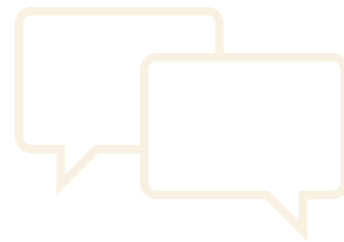


Communicating with Instructors

For many students, communicating with instructors can be challenging at first: you may feel uncertain about what to say or wonder how to use office hours. However, communication is a key to your success, and research shows that each visit to office hours can **increase a student's final grade by 1.3%**¹.



Why is communication helpful?

- Asking questions can help you better understand course content
- Reaching out can help you find resources that can help you succeed
- Building relationships with instructors can help facilitate future opportunities

Getting Started: Sometimes, knowing when to email your instructor and when to request a virtual or in-person meeting can take time and effort. Consider the scenarios below to help you decide your next steps:

<i>When should I email my instructor?</i>	<i>When should I meet with my instructor?</i>
You would like to schedule a meeting or office hours appointment	You have in-depth questions about course content or resources you can use to set yourself up for success
You are looking for clarification on a due date, assignment requirement, or group project	You would like to discuss your grade or the results of a previous exam or assignment
Your instructor emailed you previously with a question that requires your response	You would like to review for an upcoming exam or receive feedback on a paper before you submit the final draft

Tips for emailing your instructor:

- Use your Clemson email address
- Contact instructors via their ___@clemsn.edu email, not ___@g.clemson.edu or Canvas
- Make your subject line specific
- Start with "Dear Professor (Last Name)"
- Be concise and respectful with your request
- Use your resources (syllabus, Canvas) to try to find your answer before emailing
- Be patient in waiting for a response
- Always thank your instructor after you have received clarification

Tips for meeting with your instructor:

- Know the appropriate times to meet and arrive on time (check for office hours on the syllabus or set up a meeting via CU Navigate)
- Prepare specific questions before and bring your course materials with you
- Be honest and politely ask for clarification when needed
- Ask for additional resources or how to improve if discussing graded work
- Takes notes and summarize action steps
- Thank your instructor for their time

Write a Sample Email

Read over the example, then use the space below to begin writing your own email to an instructor.

From: tiger@clemsun.edu

Subject: Question about AVS1510 Lab Report #3

Dear Professor Green,
I had a question about Part 2 of Lab Report #3.
Do I need to make separate graphs for each
experiment, or can I combine all the data into
one graph?

Thank you for your time,
Caleigh Tiger (C12345678)
BS Animal and Veterinary Science
Clemson University

Subject: _____

Dear Professor _____,

Before You Hit Send

Use this checklist after you have drafted your email and before you send it to your instructor.

- Check your syllabus one more time to ensure the answer to your question can't be found there.
- Remember that email lasts forever—always be respectful and avoid making demands or complaining.
- Proofread your draft slowly for any spelling or grammatical errors. Download [Grammarly](#) for free through CCIT to do this for you!

Organize Your Office Hours

Complete the [ASC's Rules of the Game Success Strategy](#) to keep track of office hours for each of your courses for this semester. This information can typically be found in your course syllabus or on Canvas.

Brainstorm Topics for Your Meeting

Once you have set up a time to connect with your instructor, consider making a list of the questions or topics you would like to discuss. If you are planning to discuss a previous exam, consider using the [ASC's Post Exam Analysis Success Strategy](#) to help frame your conversation.

During our meeting, I would like to discuss...

¹ Guerrero, M. & Rod A.B. (2013). Engaging in Office Hours: A Study of Student-Faculty Interaction and Academic Performance. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 9(4), 403-41