Writing Professional Emails

Within your professional and academic career, you may often need to write formal emails. You might have to write a professional email when writing to a boss, a co-worker, a professor, the dean, the president, or someone you have not met.

Here are some tips for writing a formal email:

**Email Addresses**
Use an email address that contains your real name, not one with a clever nickname or user name. Use UT Dallas email addresses for communication with UT Dallas employees.

- *Correct:* suzanne.mcintosh@email.com
- *Correct:* abc123456@utdallas.edu
- *Incorrect:* catlover4335@email.com

Employers will take you more seriously when you use a respectable email address. It also shows that you take your job or school seriously.

**Subject Headers**
Write a brief, relevant title in the subject line.

- *Correct:* Subject: Interview for Accountant Position
- *Incorrect:* Subject: I just want to say thank you for interviewing me last Saturday

The subject line is meant to designate the main topic of the email. Leave everything else for the body of the email.

**Salutations**
Here are examples of *acceptable* salutations:

- Dear______,
- Hello ____.

Here are examples of *unacceptable* salutations:

- Hey!
- What’s up!

A formal email is similar to a formal letter. You want your salutations to sound respectful.

**Body of the Email**
Make sure the email is concise and to the point – avoid writing a long email. Keep paragraphs short and concise. If you find yourself writing a very long email, consider asking to schedule a meeting or a phone call instead. Also, it is important to write in a professional tone.

The University of Texas at Dallas Writing Center
Professional Tone
Here are a few tips to help you write in a formal, professional tone:

Make requests instead of commands
If you need the person to whom you are sending an email to do a favor for you, ask them politely instead of commanding them.

Correct: Would you be able to meet with me on Thursday?
Incorrect: Meet with me on Thursday.

Making requests will get your idea across more respectfully and shows that you are taking the other person into account.

Use neutral, people-first, non-discriminatory language
Using people-first language puts emphasis on the person, and helps you write without offending. For example, it is better to say “police” instead of “policemen” and “people with paraplegia” instead of “paraplegics.”

Avoid clichés, idioms, emoticons, and text speak
Clichés tend to be too informal and unoriginal. Idioms may not be interpreted correctly. Emoticons may be considered silly, and text speak creates a very informal tone that may even be considered rude.

Avoid contractions
Contractions are better used when speaking and writing informally. For formal writing, it is better to write out “do not” instead of “don’t.”

Closings
Here is a list of appropriate closings:

- Best regards,
- Best wishes,
- Best,
- Warm regards,
- Sincerely,
- Respectfully,

Follow with your first and last name. Include contact information after the signature.

Contact
Want to learn more about writing professional emails? Come work with a tutor at the Writing Center! Drop by or use the information below to contact us and set up an appointment.

(972) 883-6736
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http://www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/writing/