

APPROACHING YOUR LECTURER

As a student, there are likely times when you have thought of seeking assistance from one of your lecturers and/or teaching assistants, yet have failed to do so for a variety of reasons (fear of being seen as "stupid"; have not been to class in a while; do not know what to expect or are uncomfortable talking with someone of a different race, gender or age). You may even come from a cultural background that discourages interactions with authority figures. Whatever the reasons, you are not alone. You can learn how to approach a lecturer for help.

Four Steps to Follow

Reminder

● Step 1: Identifying Reasons for Seeking Help

There are endless reasons to why you may need to talk with a lecturer. Below are just a few.

1. You performed poorly on a quiz, exam, or in a class assignment.
2. You are unclear about an assignment, exam/reading schedule, policy on attendance, etc.
3. You want to turn in an assignment late or reschedule your test to a different time.
4. You are unsure about your current major.
5. You have missed class due to sickness.
6. You are applying to a university and need a lecturer to give you a letter of recommendation.
7. Your teaching assistant has not been regularly maintaining his/her stated office hours and you need assistance from your lecturer

Now write down your reasons for approaching your lecturer.

- The more often you talk with a lecturer, the more comfortable you will feel in doing so again (e.g. with other lecturers, teaching assistants, advisors, etc.)
- If you still feel uncomfortable about talking to a lecturer (and especially if you are having difficulty performing well in your classes), we encourage you to seek assistance at the Centre for Counselling Services (CCS).

● **Step 2: Determining When to Meet**

Once you have identified the specific reason(s) you need or want to speak with your lecturer, determine how to do so.

1. If you need to speak to him/her as soon as possible, then a phone call, email (if the lecturer checks it frequently), or face-to-face contact in his/her office may be warranted.
2. Be sure to ask if this is a good time to approach the lecturer for your specific need. Also, keep in mind that a lecturer is typically less receptive to answering questions immediately.
3. One approach might be, "Mr. Kumar, I need to talk with you about _____ as soon as possible. When can I do that?" Try to meet during the lecturer's office hours.
4. Check your handbook for office hours and policies.

● **Step 3: Organizing Your Talk with Your Lecturer**

Arrive prepared with your list of why you need to approach your lecturer for help. Any anxiety you may experience can be lessened if you are organized.

1. Have all of your questions listed on paper. This will greatly minimize any chance of forgetting to ask any important questions.
2. Have paper and pen available. It is best to record all information provided by your lecturer, instead of relying on your memory.
3. If you have a question about class material, bring your text, class notes and syllabus, just in case you need to refer to it.

● **Step 4: Talking With Your Lecturer**

1. Know your lecturer's name and use it with his/her appropriate title. Do not assume an informal greeting unless the lecturer has specifically stated that a more casual greeting is preferred.
2. Be sure to arrive on time and be mindful of possible (and likely) time constraints.
3. Don't hesitate in asking to meet again if you did not receive all the information you need. For example, "Mr. Kumar, I really appreciate you spending some time talking with me about University of Kansas as it will help me make some decisions. I would like to meet with you again to follow-up on other related areas. When can we do that?"