

# **EMAIL ETIQUETTE & PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION**

## **OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES**

Present yourself in a professional manner when corresponding with potential contacts, employers and colleagues. Written communication, particularly email, is a vital component of success in academics, the job search, and the workplace. No matter what form the communication takes, it is helpful to know how to craft certain documents and what to say in order to always personify professionalism.

### **GUIDELINES FOR EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

- Use a professional email address, such as your university account or one that is a variation of your name (example: [rowdyredhawk@semo.edu](mailto:rowdyredhawk@semo.edu)).
- Include an informative subject line.
- Address the recipient with a polite greeting and their formal title (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Professor, etc.). Do not use first names unless you know this person well or they sign an email with their first name. If you are unsure of pronouns, it is appropriate to address the recipient using first and last name (example: Dear Rowdy Redhawk).
- Watch the tone of the email as it impacts others' perception of you. Construct business-like emails.
  - Be polite and respectful.
  - Be concise. Complex sentences make it easier for misinterpreting information.
  - Select terms and phrases that cannot be read more than one way, especially if the person is not familiar with how you speak.
  - Avoid texting language, slang, jargon, emojis/emoticons, or excessive punctuation.
  - Overuse of capital letters gives the appearance of shouting.
  - Use correct punctuation, grammar, and spelling.
  - Conclude with a polite closing such as "Sincerely" or "Thank you."
  - Include a signature block which contains your contact information.
  - Proofread the entire message before clicking "Send."
- Common courtesies.
  - Wait for a response (up to 24 hours) as the recipient may be too busy to respond right away.
  - Respond to emails in a timely fashion, depending upon the request of the sender.
  - Do not annoy others by clicking "Reply All" unless it is vital for the message truly to be read by all.
  - Do not share confidential or controversial information.
  - When asking a question of a professor, employer, etc. always check the syllabus or application materials first to see if it isn't already answered.
  - Do not substitute email for a more productive face-to-face conversation.

## TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

**Networking:** Begin building relationships with professionals already in your field of interest and arrange potential informational interviews/meetings with them.

- Outline the connection between you and the reader.
- Define the purpose of your correspondence with the reader.
- Maintain a courteous and professional tone, ensuring the reader does not feel pressured.
- Thank the reader for their time and consideration.

**Prospecting/Inquiry Letter:** Market yourself to companies you would like to work for but who may not currently have a position available.

- Similar to a cover letter. You present your skills/experiences as they relate to the company in general.
- Outline how you would be a great fit for the company and respectfully ask for a potential meeting with the reader.
- Thank the reader for their time and consideration.

**Thank You Note:** Thank every individual with whom you met with during a recent interview process or informational interview/meeting.

- Express your sincere appreciation for the opportunity to meet and learn from this individual.
- Briefly present strong skill sets again.
- Reiterate enthusiasm and interest in the position/company.
- Thank the reader again for their time and consideration.

**Rescind Letter:** Remove yourself from an employer's search process when you have either accepted a position with another employer or have decided a position may not be the best fit for your personal and/or professional goals.

- Be clear and to the point on your decision to rescind from the search process.
- Reinforce your reasoning for your decision. There is no need to supply in-depth or highly personal reasons for your decision. Keep it professionally centered.
- Thank the reader for their time and consideration.

**Acceptance Letter:** Reinforce a verbal acceptance of a position and specify some of the details of the accepted position/offer.

- Reaffirm your excitement and appreciation for the opportunity!
- Confirm your acceptance, identifying specific details which were discussed during the offer (start date, salary, etc.)

**Decline Letter:** Notify an employer you are respectfully declining their extended offer.

- Present appreciation for the offered position.
- Provide your decision with a clear, brief explanation (You do not need to be too detailed).
- Be respectful toward the reader and thank them for their time and consideration and express appreciation for the offer.