

# WRITING EMAILS AT UNI

Email is one of the main forms of communication at UWA. An email to anyone at university is a professional communication and should be written formally and politely. Here are some guidelines for writing emails to staff, students and external parties:

## Before you email...

Check that the information you need is not already available on the LMS, the university website, or in your Unit Outline. Unit Coordinators work hard to ensure that a lot of detail is available in these places, so always look before sending an email.

## Subject line

Your subject line acts as the 'headline' to your message, so make it short, informative and to-the-point; for example, *Request for consultation* or *Absence from class*.

**TIP:** Title any email attachments and include your name and student number.

## Mode of address

Address the person you are emailing with their formal title, unless you have an established relationship with them; for example, "Dear Dr Jones", "Dear Ms Lee". In any follow up emails, take your cue from how they signed off in their reply — if they signed off using their first name, you can usually address them using their first name in any further emails.

**REMEMBER:** Always use your UWA student account to email university staff and students. This ensures that all your uni-related correspondence is kept in one place and means that your email is less likely to be filtered into Junk Mail.

## Email body

Your first sentence should briefly introduce yourself, followed immediately by the purpose or request of your email. Any necessary further information or context can come in additional paragraphs. Sign off with your full name and student number.

**TIP:** When asking a question, show that you have done some initial work to develop your understanding by framing it narrowly and specifically. For example, instead of asking "Can you help me develop my assignment topic?" ask "For my essay topic, I'm considering [A] or [B]. Which do you think is most appropriate?"

## Following-up

Always allow at least **two business days** for your recipient to reply to your email before you send a follow-up. Remember, **your deadlines are not other people's deadlines**. If you are emailing about a time-sensitive matter, mention this timeline politely, but realise it does not oblige your recipient to act or respond urgently.

## How to follow up... politely

If you need to send a follow-up email, it is good practice to include the original text:

- Find your initial email in your 'Sent' folder, and click 'Forward'. This will add your previous email below your new email, reminding the recipient about your original enquiry.
- Replace the "Fwd:" text from the subject line with "Follow-up:"
- Your follow-up can be very brief, directing them to your earlier request.

**REMEMBER:** Many staff members get dozens of emails a day, so always be polite and considerate in your reminder.

## Example email to Unit Coordinator

**Subject:** Request for UNIT1234 consultation

Dear Professor Morel,

I'm a student in your UNIT1234 unit, in the Tuesday 3pm workshop. I am writing to ask if I can make an appointment with you to discuss how I can improve my methodology for our project proposal.

If possible, do you have any availability on Monday mornings between 10 and 12, Tuesday afternoons after 2pm, or any time on Friday? If not, please let me know when you might be free, and I will try to find a common time.

Kind regards,  
Edwin ARDEN  
(Student ID: 2222222)

Formal address for first communication

Short introduction for context

Indicate the range of your availability, to limit back-and-forth of emails

Sign-off with full name and Student ID

Email subject concise and informative

Purpose/request of email stated in first paragraph

Show flexibility in your request

## Some Do's and Don'ts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Don't</b> use text-speak, informal abbreviations or emojis;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> be too informal or familiar in your tone and avoid using offensive language;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> use coloured text or elaborate fonts;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> send unsolicited attachments; and</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> forget to say thank you!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Do</b> be polite, concise and to-the-point;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> put your request at the start of the email;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> use proper grammar, spelling, capitalisation and sentence structure;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> be patient when waiting for a response; and</li><li>• <b>Do</b> use your UWA student email account.</li></ul>
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