

Email Etiquette for University & the Workplace

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EMAIL ETIQUETTE

FOR UNIVERSITY & THE WORKPLACE

Subject Line Guidelines

Avoid generic subject lines like "hello" or "request" as they can be easily overlooked or deleted by busy recipients.



Be concise & keep the subject line brief.



Highlight urgency if necessary



Use a descriptive & specific subject.



Use proper capitalization

Greetings:

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms./ [Last Name]



Greetings, Introductions & Sign Offs



Introduction for a Professional:

Mention your name & your affiliation or job title & the reason for contacting the recipient.

Introduction for Students:

Mention your name & the course you are enrolled in & the reason for contacting the recipient.



Signoffs:

"I look forward to hearing from you" or "Thank you for your time" with Kind regards, Sincerely, Yours Respectfully, Best, Thank you

Tone, Language & Intent

Tone, language, & intent are crucial aspects of email etiquette as they shape how your message will be perceived by the recipient.



Avoid slang & all caps



Use proper grammar & spelling



Use a polite & courteous tone



Review before sending

Emotional Proofreading

Emotionally proofreading should be done whenever you are in a heightened emotional state while composing the email



Take a break



Seek feedback



Review the language



Take a final review

Designed by: Iman Saeed

Email Structure

1.1 Subject Line Guidelines

Subject lines are vital for getting the recipient's attention and conveying the email's purpose as it is the first thing the recipient sees. Avoid generic subject lines like "hello" or "request" as they can be easily overlooked or deleted by busy recipients. Follow these guidelines for effective subject lines:

- Be concise and keep the subject line brief
- Highlight urgency if necessary
- Use a descriptive and specific subject
- Use proper capitalisation

Subject Line Examples for Students	Subject Line Examples for the Workplace
• [Course code/Name] - Request for Office Hours • [Course code/Name] - Follow-up on Class Discussion • [Course code/Name] - Request for Letter of Recommendation: Grad School Application • [Course code/Name] - Request for Extension • [Course code/Name] - Meeting Request: Discussing Research Opportunities	• Urgent: Action Required - Project Deadline Approaching • Meeting Request: Discussing New Marketing Strategy • Reminder: Team Building Event Tomorrow • Request for Feedback: Presentation Draft Attached • Follow-up on Meeting: Next Steps

1.2 Greetings, Introductions and Sign Offs

Appropriate greetings, introductions and sign offs are important in setting the tone and establishing a professional impression. Here are some sample salutations and introductions you can use in your emails:

For University Emails		
Salutations Dear Professor [Last Name], Dear Dr. [Last Name] or Dear [Title] [Last Name]"	Signing Off "I look forward to hearing from you" or "Thank you for your time" with Kind regards, Sincerely, Yours Respectfully, Best, Thank you	Introductions Mention your name and the course you are enrolled in and the reason for contacting the recipient.
For Professional Emails		
Salutations "Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. [Last Name]," or "Dear [Professional Title] [Last Name]"	Signing Off Regards, Best regards, Best wishes, Kind regards, Many thanks, Thank you, Sincerely	Introductions Mention your name and your affiliation or job title and the reason for contacting the recipient.

1.3 Tone, Language and Intent

Tone, language, and intent are crucial aspects of email etiquette as they shape how your message will be perceived by the recipient. Here are some guidelines for maintaining an appropriate tone, language, and intent in your emails:

- **Be professional:** Use a professional and respectful tone in your emails. Avoid overly casual or informal language.
- **Use a polite and courteous tone:** Always use polite and courteous language. Be mindful of your tone and avoid coming across as confrontational or disrespectful.
- **Avoid using all caps:** Writing in all capital letters can be interpreted as shouting or conveying anger.
- **Use proper grammar and spelling:** Poor grammar and spelling can give a negative impression and undermine your professionalism. Consider using a spell-check tool, or run it through [Grammarly](#).
- **Review before sending:** Before hitting the send button, take a moment to review your email. Check if the tone and language align with your intended message and ensure there are no unintentional mistakes or misinterpretations.

Remember, maintaining a professional and respectful tone, using clear language, and being mindful of your intent will contribute to effective communication.

