Email Messages Guide: What Do Your Emails Look Like?

Email is a critical daily mode of communication, and this guide aims to serve your transition into the language and cultural expectations of emailing in our academic community. We have identified the most common and important email advice that our community needs for sending initial emails, complex emails, and formal emails, as outlined in our <u>Email</u> Messages Guide resource series.

Before you continue reading, choose one or more of the following scenarios and find at least one email you have written that closely resembles that situation. If you cannot find one, you can write a sample email of your own. Then, as you read the examples, you can identify ways you might edit your email(s).

Scenarios

- 1. Requesting a Deadline Extension: You are unable to submit an assignment by the due date. You also cannot meet with your professor in person to ask for an extension before the deadline. For this reason, you need to send your professor an email asking for a deadline extension as soon as possible.
- 2. Requesting a Letter of Recommendation: You are applying for a job in your home country. You need a letter of recommendation as part of the application package. You need to send an email to a professor that you have worked with during your time at Vanderbilt to ask for a letter of recommendation on your behalf.
- 3. Making an Appointment: You are concerned about your progress in one of your classes. You need to meet with your professor to discuss the course materials and your overall progress in the class. Unfortunately, you are not available during the professor's regular office hours, so you need to email them to see if he has another time available to meet outside of class.
- **4. Inquiring about Research:** You are particularly interested in working more closely with a faculty member on campus, and they have recommended an article for you to read, but you are having trouble seeing the connection to your work. The next step is to write the professor and schedule a meeting to explain your problem and discuss the research topic.
- **5. Seeking Clarification from a Lecturer:** You left a lecture on campus feeling confused. However, the topic area is connected to your research focus, so you would like to get clarification. You have never met the speaker before, but you decide to email them to follow up.

Now that you have found (or written) at least one email fitting our scenario(s), you can read further and see if you have met emailing expectations in the US academic context. Next, you will see sample emails that resemble these scenarios and you can use them to continue editing your emails.

Example Emails

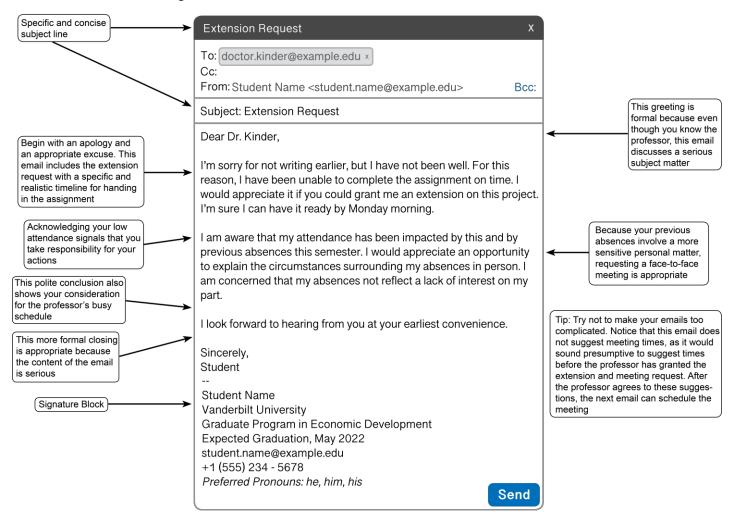
In your academic and professional life, the reasons you write emails are often not as clear as the examples on page 1. You may have multiple needs, or a situation is complex because of your position in the department or your former communications with the recipient.

The following sample emails exemplify such complex scenarios and interweave the advice given throughout the our Email Messages Guide resource series. The examples and commentary can help you develop a sense for how to adapt the

advice in this resource to fit the complex situations you encounter as well as edit email length, structure, and language in your context.

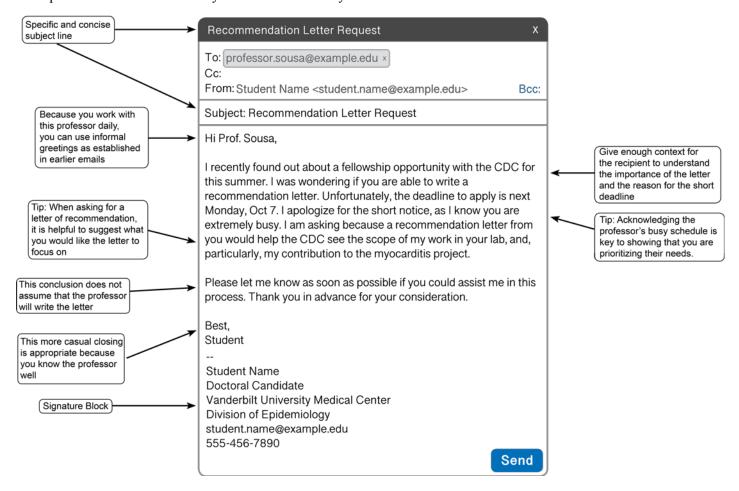
Example 1

Imagine you have been sick and missed several classes. Now you need an extension on an assignment. In this case, acknowledging your absences and affirming your interest in the material is a great way to show the professor that you care about the class and are a diligent student.



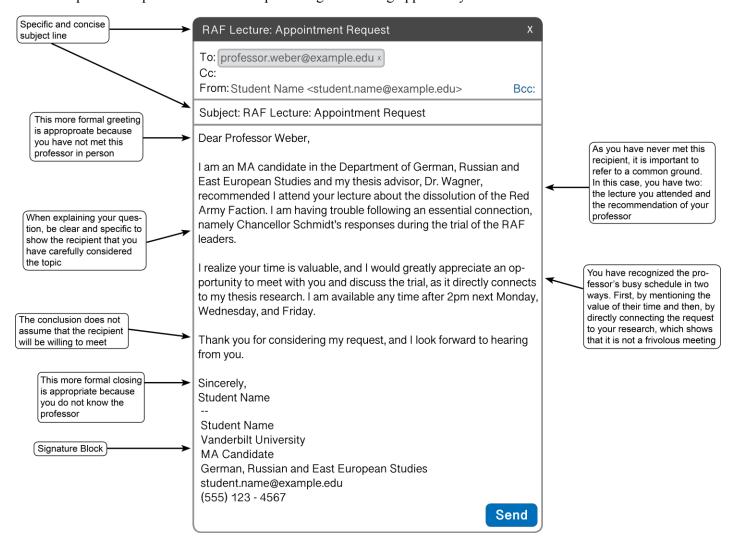
Example 2

Imagine you are requesting a letter of recommendation from your lab supervisor, but the deadline is short, which makes writing the letter inconvenient. You work with Prof. Sousa regularly, but making a formal and difficult request requires a more polite and formal tone than you would use in daily conversation.



Example 3

You left a recent lecture on campus feeling confused. However, the topic area is connected to your research focus, so you would like to get clarification. You decide to email the speaker to follow up and ask for a meeting because developing a relationship with this professor could be a promising networking opportunity.



Summary

Our Email Messages Guide resource series was developed as a way to provide English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners the opportunity to better write and edit emails.

We hope this guide will provide you with strategies for more productive email communication. If you have questions, please contact <u>elc@vanderbilt.edu</u>.

Find this guide and more online at: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/email-messages-guide/