

HOW TO TALK TO PROFESSORS!

STEP 1: MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.

- Review the syllabus for your instructor's office hours. Go to his/her office during those hours.
- If you are uncertain of your instructor's office hours, ask your instructor after class!
- If your schedule conflicts with the office hours, tell your instructor why you cannot make the scheduled office hours. Then tell him/her about your specific concerns.
- Set up a specific time to meet with your instructor.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH RAPPORT.

- Be on time for your appointment.
- When you arrive, be pleasant, smile, introduce yourself and remind your instructor what class you are in.

STEP 3: PRESENT YOUR CONCERN.

- Focus on the specific questions you have identified as problems.
- Have your problem(s) written out so that the instructor can see where your difficulties lie.

STEP 4: PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

- Briefly tell your instructor about your high school background and preparation for the course.
- Explain the study strategies you have used to understand the material.

STEP 5: REDIRECT FOR CLARIFICATION.

- If the instructor's explanation isn't clear, redirect his/her attention to the specific point where you become confused.
- "Talk through" your problem so that the instructor hears your reasoning.

STEP 6: SUMMARIZE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

- "I was missing this step in... I need to apply this formula..."

STEP 7: THANK YOUR INSTRUCTOR.

- Ask to come back if necessary.



(This advice, developed by the Retention Office at the U. of Toledo, first appeared in Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education.)