

CRAFTING PROFESSIONAL EMAILS

The following guideline is a list of suggestions that can help you craft an effective email to instructors and staff. The examples used cater more towards students interested in becoming involved with undergraduate research. These guidelines, however, can be molded to suit a variety of applications such as job opportunities, internships, or appointments.

1

CLEAR SUBJECT LINE

Having a clear, concise subject line is the first step to crafting an effective email. Use this line to capture your advisor/instructor's attention and describe why you are contacting them. Avoid subject lines in all caps, with URLs, or excessive exclamation points. This can be marked as Spam.

Examples:

- Advising Appointment Request
- Office Hours Inquiry

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PROFESSIONAL GREETING & INTRODUCTION

This is your first impression, so be sure to respectfully introduce yourself. We recommend using formal language when addressing instructors or staff members.

If your instructor has a doctoral degree (MD, PhD, DrPH, etc.), please address them as "Dr.". If you are unsure of your instructor's educational degrees, use "Professor". Do not use jargon, slang, or shortcuts when addressing instructors or advisors (avoid "4 u" instead of "for you").

Provide your first name, last name, program or course number and section (if applicable), student ID#, and why you are emailing your advisor/instructor.

Examples:

- Hello Instructor Young,
My name is Lee and I am in your BIO 111 43H course. I am sorry that I have not been able to participate fully in class. Recently, I have been struggling to focus in the classroom. I have been overwhelmed by my classes and other personal things that are going on. I am currently working with the Student Support Center and Accessibility Services to help me better manage my time and stay present during class. I would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you to create a plan for how I can make up those participation points.
- Good afternoon Mrs. Smith,
My name is Jane Doe and I would like help with setting up my classes for the Spring 2026 semester. I see that you are listed as my advisor in Self-Service. I am in the Associate in Arts program, and my student ID# is 1000000. Please contact me by email (hawtheotter@access.alamancecc.edu) or phone (336) 000-0000.

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PURPOSE OF EMAIL

The purpose of your email's body is to outline why you are contacting your instructor/advisor. Instructors and staff receive numerous emails each day, so it is important to be clear and concise about your request. Many students will use emails to arrange a meeting with their instructor/advisor.

Try to find their office hours prior to emailing them to suggest times that may work for their availability. If they do not have specific office hours, try to provide a few options for times to meet. Advisors may also have scheduling links available to students. Check to see if you've received a Welcome Email from your advisor that may include the link.

Examples:

- I am reaching out to request an extension on the assignment due on October 12th, 2025. I have come down with the flu and will not be able to work on the assignment for the next few days. Please let me know if you would like to see my doctor's note.

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CLOSING YOUR EMAIL

Thank your instructor/advisor for their time and willingness to meet with you. You can provide the best way to contact you (email, phone, etc.)

Examples:

- Thank you for your time, Mrs. Smith! I appreciate your help with figuring out my schedule, especially since I registered for classes at the last minute. Please contact me by email if you need anything else to complete my registration.

Best,
Michael

EMAIL TIPS

- Be professional! Use formal language at all times.
- Do not use text language (4 u, c u soon, thx, etc.)
- Send all emails from your ACC account. Sometimes, if you use your personal email, your instructor/advisor may not receive it. Use your email ending in "@access.alamancecc.edu".
- Keep your email short and concise. Only include necessary information. Do not yell in UPPERCASE LETTERS! or use excessive exclamation points! Avoid emotional emails.
- Do not email to express anger, reprimand, or gossip.
- Clearly name any attached file using your name, document title, and year if applicable.
- Use a respectful tone throughout your email and always address the recipient by their formal credentials.
- When using the CC or BCC, only include individuals that need to know the information in your email.
- Avoid sending emails at unusual times (midnight, 4:00 AM, etc.).
- PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD!
- Please respond in a timely manner once they respond to you. If you do not receive a response within 7 days, feel free to follow up.
- When in doubt, contact your **advisor** or the **Student Support Office** (studentsupport@alamancecc.edu). We are here to help you!