

What Do Professors Expect From Students

If a person clearly understands what other people expect them to do, then they are more likely to adjust their behavior to get the most rewards and to avoid the most trouble. So it is wise to know your professor's expectations, even if you choose not to live up to all of them. However, your professors meet hundreds of students every year and your behavior will determine if their reaction to you is positive or negative. So, what do they expect?

1. Students Are Adults

- a. Most professors consider you to be free and independent adults.
- b. Professors think you freely chose to come to college and to sign up for their courses. They know they cannot force students to do things. You have the right to underperform or even quit. This is not like high school.
- c. Because of student freedom, many professors will not interfere if you start making choices that are bad for your education. If you start cutting classes, not handing in assignments or missing a test, most instructors will not try to change your behavior. You are now an adult and responsible for your own actions.
- d. It is your responsibility to do school work on time and to the best of your ability. If you don't, the professor will probably not bring it to your attention. If you'd like to approach professors about academic concerns, most are happy to assist and give advice (providing you ask early enough for them to help).

2. Professors Expect Students To Ask Questions In Class

- a. You are expected to ask questions about things you do not understand. If there is silence, professors assume students are perfectly clear or they are bored or they just don't care.
- b. Many students are nervous about asking questions in class. You might think you have a stupid question or you might irritate the professor. Students tend to think they are the only one who doesn't understand and then after class 6 people line up to ask the same question.
- c. If you have questions you are unable to answer, try to ask them when they occur to you. It helps you but it also helps other students who often have the same concern. It also helps the professor know how clearly they are explaining the information.
- d. Try not to ask trivial questions or talk so much that it uses up planned lecture time or prevents other students from talking too.

3. Professors Expect Students To Use Office Hours To Discuss Course Difficulties

- a. Go prepared to ask questions.
- b. If you are not doing well, take your notes and other class materials so you have something to work with.

4. Professors Expect Students To Take Notes On Their Lectures

- a. Professors expect you to learn important things during their lectures and will ask questions on tests to verify that. So develop a system, have the right tools and take moderately detailed notes in class.
- b. Students can be fooled into not taking notes on information that they understand perfectly but 30 minutes later can barely remember details about the lecture. With the human brain, understanding does not cause memory--so take notes to stimulate your memory!
- c. You should not try to take dictation. You should try to figure out what is important information. Look for principles, vital facts, main ideas, and things you think will show up on exams.

5. **Professors Expect Students To Do Their Homework And Reading Assignments On Time**
 - a. A professor's whole plan of teaching assumes that students are up-to-date with their reading. Professors talk about new ideas assuming students have the background.
 - b. Professors usually give you a syllabus the first week of classes that outlines assignments and deadlines. They will assume that you are aware of all the requirements and often won't remind you or check up on you.
 - c. Professors are busy people. It helps them if assignments and tests are done on time. Late work usually takes more time and effort for them and may delay returning other student's work.

6. **Professors Expect Students To Actively Try To Learn**
 - a. An active learner:
 - Wants to learn, asks mental questions, searches for answers
 - Tries to understand new ideas, practices new skills, tries to connect ideas
 - Tries to actively memorize important principles and information
 - Tries to use new skills and knowledge & apply them to real life
 - b. Passive learners expect professors to feed them knowledge and expect that they can relax and listen. Lectures do not do something TO you that will magically make you learn. If your brain is not engaged, the information is probably going nowhere.

7. **Professors Expect Students To Do Some Work Outside Of Class**
 - a. Professors usually plan their courses so students will do most of their reading and learning outside of class. You should NOT plan to succeed by simply going to class and skipping the rest of the assignments.
 - b. Plan out how long it will take for you to keep up on reading assignments each week. Plan time for written papers and homework, not the night before they are due. Plan time to edit and study lecture notes. Plan short and long term reviews for tests.

DON'T	DO
...ask questions that show you haven't done the reading or listened to the lecture.	...come prepared to class and/or office hours. If you have missed class, get notes from another student before you ask questions.
...ask general questions such as "Could you explain Chapter 3?"	...take the trouble to read the chapter and ask specific questions about concepts that you don't understand.
...ask personal questions in class, such as "When can I take my makeup exam?"	...ask personal questions during office hours
...ask in class for any handouts that you missed because of an absence.	...find out from classmates what handouts they got and ask if you can copy them. Or go to the professor's office hours.
...expect professors to accept your excuses for turning in late assignments if you do it often.	...turn in assignments on time. Professors aren't likely to accept your excuses more than once or twice. They've heard them all.
...offend your professor. Falling asleep or reading during a lecture, consistently coming in late or leaving early, and talking to classmates is insulting and disrespectful to them.	...act respectfully and courteously. Come on time; leave when class is over. If you are too tired to stay awake, don't come. If you have to study for another class or test, don't come. If you are rude, professors are less likely to go out of their way to help you. Imagine standing in front of 50 students who are sleeping, talking or uninvolved.