1.4 Emotional Proofreading

Emotionally proofreading an email should be done whenever you are feeling emotional, upset, or in a heightened emotional state while composing the email, as it allows you to step back, calm down, and ensure that your message is conveyed in a clear, respectful, and professional manner. Here are some steps to emotionally proofread your email:

- **Take a break:** If you are feeling emotional or upset while composing an email, step away from it for a while. Give yourself time to calm down and regain a clear mindset before continuing.
- **Review the language:** Read through your email and pay attention to the language you've used. Look for any phrases or words that might come across as confrontational, aggressive, or overly emotional.
- **Seek feedback:** If you're uncertain about the emotional tone of your email, consider asking a friend or trusted colleague to review it. Getting an outside perspective can help identify any unintended emotional undertones and provide suggestions for improvement.

- **Take a final review:** Before hitting the send button, carefully review your email one last time and read it aloud to yourself. Check for any remaining emotional language or unintended tone.

Effective Communication For Students

2.1 Should you send that email?

Consider the following factors when deciding whether to send an email or have an in-person discussion, as certain topics may be more suitable for face-to-face communication.

Prior to sending an email, check if the information you need is already available on the course outline, LMS, Zambell or on other university resources.

When to use email:

- For short or simple questions, such as seeking clarification on deadlines, assignment details, or specific concepts from class. Avoid requesting a summary of missed class material.

When to have an in-person discussion:

- If the topic or question is complex and likely requires a back-and-forth conversation
- For potentially sensitive topics - discussing them face-to-face can help prevent misunderstandings that may arise from email exchanges.
- If your email is becoming lengthy and time-consuming to write - scheduling an appointment for an in-person meeting may be better.

2.2 Clear and Specific Requests

When sending emails, it's important to be concise and to the point. State who you are and briefly explain your situation, and suggest how the recipient can assist you. It is best to limit one request or ask per email. A simple email makes it easier for them to provide the necessary information in their reply.

Clear and specific requests in student emails are important because they:

- Ensure clarity of communication, avoiding confusion and misunderstandings.
- Facilitate efficient responses by providing all necessary details.
- Prevent assumptions and misunderstandings about the student's needs.
- Save time for both the student and the recipient.

By making clear and specific requests, students increase the likelihood of receiving accurate and timely assistance or information, improving the overall effectiveness of their communication.

2.3 Polite and Respectful Communication

Polite and respectful communication is key for university students as it ensures :

- **Positive perception:** Polite and respectful language creates a positive impression of the student, showing respect for the recipient's time and expertise.
- **Higher response rate and support:** When students communicate politely and respectfully, professors and staff are more likely to respond promptly and provide the needed support.

2.3.1 Checklist for before sending an email

Before you send an email, check if:

- ☐ You are sending it using your university email address
- ☐ You are sending it to the correct recipient

- ☐ You could have found a suitable answer for your query in the course outline, LMS, Zambeel or on other university resources
- ☐ The subject line is clear and concise
- ☐ You have used an appropriate salutation, addressed the recipient (title and name) appropriately and ended with a clear closing
- ☐ You have added any necessary attachments
- ☐ You have introduced yourself (name, course name/code, roll number)
- ☐ Your request or inquiry is clear and concise
- ☐ The tone and language is respectful and specific
- ☐ The email is proofread

Effective Communication For Professionals

2.4 Using Proper Reply and Forwarding Techniques

When replying to or forwarding emails in a professional setting, consider the following things:

- Practise attentive email etiquette by replying and forwarding messages selectively.
- When forwarding lengthy threads, summarise key information to save the recipients' time.
- When forwarding an email, update the subject line if it no longer applies to the current conversation.
- Try to always include a personal comment when forwarding emails.
- Review recipients before replying and only include necessary addresses.
- Use "Reply All" only when necessary for everyone to know. Otherwise, review the "To" and "Cc" fields and reply to only those who need to be informed, removing unnecessary addresses.

2.5 Timely Responses and Follow-ups

Timely responses and follow-ups in professional emails are:

- crucial for demonstrating professionalism, maintaining effective communication, and ensuring tasks are not overlooked.
- important for showing respect, preventing delays, and enhancing your professional reputation.

In a professional setting, replying within 24 hours is common courtesy. Failing to do so can be perceived as rude and have negative consequences. If you exceed the time frame, apologise and politely explain your reasoning for the delayed response.

