



Meetings

Asking questions and seeking help

Simple questions about a unit or single aspects of an assessment can usually be dealt with in an email or two (see [Email communication](#), PDF, 606 kB), or even a phone call. For more complicated issues, however, you might need to request a meeting with a member of staff. Alternatively, a staff member might contact you to set up a meeting to discuss an issue that has arisen.

Setting up a meeting

First, check the unit Learning Guide and vUWS site to see if your lecturer or tutor has advertised their consultation policy. Often academic staff list regular office hours where you can drop in without an appointment to ask your question. If they don't list office hours, or you can't come at the listed time, request a meeting. It's a good idea to suggest a couple of times that you are available, but don't be surprised if the staff member is busy during those times. You may have to be flexible to find a timeslot that works for both of you.

State the purpose of the meeting so both you and the staff member can prepare. 'I want to talk to you about the assignment' is very general. 'I would like your advice on whether my references are appropriate for this type of essay' is better.

Preparing for a meeting

Once you've agreed on a date, time, and place for the meeting, make sure to prepare yourself. Ensure you know where the meeting is and allow enough time to get there five minutes early, just to be polite. If you're late, you may end up missing the meeting altogether.

Prepare mentally, as well. Write down all of your questions, or all of the issues that you want to discuss. Bring copies of relevant documents like the unit Learning Guide, readings you've found, or drafts of your assignment. If the staff member has asked you to bring something specific like a Turnitin Originality Report for your draft, do not forget it. Bring a pen and paper or a digital device so you can take notes during the meeting.

Running a meeting

You will probably want to let the staff member take the lead, but here's where your preparation comes in handy. When they ask how they can help, or what you would like to discuss, refer to your list of questions or points. Go through the list in order, asking questions and taking notes as appropriate.

If the other person called the meeting, they might have an agenda in mind. In this case, you should still come prepared, and ask and answer questions and take notes as you go. If there are multiple attendees at the meeting, or many issues to discuss, using an agenda and/or following [Robert's Rules of Order](#) might be useful.

Reviewing a meeting

It isn't over once you walk out the door. At the very least, if the staff member has helped you, send an email to thank them. You might also send an email to confirm what was discussed or note anything you now need to follow up.

Go over your notes, including those you wrote before the meeting. Was everything addressed? Did you get what you needed? Were your questions answered? Or do you need more help? You might like to [reflect](#) (PDF, 67 kB) at this stage, to help you decide on your next steps.

At all times, be courteous and calm when interacting with others. Remember to use your [assertive communication tactics](#) (PDF, 660 kB) so that you don't offend or put others offside.



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