

Virtual Office Hours

Virtual office hours can be used to meet with students individually or in small groups as way to support learning. When planning your virtual office hours, consider the following tips:

1. **Set up your Zoom Virtual Office Hours one time.** When scheduling virtual office hours in Zoom, you can ensure that meeting hours all have the same Meeting ID. This can be done by scheduling office hours as a recurring meeting. Scheduling recurring meetings with “No Fixed Time” will retain a consistent Meeting ID and can be used for all of the courses you teach.
2. **Make use of the Waiting Room feature in Zoom.** This will enable a space for students to wait while the instructor is meeting with another student. When activated, the waiting room, will allow an incoming student’s name to appear in the participant window, but not come into the main room. The instructor can invite the student to enter from the waiting room when ready.
3. **Share the Meeting ID and time for office hours with your students in D2L.** Include the meeting ID in your course outline and any other communications where students can easily locate the link. In your communications about Virtual Office Hours describe the procedures you will use, such as enabling the waiting room, the length of appointments or other preferences for office hours.
4. **Add Teaching Assistants (TAs) as alternative hosts when you are scheduling the Zoom session.** Break out rooms could be used if meeting with multiple students/groups during one session. Instructors and/or TAs could circulate among break out rooms and respond to questions.
5. **Text Chat for Virtual Office Hours.** As an alternative to scheduled office hours, use the Chat feature in D2L for a Virtual Chat to answer student questions. This format can be helpful for students who prefer to ask questions via text.
6. **Asynchronous Q&A.** As an alternative to scheduled office hours, set up a discussion forum for asynchronous questions and answers. Create an ongoing discussion forum in D2L to address questions that students post throughout the term. An asynchronous communication option can support students who are unable to meet during scheduled office hours.
7. **Meet by Appointment.** Some instructors prefer students make an appointment to meet with the instructor or sign up for office hours using a shared online document.

Suggested Reading:

Smith, M., Chen, Y., Berndtson, R., Burson, K., & Griffin, W. (2017). "Office Hours are Kind of Weird": Reclaiming a Resource to Foster Student-Faculty Interaction. *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 12, 14–29. <https://doi.org/10.46504/12201701sm>