



## Professional Email Etiquette Tips

### Introduction:

- Email is currently one of the most widely used communication tools in both academic and professional life.
- The ability to craft professional emails is incredibly helpful, both in and out of the workplace. For example, emails can be used to request a recommendation, schedule an appointment or meeting, ask questions, etc.
- The goal of a well-composed email is to provide the recipient with a clear and concise message.
- While this guide can help you understand the topic and answer many of your questions, we also invite you to schedule a consultation with one of our Communication Consultants. Visit [our website](#) for more information. We are equipped to help with any of your course projects or communication challenges.

### Professional Email Formatting:

- **Subject line**
  - Summarizes the reason or purpose of your communication
  - Your email should always lead with a clear subject line so that the recipient(s) will know what to expect; a good subject line also keeps the email out of the spam folder
  - Be informative and concise
    - *Example:*
      - “Questions regarding XX”
      - “Request for an Appointment”
      - “[Class Name] Presentation”
      - “Thank you”
- **Salutation**
  - Act as a standard greeting which is also the first line of the email
  - Begin with “Dear,” “Hello,” or “Good morning/afternoon/ evening” and address your recipients by their title and name
    - Carefully consider the person’s title. Omitting their proper title or using the wrong one could offend your recipient
    - Be sure to include “Professor” or “Doctor” with their last name if you are writing to your instructor

- Use “Mr.” or “Ms.” with the last name if you are writing to professionals
- Be sure to double check that you are spelling the recipient’s name **correctly!**

- **Body / Context**

- The body serves as the most information-dense portion of the email, delivering the bulk of your message
  - Emails to networking contacts typically are requests for more information or questions regarding career advice
  - Emails to professors typically are questions related to courses; **provide your course number and section number** to ensure that your professor can answer your questions quickly and accurately
- Keep your email as concise as possible without leaving out key information
  - Do not address all the subjects at once in a full paragraph--it will be better to start each topic on a new line
  - Use bullet points or numbered lists for important details
  - Try to be succinct by removing any irrelevant comments, filler words, and extraneous information.
  - Ensure that you have addressed all the necessary topics

- **Closing**

- Conclude your message which is also the last line of your email before your signature
- You may reiterate any requests previously made
  - *Examples:*
    - “Please let me know if you any questions about XX”
    - “I am looking forward to speaking with you XX”
- Always remember to thank the recipient for his or her time and help
  - End the email with a “Thank you,” “Sincerely,” “Best,” or another simple send-off with your full name

- **Signature**

- Identify yourself by name, title, and other related personal information
- You could set up a fixed signature that will be automatically included to the end every time you send an email
- *Example:*
  - “First name Last name
  - Your role (Information like major, major roles/positions)
  - School/Institution name (Lehigh University)
  - Contact information (Optional like phone number, address, etc.)”

## Considerations:

- **Send from a professional email address**
  - Use your official university email address or a professional email address including your first and last name
- **Identity your goal**
  - Make sure you know what you want the recipient to understand or do after they receive your email
  - You could try to list a couple of subjects or questions first you hope to be replied/answered and expand them into short sentences
    - Think about the “why, what, and when” as you construct your email
- **Consider your audience** to make sure you know who is your recipient and address your email properly
- **Use proper etiquette**
  - Write in complete and coherent sentences
  - Avoid spelling errors, fancy fonts, colors, or graphics that will distract the recipient
  - Do not include emoticons in a professional email
  - Be clear, polite, and succinct
- **Proofread your email’s completion and relevance**
  - Double check your contents and any spelling, grammar or syntax errors before sending the email
  - Be sure you include any complete and relevant attachments if needed
  - You could also ask a trusted friend or an instructor to review your message and provide feedback
- **Remember to follow-up**
  - Check your email regularly and respond as soon as you are able
  - Consider reaching back out with a simple friendly follow-up if you have not received any responses from the recipient after a week

## Examples:

- [Email about course assignments](#)

**Subject:** BUS 001: Question about essay [*Your specific question/request*]

Dear Professor [*Last name*],

I am a student in your *BUS 001* section \_\_\_ [*course name*] and I have a question about the essay [*state your question/request*].

