

Guidelines For Effectively Communicating Issues or Concerns

General Tips For Successful Communication:

- 1) You have the ability to ask questions or request further clarification about various aspects of the course, but you must also do so respectfully.
- 2) It is best to address concerns sooner rather than later. Make sure you are addressing concerns right away, not at the last minute or the end of the course.
- 3) Review the syllabus and course webpage *throughout* the semester and bring materials with you to class. The syllabus explains expectations and responsibilities for the semester. Changes may be made to the syllabus or course content as the semester progresses.
- 4) Keep all of your course work and course materials until the end of the semester and after you have learned your official grade. IF you have questions about a grade, you can review your work and compare it with the requirements of the course.



Steps To Communication:

- 1) Be Prepared!
 - a. Understand course policies before you visit your instructor to discuss a concern. Read the syllabus, check the course webpage, and look at applicable EMU policies.
 - b. Be prepared to state your concerns. Be prepared with specific information to support the concerns that you have including documentation and communications.
 - c. Think about whether the concern is a simple one that can be addressed via e-mail or a more complex one that requires a face-to-face meeting.
- 2) Request An Appointment
 - a. If you have a concern to discuss, do not confront your instructor in the classroom around other students, this removes your chance for privacy and puts the instructor “on the spot”.
 - b. Send an e-mail (to have a written record) requesting an appointment either during office hours or at another mutually agreed upon time. Include your course #, a bulleted description of your concerns, and the resolution you are looking for.
- 3) During & Following The Appointment
 - a. Treat the instructor with respect. Be polite and respect time boundaries.
 - b. Take responsibility for any mistakes, misunderstandings, or oversights on your part.
 - c. Before leaving the meeting, be sure that you and the instructor share the same understanding of the instructor’s decision or next steps to be taken. As for clarification if you are unsure.
 - d. After the meeting send a follow-up email detailing your understanding of what was discussed and the resolution reached.

If the instructor indicates that they have made a final decision on your concern, respect that decision and, if you wish to pursue the concern further, contact the Office of the Ombuds to find out what options are available for doing so.

Concern Resolution Worksheet

Walk A Concern Through These Questions:

1) What is my real need here?

2) What do I want to change?

3) What supporting documentation do I have?

4) What is personal opinion/feelings versus fact/tangible evidence?

5) How will I present this concern without blaming or attacking?

6) What are the possible resolutions?

If you are having trouble or would like assistance in formulating your concerns in the best way possible, contact the Office of the Ombuds for assistance. We are here to help!