



Emails to Academic Staff- Tips and Useful Phrases

Cross off any tips below which are usually bad ideas.

Starting

1. Use the same naming conventions as you would when face to face with that person.
2. Use "Dear" with just their position in the institution.
3. If in doubt, use one level above what you imagine their actual position or qualifications would suggest.
4. Usually start with a general friendly greeting ("How are you?" etc).
5. Make any friendly greetings as specific as possible.
6. Start with a (very specific) mention of the last contact or communication between you and that person.
7. Start with an apology.
8. Directly mention which lecture you are attending.
9. Find a more indirect way of making sure that the person knows who you are.

Main body

10. Use "Please (check my.../ look at.../...)" / "Would you...?" / "I'd like you to..." / "I'm afraid I have to ask you to..." / "I need you to..." / "Thank you for your cooperation." for requests.
11. Mention any attachments or pasted in text.
12. Include at least one more sentence after mentioning attachments.
13. Give reasons for requests, delays, etc.
14. Even if you are expected to send something, still use the language of requests to talk about them looking at it.

Ending

15. Use general business last lines ("I look forward to hearing from you soon", "If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me", "Thank you in advance").
16. Use a last line which is more specific to the content of the email.
17. Mention the next contact or communication in the last line.

Brainstorm suitable phrases to do the good things or ways of doing something better than the bad things. (You only need to do this once for any pairs of tips above).

Can you think of any other similar tips or language for emails to professors etc?

Academic Writing Process tips

What advice would you give someone about the process of academic writing?

What stages are there?

What orders could those stages go in?

At what stage(s) would you think about the title? What would that depend on?

What tips could you give about titles in different kinds of academic writing?



Emails to academic staff Tips and useful phrases Suggested answers

Bad ideas are in italics

Starting

1. *Use the same naming conventions as you would when face to face with that person – Not a good idea*
2. *Use “Dear” with just their position in the institution – “Dear teacher”, “Dear Doctor”, “Dear my teacher”, “Dear lecturer” etc are not correct. If you really can’t find out their name, “Dear Professor” might be okay in the place of “Dear Sir or Madam”*
3. If in doubt, use one level above what you imagine their actual position or qualifications would suggest – Dear Professor + family name, Dear Dr + family name
4. *Usually start with a general friendly greeting (“How are you?” etc) – Not usually suitable*
5. Make any friendly greetings as specific as possible – I hope you enjoyed the trip which you told us about in the last lecture./ I hope you have recovered from your cold.
6. Start with a (very specific) mention of the last contact or communication between you and that person - Thanks for your lecture on..., which was very interesting./ Thank you for your email yesterday about the lecture that I missed.
7. *Start with an apology – Not usually a good idea, better to make that the second sentence*
8. *Directly mention which lecture you are attending – Usually better to do the thing below*
9. Find a more indirect way of making sure that the person knows who you are – Thank you for your very interesting lecture about... on Wednesday afternoon./ Please find attached the homework task “Write about misconceptions in your field”, which is due by Friday.

Main body

10. *Use “Please (check my.../ look at.../...)/ “Would you...?”/ “I’d like you to...”/ “I’m afraid I have to ask you to...”/ “I need you to...”/ “Thank you for your cooperation.” for requests – None of these are requests, they are all commands/ orders, and are unsuitable however polite the language you use. Suitable requests phrases include “Could you (possibly)...?” and “Would it be okay for me to...?”*
11. Mention any attachments or pasted in text – Please find... attached./ I have attached.../ Please see... below./ I’ve pasted in.../ The text in blue is.../ INFORMAL Here is...
12. Include at least one more sentence after mentioning attachments – It’s slightly over the word limit, but.../ If you have any problems reading it, please let me know./ I wasn’t sure which format was best, so I’ve included both PDF and Word document versions.
13. Give reasons for requests, delays, etc – This is because.../ The main reason for this is...
14. *Even if you are expected to send something, still use the language of requests to talk about them looking at it. – Not a good idea. It’s better to use things like “I look forward to receiving your feedback.”/ “I hope it’s better than my last attempt.”/ “As requested, here is my...”/ “As per your instructions, ...”/ “Following your instructions, I have...”*

Ending

15. *Use general business last lines (“I look forward to hearing from you soon”, “If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me”, “Thank you in advance”) – Not usually suitable, for example because a professor will obviously not hesitate!*
16. Use a last line which is more specific to the content of the email – Thanks again./ I hope that’s okay./ Please let me know if that might be okay./ I’ll write again with the finished document by Friday./ Thanks for your patience.
17. Mention the next contact or communication in the last line – See you in the tutorial on Friday./ I look forward to your next visit to our university./ I hope we have a chance to meet again at a symposium soon.