Duke Hidden Curriculum

ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Prepare for Class

Activity: Going to Office Hours

Take a moment to review the email templates to professors below (also available here: https://academicguides.duke.edu/resources-for-students/):

Pick one to modify, or draft your own, so when you need to email a professor for a particular interest or need you might have, you have something ready to go!

1. **Asking About Research Opportunities**

Subject: Meeting to discuss undergraduate research opportunities in [topic/possible undergraduate research opportunities]

Dear Professor* [Last Name],

I am a [year] student studying [major]. I am very interested in your work on [specific paper/presentation/project]. I would appreciate the chance to talk with you about your research in [topic] and about possible undergraduate opportunities in your lab.

My experience in [describe your research experience or classes you have taken related to research design or methods] has helped me realize that I would like to continue a path of research on [topic], which will ultimately allow me to [academic and/or career goal].

We could schedule an appointment, or I can drop by your office hours on [day and time if the person holds office hours].

I have attached my resume and unofficial transcript. If there is additional information that I have not included that you would like, I would be happy to provide it to you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
[Name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.

2. Asking for an Informal Chat with Faculty

For a course professor

Subject: Possible Time to Discuss [what you are interested in]

Dear Professor* [Last Name],

I am a [year] in your [name of course] course. I have really been enjoying the class, [especially X topic/issue/question]. I am writing to ask if I could meet with you to ask you a few questions about what we're learning [and/or your research/experience in some field.]

Please let me know when it would be convenient for you to meet.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

For faculty from VLearn website

Subject: Possible Opportunity to Discuss [what you are interested in]

Dear Professor* [Last Name],

I am a [year] studying [major]/interested in [academic subject], and I read your profile on the VLearn website. I am interested in learning more about your [experience/research] in [X], and I am writing to ask if you would be willing to meet with me.

To provide a little more background about myself, I have taken courses in [X, Y, Z] and am particularly interested in [topic/question about their path, a particular experience, research]. (If you have relevant activities/internships/volunteer experiences or just spend time getting into some specific issue or activity): Outside of my classes, I've been involved in [student org(s)] here at Duke/have interned at [organization(s)]/research with [faculty member/research group] and have been reading/looking into [X] in my spare time.

I would appreciate hearing your perspective and any advice you may have on [X issue/question]. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.

3. Email to a Professor about a Concern

Subject: Questions from [class name] student

Good morning Professor* [Last name],

My name is [name], and I am currently a student in your [class name]. I am writing because I have some concerns regarding my [insert concerns].

I have tried to [insert how you have tried to approach the situation to illustrate that you have taken initiative to solve the problem first].

[Any additional questions or comments].

I am hoping that we can meet to discuss these challenges and am available to meet during your office hours on [date] or [list window of time that you are free.] Would any of these times work for you? If not, when might you be available?

Thank you,

[Your Name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.

4. Follow-Up and Reminder Emails

Subject: Follow-up about [Reason for Follow -up]

Good afternoon Professor* [Last name],

I hope all is well. I wanted to follow up on my email from [when you sent it] about [what your concern or question is]. I understand you have a busy schedule, but I wanted to see about [whatever you are following up on].

I greatly appreciate your time. Thank you again in advance for your help with [question]. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Subject: Reminder about [Reason for Reminder]

Good morning Professor* [Last name],

I hope all is well. I know you have lots of things going on, but I just wanted to remind you that [whatever you are reminding of] is due/needed by [date]. Thank you again for taking time to complete [request]. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thank you again!

Sincerely,

[Your name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.

5. Meeting Professor Outside of Listed Office Hours

Dear Professor* [Last Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is [insert name}, a student in your [insert class name] class. I know in the syllabus it outlines your office hours are [insert office hours]. Unfortunately, I am not able to make those hours because of [reason for not being able to attend]. I was wanting to come by and discuss [what you want to discuss] and I was wondering if there was another time that you were available to meet. I am free [list windows of time that you are free]. Would any of these times work for you? If not, when might you be available?

Thank you in advance for your time and flexibility. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.

6. Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

Subject line: [CLASS TITLE] student requesting letter of recommendation for [PURPOSE]

Dear Professor [Last Name]*

Good morning/afternoon! I am a student in your [XXX] class this semester and am working on [project or product description, or paper title].

I am currently applying to [# + Type of Application—scholarship, fellowship, internship, graduate program, job]. As part of the application process for each, I have been asked to provide a letter of recommendation from a professor, and I am hoping that you will consider writing such letters for me. I thought to ask you because I have really enjoyed being in your class [give an example of something you learned in the class] and particularly appreciated your [give an example of how they personally were helpful or impactful to you].

I am applying to:
NAME [Application due XX/XX/XXXX]
NAME [Application due XX/XX/XXXX]
NAME [Application due XX/XX/XXXX]

I have attached a document with potential points to highlight to inform a general letter, given my participation in your class, as well as brief paragraphs explaining my reasons for applying to each program. I can also share my application materials—or anything else—with you if that would be helpful. If you agree to write letters on my behalf, I will send detailed instructions for how to submit each letter.

Please let me know what else you need from me or what questions you have.

Thank you for your time and for considering my request!

Sincerely,

[Name]

*Use the title they use for themselves. If they haven't specified, "Professor [Last Name]" is preferred.