

Email Etiquette

How to Communicate Effectively with College Professors



Always use your official Monmouth College email account

This lets a professor know who is sending the email. Do not forget to sign your name.

Do not use Gmail, Hotmail, Facebook, or your home internet provider email accounts. Emails from unofficial addresses might be ignored, deleted, or spammed without being read.

Subject Line: First and last name plus course name and section number

Identify yourself as a student in your professor's class as opposed to a fellow professor or a campus announcement. *Example: Ima Pacer - AEGL 101 section 003*

Instructors who teach 3-4 classes, serve on committees, and conduct research receive many emails every day, so it helps both you and your professors if they can quickly see what your message is pertaining to.

Greetings/Acknowledgements: Start the e-mail with a sense of respect

Before beginning the e-mail, review your course syllabus to determine the appropriate prefix for a professor's name. If the name is given on the syllabus as "Dan Jones" and you are unable to determine what prefix to use, use "Professor Jones" to be safe. Also, check to see if the question you are asking is answered in the syllabus.

No matter how easy-going you perceive your professor to be, never start a message with "Hey teach!"

A more appropriate start to an e-mail message could be something as simple but meaningful as "Hope your day is going well. Great class on Monday."

The Message Itself: Be specific and present it in an organized manner

Get to the point of your e-mail. If you cannot leave out long stories, scenarios, or situations that you find need paragraphs to explain, it might be more appropriate to make an appointment to talk to your professor, in person, during office hours rather than over e-mail.

Example: "I need to clarify an aspect of the assignment due next week. Would you prefer the paper be double spaced or single spaced?"

If you must turn in a homework assignment via an actual e-mail message, present material in an organized manner using spacing and breaks if necessary. You want your homework to be organized and presented in a visually pleasing way for ease of reading. Again, refer to your syllabus to verify proper format for assignments.

Concluding the Message: End with appreciation

Examples:

"Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon."

"I appreciate you taking the time to consider my request."

Do not use slang or IM/texting abbreviations such as LOL, TTYL, "Peace Out!" etc. "Thank you" is appropriate.

Finally, close with both your first and last name, the course name and schedule such as:

Ima Pacer, AEGL 101 section 003, Monday & Wednesday 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Final Suggestions:

BEFORE SENDING: Always read the message out loud and run a spellchecker.

AFTER SENDING: Do not expect replies to come instantly, after hours or on weekends/holidays.

Adapted from University of Central Florida Student Academic Resource Center, Student Success Center, Division of Student Development and Enrollment Services.. (n.d.). *Email netiquette – how to communicate effectively with college professors.* Retrieved Sep. 14, 2007, from http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/MCLCW_sheets/email.pdf

EXAMPLES

Good Email:

Hello Professor X,

This is Imma Pacer and I have your class tomorrow at 9:25. I just completed the online quiz and when it was about to give me a confirmation, the internet shut down on me. I just wanted to make sure that it went through.

Thanks,

Imma

What the student did right:

The student identifies himself and what class he is in. The student quickly and specifically identifies his problem. The student also uses a greeting and a conclusion (Hello __, and Thanks, ____)

Bad Email:

Dr. pacer, i was wandering how i recieved a bad grade in your class. I believed i was doing fairly well in there. Is there anyway u can explain to me how this happend?

What the student did wrong:

Careful attention needs to be paid to grammar and spelling. The student also uses informal “texting” language (“u” instead of “you”). The student also does not identify herself or the class and section he is in. Additionally, grades are a subject which should be discussed in person with the instructor.