

E-mail Etiquette Guide

The Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) *E-mail Etiquette Guide* is intended to help the NDU Community across the three NDU campuses to write e-mails clearly, consistently, correctly, and purposefully. It is generally understood that the way we communicate speaks volumes of our institution and us. We, therefore, ask all faculty, staff, and students to pay close attention to the following tips when writing e-mails.

ALWAYS

- Include a clear and direct subject line.
 - Examples of a good subject line include:
"Meeting location changed" or "Sponsorship Proposal"
- Use the same font type, size, and color in all your e-mails, i.e. Calibri 11, black
 - Dear Dr. Haddad,
- Use a comma (,) or a colon (:) after the salutation (colon is more formal)
 - Dear John,
 - Dear Prof Khoury:
- Use a comma (,) after the valediction, directly before the signature:
 - Best Regards,
Sarah
 - Many thanks,
Carla
- Pay attention to the recipient's name and title (including how the name is spelled).
 - Professor (for faculty who hold this rank – avoid using the abbreviation, “prof.”); Dr. (for faculty members with doctorates or Ph.Ds.); Mr.; Miss / Ms.; Mrs. These details are easy to check via the *University Directory* found on the website and on SHARE.
- Usually, if someone signs off with both their first and family names, this is an indication of formality, and you should reply by addressing that person with their title and surname.
 - Example:
Best Regards,
Souha Bechara
 - The reply should be:
Dear Ms. Bechara,

- If someone signs off with just their first name, they are probably inviting you to call them by their first name.
 - Example:
Best Regards,
Souha
 - The reply should be:
Dear Souha,
- Target your e-mail appropriately. Only send it to those who really need to read it or to take action concerning its content.
- Be concise and to the point. Edit it down to the basic essentials. Avoid excessive description and editorializing.
- Structure your message so that it is easy to understand, make questions and actions clear. Include action items for specific recipients.
- Be careful with the *REPLY TO ALL* and *CC* function. Do all of the recipients of the original message really need to read your response? You should only really use the *cc* function when the content is relevant to the recipient (s). Never use the *CC* function to intimidate.
- Re-read the e-mail before clicking *SEND*. This strategy helps to ensure that your message makes sense, and it may help you avoid potential misunderstandings later. Once you have clicked the *SEND* button, the e-mail cannot be retrieved.
Tips: - (1) Add recipients when you are done to avoid accidentally sending before a message is final – (2) If you are in an uncertain situation, have someone else review before hitting *SEND*.
- Never assume that because you have sent a message it has arrived. It is always better to ask for receipt confirmation/acknowledgment.
- Do not assume that all recipients use the same operating system or programs. Formatting may be lost when the recipient views the message, so it is a good idea to treat all messages as plain text unless you know what system the recipient uses.
- Think about tone. Consider the use of “please” and “thank you,” though there is a fine line between being pleasant and sounding obnoxious.

REMEMBER

- To respect peoples’ privacy and not pass e-mails to others when it is inappropriate to do so, or they have specifically asked you not to.
- Think carefully about what you write in an e-mail, as many others, in addition to the original recipient, may read it. For example, in the case where e-mails are forwarded without your knowledge or printed out and left on desks.

- Use meaningful, short, and clear headings in the *SUBJECT LINE*. This will help the recipient when prioritizing any response required.
- Indicate level of importance;
 - Tip: Overuse of the 'High Importance' option is likely to reduce its impact.
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor, as the meaning is often lost or misunderstood in an e-mail.
- Make it clear to the recipient if an e-mail is confidential or you do not wish it to be forwarded to others;
- Include a salutation and valediction. Omitting either suggests you are short on time and/or rude, neither of which is helpful. Also, avoid the peculiar:
 - Skip: "Hey," "G'day," "Ciao," "Cheers," etc.
 - Use: "Hello Sarah," "Best," "Have a good day," etc.
- To treat your e-mail address responsibly. Do not post it on inappropriate websites, and remember that using your e-mail address for any purposes that are not directly related to your job at NDU is likely to involve the University administration if disputes occur.
- Back up and archive important emails regularly to avoid losing data.

AVOID

- Solely using UPPERCASE to write messages – this is considered to be the equivalent of SHOUTING!
- Using colors (red, blue, green, etc.), bold type font, different fonts, underlining words or sentences, highlighting words or sentences to stress on a certain idea.
- Signing off in an overly familiar way:
 - Example: "Blondy-B," "Mikey xxx," "Mwah," "Bisous," etc.
- Using the corporate mailing list for private purposes and sending to all community individual messages:
 - Example: Holidays wishes
- Sending e-mail attachments to large numbers of people may cause bottleneck.
- Sending programs or executable files (.exe) as attachments as these will be blocked by the e-mail security system, as viruses etc. are often distributed in this way.
- Sending vulgar, abusive or defamatory messages - apart from being discourteous and offensive, they may break the law. This holds equally true when forwarding on "joke" e-mails.

Tip: Saying anything in an e-mail about someone else that you would not say directly to that person. Defamation by e-mail can carry the same consequences as by any other medium.

- Sending personal information via e-mail, for example credentials, credit card details, etc.
- Sending Reminders. It is annoying to receive *Reminders*, *Last Reminders* for events. Always remember that people who are interested in your event will surely flag it.