

E-Mailing Your Professor



The Learning Center
at UNC-CH



Don't

Don't embarrass yourself.

Remember to proofread before you hit Send. Mistakes might be interpreted as humor or an insult.

Don't expect an immediate response.

Professors have different work schedules. Twenty-four hours is a standard window for an e-mail response during the business week.

Don't complain about grades. Unless you have been specifically advised to use e-mail for grading topics or issues, don't. Go to office hours and discuss grade questions face-to-face.

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Do

Use your UNC e-mail address. Save your other email accounts for use with friends and family.

Use a salutation. The safest way to start is with "Dear Professor Jones." This will avoid the issue of whether the professor has a PhD or not.

Use the subject lines. Write a brief and specific description of your purpose, such as "question about lecture" and include the course number. Do not make demands, such as "immediate response needed."

Be concise in the body of your email. Your message should be clear and brief.

Capitalize, punctuate, and check your spelling. You want to convey an impression as a serious student. This is not a post on Facebook or a text message. Be careful or your professor may LOL@u.

Check e-mail. It's currently most professors favorite mode of communicating. They may not Facebook, Tweet or text.

Acknowledge any and all replies. If your professor answers your email, sends a handout, or agrees to write a reference, be sure to acknowledge this with a thank you in your reply. Your professor will appreciate your good manners.

Remember

E-mail is forever. Once you send it off, you cannot get it back. Your professor owns it and can do with it what he or she wants (like forwarding it to others). At UNC, all e-mail sent on a University server is saved.



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