What Faculty Expect of Students

Each professor runs class differently, but they all need respect. Regardless of how lax it seems a class is, or how "annoying" the professor may be, the fact still remains that your student’s grade at the end of the semester counts just as much as all of the other ones. Slacking in a class just because they don’t like the subject or they don’t think it applies to their major doesn’t pay off, and a lot of students learn that the hard way. Understanding what faculty members expect of students is something you can help them learn. For instance, they expect...

Attendance and Participation

It’s true that many professors don’t take attendance. It’s also true that they might not even notice when a student is there (and when he is not). But failing to show up for class has detrimental effects on a grade, whether or not participation is a part of it.

Many professors stick to their syllabi but add small assignments here and there, and unless all syllabus changes are put online, one of the only ways your student will be able to get the new assignment is by being present in class. Several small grades add up to one large grade, and a professor is much less likely to take pity on a student who regularly misses papers or other graded material.

Participating regularly helps students gain a better understanding of the subject. Being engaged in what a professor is saying or adding to a group discussion not only helps the speaker remember what was taught over the course of the semester, it also makes time move faster. And it never hurts when a professor knows a student by name.

Coursework and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a more serious offense than many students realize. Computers make it so easy to “cut and paste” from the Internet (or someone else’s paper, for that matter) that it doesn’t seem like a big deal, when in fact, it is. Taking quotes from other sources is one thing – it shows the student is researching the material and trying to gain several perspectives – but putting quotation marks around the quote and correctly citing the material is absolutely necessary.

It is also necessary to cite paraphrased material. Any information that is not an original idea (from the student’s own thoughts) needs to be properly explained as someone else’s. This can get a little confusing, but any professor would be happy to clarify the difference.

Students are also expected to do their own work – on their own. Unless it is specifically stated by a professor that students may work in groups, all assignments are to be completed by students, by themselves.

Respect in the Classroom

There are a few obvious things a student shouldn’t do in the classroom, like talk while a professor or another student is talking, or pass notes. Beyond that, many new college students need to learn how to be properly respectful of both their professors and classmates during class discussions.

College is a place for exchanging ideas, so, of course people are going to disagree with one another. Disagreeing with a student or professor during a class discussion is fine, and so is stating personal opinion (as long as there is evidence to back it up). But students need to make sure that what they are saying isn’t offensive to the people around them, especially when talking about issues that carry emotional weight. Encourage your student to keep discussions on an intellectual level, and never purposely insult another person. A degree of civility is respected – and expected—by both classmates and professors alike.

Better understanding what faculty members expect will help your student be a more successful student, not just in terms of grades, but also when it comes to connecting with a knowledgeable adult on campus, learning subject matter and figuring out how to put learning into action. Classes aren’t a “chore” to be endured; they’re the primary reason your student is sitting in a classroom. Help them make the most of this privileged opportunity!

A Deadline is a Deadline

Many of today’s students view deadlines as “suggestions” rather than set rules. Yet, many professors see deadlines as actual deadlines. Learning to abide by these deadlines is an important part of your student’s education. There’s not as much “wiggle room” as they may think.

E
Determining or creating a study space on campus can be tough for students at first. Some may discover that they are unable to study successfully in their room due to distractions. That’s okay. There are plenty of spaces on campus in the library, coffee shop, or student center lounge that work as a quiet escape for students needing this type of environment. Some students may be able to study in their room, despite the noise from their roommate and hallmates. In any case, finding a proper study space is one of the keys to academic success.

Be proactive. Instead of waiting until after end-of-the-semester grades arrive, talk with your student now to make sure he has set up a study routine. This includes determining a study space where he can be successful writing papers and preparing for exams.

**Tips to Try**

Here are some study space tips from the experts that you can share with your student:

- **Take the time to determine what you need to maintain your focus, so you can plan out the perfect space.** What level of noise do you prefer? What temperature do you like? How do you like to sit or lay? Does the type of school work you are doing change your needs at all?

- **Turn off the cell phone, Instant Messenger, and TV.** In today’s day and age, this is tough, especially for those who grew up multi-tasking. But, all of these things pull your attention away from the task at hand. If you need some noise, try some background music instead. An instrumental selection is best, but use whatever works for you.

- **Check the lighting.** Make sure it is not too dim, especially if your study space is in a residence hall room. If the overhead lighting isn’t cutting it, a desk lamp may be the answer.

- **Select an area that has enough room to spread out everything you need.** You’ll want to be able to easily view as many resources as possible, especially if you are checking sources for a paper or referencing multiple sources for an exam.

- **Take an inventory of regularly used/needed items — before sitting down to write that major paper or study for that final.** Stock up on pens, pencils, printer paper, ink cartridges, and anything else you’ll need. If you are traveling to your study space, make sure you have everything before you leave so you don’t have to go back for forgotten items.

- **Decorate your space or bring some inspiration with you.** If you enjoy your space, you’ll be more likely to want to be in it!

- **Create an organizational system that works for you.** You might think that keeping one messy pile of handouts and notes from all of your classes is helpful, but the experts say it isn’t. Label folders or binders and regularly organize your resources. Make sure you have clearly-defined spaces for all of your supplies, too.

- **If you really want to be healthy, ensure that your study space is ergonomically correct.** Your work space should be about waist-height. You should be able to rest your elbows on the table without hunching your shoulders and put your feet flat on the floor (even if you don’t always sit like this). You can adjust your seat height to make this happen.

- **Get comfy, but not too comfy.** You don’t want to fall asleep while you are studying. It’s best to sit upright at a desk. But, if you want to lie on the floor or on a bed, just make sure you’ll stay focused enough to get the job done.

Source: [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)