

Meeting Tips for Students



Resolving Things Early

Often when we have problems, there are simple solutions if they are dealt with early on. Dalhousie has a wide range of resources to help. It is important to take the time to build strong connections with other students and faculty in your department. If one day you find yourself in a difficult situation having a strong support network of colleagues and services can be helpful.

For more information on Dalhousie programs and academic regulations, visit the [Academic Calendar](#)

Making the Most of Meetings

While at Dalhousie, there may be times when you need to meet with an instructor for clarification on an assignment, discuss a grade or decision you are dissatisfied with. Or perhaps an instructor/faculty member requests you attend a meeting to discuss your performance, professionalism, or an incident. How you approach this meeting and your attitude during the meeting can strongly influence the outcome.

Meetings are an excellent opportunity to seek information, gain understanding of procedures and expectations, and most importantly to demonstrate your commitment and motivation as a student.



Ombudsperson
OMDBUDS@DAL.CA
902-494-2665



**Dalhousie
Student
Advocacy**
DSAS@DAL.CA



**Human Rights &
Equity Services**
HREHP@DAL.CA
902-494-6672

Preparing for Meetings

Before attending any meeting, it is important to be prepared. Preparation will require you to respond and follow-up promptly and be punctual as well as be focused on the priorities and intention for the meeting. The content below are things to consider in preparing for a meeting.

<p>ISSUE OR CONCERN</p> <p>Focus on the issue or concern for the meeting and not any other issues or concerns.</p>	<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p>If you have questions, write them down and bring them to the meeting to ask.</p>	<p>SOLUTION FOCUSED</p> <p>Think about what outcome you are seeking and consider options/supports available to you.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>Support looks different for everyone – consider what you need to help you stay focused.</p>
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Another element of preparing for a meeting is to take notes. **Notetaking** could be a means for you to write out your questions, options/solutions, and timelines so you are clear before the meeting. Keeping the focus on the purpose of the meeting will allow the focus to be on what needs to be addressed and other extenuating circumstances do not become included in the issue or concern.

Preparing for a meeting, however, is not just about notes. Preparing for a meeting requires you to do some work and reflect on what you want to say and the way you want to say it. Speak to your support person and practice. Page 3 of this document outlines do's and don'ts for effective meetings. It is just as important to review what to do for a meeting as well as what not to do.

What Happens if the Meeting Does Not Go Well?

If the meeting does not go well or you are left feeling that it did not go well, don't rush to action or conclusions. Give yourself some time to consider the meeting and what you feel did go well and what did not go well. If you have unanswered questions or unclear on next steps, it's okay to seek clarification and follow-up. Review your notes or speak to your support person for clarification before reaching back out.

Meetings that did not go well do happen, but by remaining calm, professional, and open you are better positioned to follow-up. If you do have another meeting, consider bringing someone to support you – a colleague, a friend, staff member, or DSAS advocate.

Do's and Don'ts for Effective Meetings

DO:	DON'T:
<p>Listen and present a balanced approach by acknowledging another's point of view</p> <p>Show a positive outlook and think toward the future</p>	<p>Be defensive, threatening, one sided, or argumentative</p> <p>Dwell on the past or dredge up past conflicts</p>
<p>If there is misunderstanding or miscommunication clear it up</p>	<p>Speak with a negative attitude</p>
<p>Ask clarifying questions to ensure you fully understand the facts</p>	<p>Get stuck in the "he said - she said -they said" reasoning</p>
<p>Take responsibility and apologize when your actions or mistakes impact others to move forward</p>	<p>Assume you know what the other person is thinking or what they believe</p>
<p>Ask for time to make decisions - do not be reactive</p>	<p>Place blame on others or finger point</p>
<p>Explore all your options and alternative avenues that may be available</p>	<p>Jump to conclusions or decisions</p>
<p>Request for the reasons for decisions in writing and be clear about what step you need to take next</p>	<p>Assume that the decision or outcome has been finalized</p>
<p>Look for opportunities for solutions and mutually satisfactory outcomes</p>	<p>Leave the meeting without fully understanding where you stand and what you need to do</p>
<p>Stay open-minded, reasonable, curious and conciliatory</p>	<p>Be stubborn and get in a rut</p>
<p>Stay focused on you goals and take steps to reach your goal</p>	<p>Give up!</p>