

Department of English
Student and Colleague Availability Guidelines Proposal

“To enhance the possibilities of faculty-student interaction outside of the classroom and to promote a more collegial teaching/learning/research community in Arts and Letters, all full-time faculty are expected to maintain a significant on-campus presence, making themselves available to students and colleagues and participating in activities related to the improvement of pedagogy and student advisement, recruitment and retention, peer and student mentoring, and research and creative activity.” [from College statement on office hours]

As a PhD-granting department, we recognize that excellent teaching and mentorship, as well as scholarly and creative productivity, involve being available to meet with students and colleagues, serving on student and department committees, and participating in an active academic community. As a result, faculty members typically exceed the minimum expectations for student and colleague availability outlined here.

Faculty will be available to students and colleagues for at least six hours per week through a combination of the activities enumerated below:

1. Faculty teaching face-to-face lecture classes or seminars should hold a minimum of one open-door office hour per week per three-credit class. Office hours must be held in faculty offices during regular business hours.
2. Faculty must make themselves available for appointments for a minimum of one additional hour per week for students legitimately unable to attend usual office hours. Any students who fail to attend a scheduled appointment or fail to provide sufficient notice of cancellation should make arrangements to use regularly scheduled office hours in the future.
3. Faculty should typically respond to email or voice mail that demonstrates professional etiquette within 48 hours during regular semesters, except for university holidays and weekends. Students needing more than basic information should be encouraged to visit or call during office hours or to make an appointment to meet in person, though faculty might expect to spend at least one hour per week responding to email.
4. Faculty should make themselves available on campus to meet with colleagues or participate in department, college, or university service or committee activities for a minimum of one hour per week, including department or graduate-student-committee meetings, peer mentoring, student advising, recruitment activities, guest lectures or job talks, etc. Service should be documented in annual review materials.

Additional guidelines:

5. For faculty teaching one or more online classes, virtual office hours may be substituted for up to one-third of required on-campus office hours.
6. Faculty who teach field- or practicum-based courses can substitute field supervision for up to one-third of required on-campus office hours.

7. Faculty must post office hours outside of their offices and on syllabi and must notify department staff about office hours by the end of the first week of classes each semester.

8. For faculty who teach in the evening, some office hours may be scheduled after 5 p.m. prior to the scheduled night class.