

Email Etiquette

You should feel able to contact academic and administrative staff to for information, advice, or to arrange a face-to-face meeting. However, it is important that you get the tone right. The etiquette “rules” that apply to such email also apply to other work contexts, so it is important to learn how to get it right.

Writing emails in professional contexts requires a different tone to that used when emailing or messaging friends or family. If your email leaves a good impression, you may be more likely to get a quicker, more thorough response.

Starting your message

- **DO** pay attention to the recipient’s name and title (including the spelling of names). At university, these include Prof, Dr, Mr, Miss, Ms, Mrs. These details are easy to check via the School website
- **DO** open with a polite address (e.g., “Dear Dr Evil”)
- **DON’T** address someone by their first name unless you are on familiar terms with them - if in doubt opt for formality. If someone signs off their email to you with just their first name, then they are probably inviting you to call them by their first name
- **DON’T** begin messages with overly familiar openers (e.g., “Yo, Blair”)

Tone & Manner

- **DO** be polite and respectful
- **DO** be patient and allow time for a response. If the matter is urgent, it may be best to make a phone call
- **DO** think about the content of your message before you send it. The answer to your question may already be in the module handbook and/or Study Direct pages
- **DO** ensure that the content of the message is clear in the subject line, and that the person you are sending it to is the appropriate recipient
- **DO** check punctuation and spelling, and always reread your message before pressing ‘send’
- **DON’T** send e-mails that sound curt, abusive, or demanding
- **DON’T** bombard your addressee with messages (especially at weekends)
- **DON’T** send a message with no structure: this makes it difficult to follow. If your message is longer than a few paragraphs, then it may be best to briefly outline the key issue and ask for a face-to-face meeting
- **DON’T** send off an e-mail to the first staff member who comes into your head: they may not be the best person to contact for the most appropriate response

Signing off

- **DO** include a brief signature to help the recipient understand who has set the message (especially if the person is unknown to you). It may help to indicate your course and year of study.
- **DON’T** sign off in an overly familiar way

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