Follow-up emails in a professional setting are crucial for maintaining effective communication. You should send follow up emails for confirming receipt, requesting updates, reminding about deadlines, checking for action, and expressing gratitude. Keep them concise, and specific, using a professional tone.

2.6 Proper Use of Cc and Bcc

Properly utilising the Cc (Carbon Copy) and Bcc (Blind Carbon Copy) fields in professional emails is essential for effective communication and privacy. Here are some guidelines:

- **Cc:** Use the Cc field to inform or involve others in the conversation. It lets recipients see who else received the email, but they aren't expected to take specific action.
- **Bcc:** The Bcc field is for sending a copy without revealing recipients' email addresses. Bcc recipients remain hidden, ensuring privacy. It's useful for mass emails or protecting individuals' privacy.

2.7 Mailbox Management

You should schedule specific times to read and respond to emails. Prioritise your emails using a tool like Eisenhower's Matrix¹, categorising them as urgent/not urgent and important/not important. This helps you determine which email requires immediate action, which can be scheduled, delegated, or deleted with a brief

response. By implementing these strategies, you can save time, reduce email-related stress, and improve productivity.

Scenarios/Samples For Students

3.1 Requesting a Meeting

Subject: [Course Code/name] - Meeting Request

Dear Dr./Professor [Recipient's Name],

I hope you are doing well. I would like to request a meeting to discuss [topic of discussion]. Could we schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience? Please let me know your availability, and I will accommodate accordingly.

During the meeting, I would like to discuss [specific points or agenda items]

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to meeting with you.

Best regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Roll number]

3.2 Course Related Queries

Subject: [Course code/name] - Question about Course Content

Dear Dr./Professor [Recipient's Name],

I hope you're doing well. I am currently enrolled in your [Course Name] and have a question about the material.

Could you please provide clarification on [specific topic or concept]? I'm having difficulty understanding [specific aspect] and would appreciate your guidance to improve my understanding. Additionally, if there are any recommended office hours or times when I could discuss this question with you, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and support. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Roll Number]

3.3 Notice of Absence

Subject: [Course Code/name] - Absence Notification

Dear Dr./Professor [Recipient's Name],

I want to inform you that I will be absent from [Course code and name] on [date(s)] due to [reason for absence]. I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Would it be possible for me to visit during office hours on [Date] to address anything I may have missed, including participation credit?

Thank you for your understanding.

Best regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Roll number]

3.4 Request for Extension

Subject: [Course Code/name] - Extension Request

Dear Dr./Professor [Recipient's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to request an extension for the [task/assignment/project] due on [original deadline].

Due to [reason for needing extension], I request for [proposed length of extension]. This additional time will ensure that I can deliver a high-quality outcome.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused by this request. Thank you for your understanding. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Roll number]

3.5 Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

Subject: Recommendation Letter Request

Dear Dr./Professor [Recipient's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am [your name]. I had the opportunity of being taught by you in [course code, name and year]. I am writing to request your support in writing a letter of recommendation for [purpose of the recommendation]. Your endorsement will greatly strengthen my application.

If possible, I request you to highlight [provide specifics for what you require].

The deadline for submitting the letter is [deadline date], kindly send it directly to [recipient's email or mailing address].

I understand the time and effort required for writing a recommendation, and I truly appreciate your assistance. Thank you for your consideration. Your support has been invaluable, and I am grateful for your help.

Best regards,
[Your Full Name]

Appendix

Eisenhower's Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	DO Complete the task	DECIDE Choose a time to complete the task
Not important	DELEGATE Let someone else complete the task	DELETE Do not complete the task

References

For Students

[Email Etiquette for Students | University Writing & Speaking Center](#)

[Email Etiquette for Students - Purdue OWL](#)

[Email Etiquette | Student Success | The University of Southern Mississippi](#)

[Practice good email etiquette | Career Centre](#)

[Email Etiquette at University Email](#)

For the Workplace

[28 Best Practices for Email Etiquette in the Workplace | Indeed.com](#)

[Email Etiquette in the Workplace: A Guide - Pipefy](#)

[13 email etiquette rules support leaders should share with their team](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/30-email-etiquette-rules-workplace-shamim-ansary/>

[The Dos and Don'ts of Business Email Etiquette](#)

[Best Practices for Professional Email Etiquette in Every Situation | TopResume](#)