



Fairness Toolkit: Meetings – Shift Your Attitude

During your time at university, you may need to meet with a professor to discuss a grade or decision that you are not satisfied with. Or perhaps a professor or other faculty member may request that you attend a meeting to discuss your performance, your professionalism, or a particular incident. Your approach to the meeting and the attitude you exhibit during the meeting can strongly influence the outcome of the meeting. Meetings can be a good opportunity to seek information, gain understanding of procedures and expectations, and to demonstrate your commitment and motivation. For most effective discussions, keep these tips in mind.

Do:

- Listen and present a balanced approach – acknowledge other’s point of view
- Do forward thinking and show a positive outlook
- Clear up misunderstandings or miscommunication
- Ask clarifying questions to ensure you fully understand the facts
- Take responsibility and apologize for your actions or mistakes and move forward
- Ask for time to make well thought out decisions
- Explore your options and seek alternative avenues
- Ask for reasons for the decision in writing and be clear about what steps you need to take next
- Look for solutions and mutually satisfactory outcomes
- Stay open-minded, conciliatory, reasonable and curious
- Keep your eye on the prize and take steps to reach your goal

Don't:

- Be defensive, threatening, one sided or argumentative
- Dwell on the past or speak negatively
- Get stuck on “he said – she said” reasoning
- Assume you know the other person is thinking
- Blame others or point fingers
- Jump to quick conclusions or decisions
- Assume this is the final decision or outcome
- Leave the meeting without fully understanding where you stand
- Shut out your options or be unwilling to negotiate
- Be stubborn and get in a rut
- Give up

