will require a back-and-forth exchange between student and professor would best be handled in person during office hours. Students need to ask their professors, though, which form of communication the professor prefers.

Other responses:

Vista Web/CT e-mail – 5 responses

Phone – 1 response

Before or after class – 2 responses

Question 2: What should students do to improve communication with you?

- Office hours visit – 33 responses
- Attend class, ask questions, participate, be prepared – 15 responses
- Be prepared to effectively communicate – 12 responses
- Communicate more and in advance whenever possible – 9 responses
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and salutation format in e-mail – 6 responses
- Do not be too informal in e-mail messages, do not address professor by first name until invited to do so – 4 responses (but this was alluded to in several other responses)
- Contact professor early in the semester; get to know him/her without a problem – 3 responses
- Only trust appropriate sources; get info straight from the professor whenever possible – 3 responses
- Think before asking a question either in person or via e-mail – 3 responses

- Use proper timing when asking questions; know when it is appropriate to ask and make sure there is enough time for both the question and the response – 2 responses
- Be courteous and respectful in communication – 2 responses
- Make appointments and keep them – 2 responses
- Sit in front in the classroom – 1 response

If you could change one thing regarding how students communicate with teachers, what would it be?

- Visit professor in person either before a problem is too big, or even when there isn't a problem just to get to know the professor – 30 responses
- Use full name when sending e-mail to professors. Do not use e-mail addresses with drug or other inappropriate references. Do not use text language. Do not assume too much informality with professor in message until a relationship has been established. Err on the side of formality. Use e-mail selectively – for questions with short answers – 26 responses
- Assume a climate of mutual respect – student approach should not be hostile or angry when approaching professor, calm down first and never approach a teacher to argue a grade immediately upon receiving it – 15 responses
- Contact professor before class anytime student cannot make it or needs to leave class early. Student needs to take responsibility for getting caught up – not expect the professor to take care of it. Never approach a professor after missing class and say, “Did I miss anything?” – 6 responses
- Students need to be prepared and attend class. Check in with professor mid-project to gauge progress – 4 responses
- Communicate with professors in terms of interest in the course or subject. Do not approach professor and say, “What do I need to do to get an A – or a C – in this class.” – 3 responses
- Wish there was more time to talk with students before or after class to talk to students, this is when they are most engaged – one response
- Be professional – 1 response
- Include phone number in e-mail correspondence – 1 response

Other suggestions:

1. If parents really want to keep up with what is happening in classes, ask your son or daughter for a copy of the syllabus.
2. Parents cannot do the work for their child – for obvious reasons.
3. Strong students do not typically visit office hours which cheats them out of really getting to know their professors. This will affect the student most when they need letters of recommendation or references. Some suggestions:
 - Go to office hours just to talk about assignments
 - Attend department social events and make small talk with professors
 - Join department clubs or organizations