

Open Office Environment: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Distractions

Open office environments can have some great benefits, like increased collaboration, relationship-building interactions, and workspace flexibility. There are also some challenges, including disruption of personal space, respect, and interruptions for productivity. We all have differing needs for personal space and without doors we can close, an open office lessens our ability to control our environment. When in doubt, err on the side of caution, courtesy, and respect.



Office space

Cubicles, areas immediately outside of an office, and spaces and walkways between cubicles and offices



Meeting space

Any space that can be booked through the Event Management System (EMS)



Community space

Any lounge or kitchen area; Noble Commons and Mandel Center Lounge become community spaces when not reserved

Expectations for Respecting Personal & Office Space



Move social conversations (longer than 2 minutes) and cell phone conversations to a community space.



Keep desk phones and cell phones on very low volume, and cell phones on vibrate when possible.



Respect that a colleague may be working intently on something; if you approach them, they may ask if your need is urgent and ask to follow up later. Check to see if they use a red-yellow-green flag system to alert others of their availability.



Do not enter another person's work space unless invited.



Respect colleagues' privacy by not looking over their shoulder at their screens.



Be aware of sounds associated with eating and drinking.



Be aware of how your behaviors impact those around you who are working. Keep noise to a minimum unless work-related, don't run through the office, keep belongings out of walkways, etc.

Expectations for Working Together



Need to have a longer or sensitive work-related conversation in person or via phone? Request a meeting time and book a meeting space using EMS.



Use Google chat for quick questions.



If you need to meet or make the call urgently, try to step into a community space or empty meeting space. Acknowledge that there may be noise in a community space that is unavoidable.



Be understanding that this is still an open, collaborative work environment and some distractions will be unavoidable.

Expectations for Respecting Community & Meeting Spaces



You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself, including kitchens and restrooms. Leave a space better than you found it.



Check EMS to see if a room is booked or will soon be in use before claiming it for a conversation or meeting.

This resource was created by the Staff Climate Working Group as a set of general expectations. All departments and areas are asked to determine what systems will work for them.



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