

How to write an email to a Professor or in a Professional Role

How you present yourself via email may be the first way another person will encounter you. More importantly, what you write via email cannot go away. Therefore, it's vital that you learn how to develop practices that continuously allow you to be viewed as a professional. Remember, email correspondence is a primary factor in how seriously you are treated and will determine how you are viewed when you request further assistance, including reference letters, future advice, etc. Here are some basic rules to frame your correspondence:

1. **Be formal:** always address a potential employer or professor with a formal greeting, including any professional titles.
 - a. Ex: Dear Professor Smith,
 - b. Dear Ms. Jacobson,
 - c. Don't be disrespectful and assume that saying "Hello," "Hey," "Whatup," is acceptable. It is not.
2. **State your purpose:** Are you asking for something? Are you emailing a professor about an assignment or need help? Are you trying to get an interview? Cut to the chase, but be polite.
 - a. Ex: I am writing to enquire about...
 - b. Ex: I sent my resume to your company last week and wanted to confirm that you received it...
3. **Spellcheck/Proofread:** don't make a simple grammar mistake in an email to a potential employer – they probably won't employ you.
4. **Always thank the contact for their time at the end of the email:**
 - a. Ex: Thank you for your time and consideration, I look forward to hearing from you soon.
5. **End the email with a closing remark and include contact information and your full name:**
 - a. Ex: Best,
Brian Smith
555-343-5656
 - b. Sincerely,... Thank you,... Warmly,...
6. **Be culturally sensitive.** Titles and Surnames are varied throughout the world and it's important to adapt to the conventions of the person or organization you are contacting. For example, Asian and Latin American surnames may have different orderings or emphasis. If you are not sure, try to check for cultural contexts. The following UNM resource may help if you want to explore further:
<http://libguides.unm.edu/international-business/etiquette>

7. **Accommodate requests from people:** If you are corrected by someone, don't get flustered. If someone asks you to call them by a specific name, or if someone informs you of an error, take it in the manner intended – that's a learning moment and show your appreciation. Avoid being combative or overly explaining yourself.