



## **Guidance on Office Hours** **IST\_AC-27 Administrative Guideline**

**Goals.** This document provides guidance on IST common practices concerning instructor office hours. This guidance seeks to reflect, not transform, existing practices in the college, in hopes of supporting all instructors, including new instructors and adjuncts, by sharing knowledge and practices within the college. It offers flexibility for instructors and students alike, while also respecting instructor judgment.

**Principles and constraints.** The guidance recognizes that in-person and World Campus-based teaching have different contexts and norms, and that the pandemic has influenced them. It recognizes that students show up irregularly, often only around major deliverable due dates. It seeks to establish minimum and maximum thresholds, to ensure students have some reliable access to their instructors while also ensuring that instructors (especially those teaching multiple sections) are not overwhelmed by office hours. It also seeks to balance student need for prompt attention with instructor need not to sit around waiting for students who may never show up.

**Administrative uses.** The primary purpose of this guidance is for organizational knowledge management, not as an enforcement mechanism. This guidance will be shared, for example, during new faculty orientation. IST administration will not proactively seek to ensure compliance, e.g., by auditing instructors' syllabi. However, in the event of significant student complaints about a particular course, administration might use this guidance as part of a broader intervention to support instructor success.

**Guidance.** All instructors should hold office hours in support of student learning for their courses, as follows.

- Instructor office hours should be described in the course syllabus.
- Office hours may be held in-person, virtually, and/or in any combination of them, regardless of teaching modality.
- On average, minimum and maximum weekly office hours should fall within the following criteria:
  - Credits 1-3: 20 minutes per credit hour
  - Credits 4-12: 10 minutes per credit hour
  - *Examples:* Instructors teaching one 3-credit course would hold 60 minutes of available office hours. Instructors teaching two 3-credit courses would hold 90 minutes of available office hours. Instructors teaching three 3-credit courses would hold 120 minutes of available office hours. No instructor needs to hold more than 150 minutes of available weekly office hours.

- *Note:* Instructors may hold more or fewer office hours in a given week, based on anticipated student demand. The minimum and maximum numbers reflect an *average* over the semester, not a fixed number each week.
- Office hours may be, but do not need to be, scheduled for a fixed time. That is, instructors and students may use a scheduling mechanism to establish appointments on-demand. However, there should be some mechanism to accommodate students promptly when a fixed schedule is not offered.
  - Fixed scheduled office hours are one way to do so, as they accommodate walk-ins.
    - Variation: holding office hours immediately following class is another way instructors promptly accommodate student needs.
    - Optionally, instructors may strongly encourage appointments even during regularly posted office hours.
  - If no fixed office hours are scheduled, then instructors should, as a rule, allow students to schedule on-demand office hours within 24 hours.
    - On-demand office hours should be offered first-come first served.
    - Instructors offering on-demand office hours are not expected to be available for office hours 7 days a week; they may categorically exclude up to 3 days of each 7-day week from office hour availability and excluded days should be specified in the syllabus.