

Communicating with Students: A Guide for Faculty

Consider these four areas of faculty-student communication. Implemented together, they will likely improve and streamline communication with students.

Set Clear Expectations and Boundaries

1



- At the beginning of the semester, clarify how you prefer to communicate and ask students to share their preferred mode of communication.
- Discuss communication styles and how these may be impacted by generational and role differences and experiences during the pandemic.
- Post your preferred contact information and note a timeframe in which you will respond to student emails/calls in your syllabus and in Canvas.
- Set and adhere to office hours. Post them in your syllabus and in Canvas.
- Practice work-life balance. If you set a precedent of responding in the evening, late at night, or on the weekend, students may expect this for future communications.

Honor Student Questions and Your Time

2



- Answer questions when students are together, if possible. Answering one student in class may reduce future emails from other students.
- Defer to a later time if needed. Answering questions right before or after class can be difficult and some questions interrupt the flow of instruction. If students ask a question at an inopportune time, tell them you cannot give the question your full attention now and suggest that they write it down or email it to you so you can respond as soon as you are able.

Understand Communication Styles

3



Learn how to recognize and respond to communication that may be: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive. The following resources can help you to learn more about these communication patterns:

- bit.ly/3OrreNG
- bit.ly/3UTwlZK

Know When and Who to Ask for Help

4

Acknowledge when you need to involve others to help students and familiarize yourself with campus resources such as:

- Working with Students in Distress FAQs at bit.ly/3rVPahT
- Student Support Resources at bit.ly/UNOresourceguide

