

# Professional Emails

Often we don't give due attention, or take enough time, to write an effective email. But our emails are a reflection of our critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. They can make or break moments in professional communication. They are also a great way to connect with your professor to let them know you are engaged in the course and your own learning. It's always smart to ask your instructor or supervisor about their preferred communication protocols. Here are some basics if you don't have access to that info!

## Email Address

To: yourprof@lsu.edu

- ◆ Add your recipient's email only after you've completed writing and attaching!
- ◆ Double check you have the correct and preferred address.

## Subject

Subject: Email Etiquette Tips

- ◆ Be specific. This helps the recipient prioritize.
- ◆ Be brief.
- ◆ Avoid words like "URGENT" (ironically, they get ignored!)

## Greeting

Dear Professor Smith,

- ◆ Keep it formal (unless they have advised you informal greetings are accepted.)
- ◆ Use official titles or (if you have this info) their preferred referent
- ◆ Don't know them or their title? Google it!
- ◆ Keep it gender-neutral until you know the appropriate pronouns to use.

## Body

Thank you for taking time in our CxC 1001 class to talk with me about professional writing. After class I followed your suggestion and took some time to research best practices for email etiquette. I've attached some tips I found insightful, but I want to make sure I am on the right track. Are you available to schedule a meeting to discuss a few follow up questions I have about how to apply these ideas for different audiences and scenarios?

- ◆ Tell/remind them how you know them.
- ◆ Answer the questions you anticipate they'll have.
- ◆ Be clear about what you are asking of them.
- ◆ Keep the tone positive or optimistic when possible.
- ◆ Use contractions for a friendlier tone, and graphical symbols when you know your audience will accept them as appropriate :)
- ◆ Keep the design simple: fancy fonts and backgrounds can make you seem unprofessional.
- ◆ Avoid slang acronyms (btw, lol, etc.) and ALL CAPS

## Closing

Thank you for your time,

- ◆ Keep it brief and appropriate for the tone of the message.
- ◆ Other common closings are "sincerely" and "thank you"

## Signature

Mike Tiger  
LSU Mascot  
miketiger1@lsu.edu  
(225) 578-0000

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Title/Major
- ◆ Email
- ◆ Phone Number (if appropriate)

## Attachments

 EmailTips.pdf (1 MB)

- ◆ Mention in the body of the email that you've attached the file.
- ◆ Keep the file size small enough to send.
- ◆ Label the file clearly so it doesn't get lost in the recipient's downloads folder.
- ◆ It sounds silly, but remember to actually attach the file!

### Before You Hit SEND:

Like any other form of writing - draft and revise, then revise again!  
Ask yourself - is it more appropriate to talk this out? For complicated or sensitive topics, or disagreements, likely yes.

**Bottom Line:** Be clear and concise. Make every word and detail count!