

Five Questions to Ask your Professors

It is not uncommon to experience some academic challenges during your first year in college – after all, the courses are harder, the professors are different and you have many more demands on your time. So to help you figure out how to navigate some of these challenges we have included some questions to ask your professors that will clarify how to perform well in your chosen course work.

- 1.) ***Which items should I concentrate on more for your exams – the notes or the Textbook or both? What are the best ways to prepare for your exams?*** Professors are pleased when their students take a special interest in their subject, so they will often tell students that seek them out which items to focus on, thus allowing you to maximize the efficiency of your study time.
- 2.) ***Could you give me an example of a common test question? Are there practice test questions in the text or workbook?*** Many times students feel they understand the material but experience difficulty performing well on exams. Professors will often suggest workbook or example test questions that will allow you to practice answering questions that you are likely to see on the exam.
- 3.) ***Would you mind looking over my paper and recommend changes that you feel should be made?*** Professors often review papers and projects prior to the due date. This allows you to make changes that ordinarily would cause you to lose points. This practice also reinforces the lessons that the professor is looking for when he/she grades your paper, resulting in a better grade on assignments and a greater understanding of the course material. Although not all professors do this, many will and are happy to make suggestions.
- 4.) ***Would you mind clarifying some areas of confusion for me regarding the notes from class?*** Even if you feel you are clear on the course material, meeting with your professors gives you an opportunity to show your professors that you care about your education and affords you the chance to make some valuable contacts. *This practice also allows you to identify areas you thought you knew but perhaps require clarification.* When you then miss class for a competition, your professor knows you are still taking his/her course seriously.
- 5.) ***What strategies can I use to perform better in your course?*** Professors want to know that you are interested in improving your performance in class but most importantly that **you are interested in learning**, after all - that is why you are here. Asking them this question lets them know that you want to do well in their class and that you are here to learn. Colleges are full of students that attend for a variety of reasons; your professors want to know you are here for the right reason.

Remember, the professors that you will have for the next four years can change your life; **get to know them**, they can help make your education meaningful.