Should this essay draw only on readings listed on the syllabus or can I incorporate scholarly articles I read on my own, as long as it fits with the subject of the assignment?

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

[*Your name*]

[*Major*]

[*Lehigh University, Class of 20xx*]

- **Email about academic planning**

**Subject:** Course plan [*Your specific question/request*]

Dear Mr./Ms. [*Last name*],

I have a question about my academic plan for this semester.

In order to take [*course name*], I need to take a prerequisite course [*course name*] first, which might affect my current academic plan. Do you suggest that I should register for the prerequisite course this semester?

Thank you,

[*Your name*]

[*Major*]

[*Lehigh University, Class of 20xx*]

- [Email about a new job](#)

**Subject:** *[Company's Name] New [Job Title] - [Your Name]*

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

My name is *[Your Name]*, and I am a *[Job title and any personal connections to the company]*. I am reaching out to you to communicate my interest in the *[Job position]*. I became aware of this by *[Research or prior knowledge of the company]*.

I am confident that my qualifications and experiences are a great match for this position. Specifically, I have *[One to two highly relevant accomplishments not mentioned in the cover letter]*. Attached to this email for your review are my *[insert specific documents, typically cover letter and resume]*.

Please let me know if you are available to *[insert specific ask and time frame]*. My name and contact information are below for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*[Name]*

*[Phone number]*

*[Email address]*

- [Email about a proposal](#)

**Subject:** Proposal regarding Family Grocer Company *[Your proposal topic]*

Greetings Mr./Ms. *[Last name]*,

My name is Austin Schick *[Your name]*, and I am a business development manager with Bizzy Commercial Floor Care *[Your role]*. My objective in sending this email proposal is to decrease the cost of Family Grocer Company's nightly cleaning service by 15% using only direct hire labor *[Your main proposal topic]*. We can do this within 60 days of proposal acceptance *[Approximate delivery time]*.

Here's how the transition would be implemented:

*[Necessary information about related procedures, expectations, estimated outcomes, etc.]*

First, Bizzy Commercial Floor Care will hire the labor to work in all 36 Georgia stores within 30 days.

Within 60 days, we will deliver on nightly cleaning services, including scrubbing and buffing floors, high dusting and polishing fixtures. We will do this overnight, seven days a week, and Family Grocer Company will have access to a customer service line available for them to dial into at any time if there are issues. I will be your main point of contact throughout this process.

We at Bizzy Commercial Floor Care believe this will solve the issues you discussed in our meeting. First, you said you were concerned with ensuring quality standards are met, but you also want to reduce costs. We are offering our services for \$300 a day and will continue services on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for your time. I will follow up in one business day if I haven't heard from you sooner,

Austin Schick *[Your name]*  
Business Development Manager *[Your role]*  
555-123-3214 *[Contact information]*

- [Email about a referral request](#)

**Subject:** Referral Request

Dear Barbara Cho,

Recently on LinkedIn, I spotted a job ad for the position of marketing assistant at XYZ Corp. As I know you've been there for several years now, I wondered if you might be willing to give me a referral for the job.

I was especially excited to see that the job involves working heavily with your team on email marketing and social media campaigns. Since we last worked together at ABC LLC, I've gained extensive experience with HubSpot, Google Analytics, and SurveyMonkey. I'd love to put these skills to work for XYZ.

I've attached a copy of my resume and a link to my portfolio, so you can see my recent experience. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you'd like to see further samples of my work.

Best,

Cynthia Dailey *[Your name]*  
cynthia@email.com *[Contact Information]*  
portfoliosite.com/cdailey *[Additional information]*

**Parts of this guide were adapted from the following sources:**

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