

**Winthrop University**  
**College of Arts & Sciences**  
**Office Hours Guidance**

University Policy Statement:

*Faculty members are required to maintain office hours and to post the hours in the syllabus. Office hours shall be reported to the department chair and to the dean. While the number of office hours required is not fixed, it is assumed that each faculty member will maintain office hours each day which will be convenient and adequate for the students to arrange conferences pertaining to their work.<sup>1</sup>*

(<https://apps.winthrop.edu/policyrepository/Policy/FullPolicy?PID=78>, updated Sept. 2018)

The College of Arts and Sciences affirms the University statement on faculty office hours.

**In principle**, as a student-focused institution priding itself on exceptional faculty-student relationships, the message to students on office hours should clearly present the instructor as inviting and welcoming direct interaction with the student. To this end, the instructor should clearly convey to students his/her/their availability to students for “office hours”-type consultation.

More specifically, the College recommends the following:

- In many cases, in-person office hours may be scheduled hours in the instructor’s assigned office space. This can be appropriate for both face-to-face as well as online courses. As a general rule of thumb, the College recommends 1 hour of scheduled office hours for every 3 credit hours of instruction.
- In cases where in-person office hours are not practicable, the above principle may be satisfied by some of the following suggested means:
  - o Scheduling virtual, synchronous office hours delivered electronically – e.g., via Blackboard Collaborate, Skype, or the like;
  - o Scheduling non-synchronous communication, clearly indicating when and how the student should submit a query and when and how the student should expect a response from the instructor. Stated response times may vary over the course of the week based on the needs of students: some students may readily access communications media during weekdays; others may need interaction during evenings or weekends.
  - o Providing the student with multiple means of contacting the instructor for direct interaction: telephone/s; text; email; video- or tele-conference; etc.;
  - o Providing students with a means of joint or group interaction with the instructor, such as a chat room or discussion board;
  - o Linking the “office hours” policy with a broader set of communications expectations applying to both instructor and student;
- Note: If you do offer contact with students via web interface, we recommend testing the connection with students early in the semester so that students are familiar and comfortable with its use.
- Consult with your department Chair for department-specific guidelines or requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> We read the last sentence to mean that faculty will hold hours on such days as is convenient and adequate for students, not that faculty will hold hours on each day of the week.