

Email Etiquette

For many of us at Oregon State University, students and staff alike, email is a tool that we use to perform our jobs more efficiently. It is a tool that makes communication easier when used properly. However, when misused, email can cause more problems than it solves. Here are few tips that can help to make email a more useful tool for us all:

- **Use a professional email address**
OSU student, faculty, and staff email addresses are considered professional. A personal email address may be filtered as spam (ex. Fuzzy_Bunny@ yahoo.com). So, *send your messages to faculty or other students from your onid email address.*
- **Use an appropriate salutation** Use “Dear Dr. XXX” rather than “Hey,” or “Dear Mrs. XXX” or “Dear Pat.” If you are uncertain whether your professor or advisor has a PhD degree (and should be addressed as “Dr.”), err on the side of caution – use “Dr” as the default; the person will invite you to use another name for them if they wish to.
- **Do not write in all capital letters.**
It is generally interpreted as SHOUTING.
- **Be concise.**
Most people don't enjoy reading off of a computer screen. State your point as quickly as possible. Be sure to include all the important facts, but be brief.
- **Use spell check.**
Pay attention to grammar and spelling. No one wants to guess what is being said, they want it spelled out for them (correctly). While email is less formal than letters, people will form an opinion of you based on how you write.
- **Write the subject of the email in the subject line.**
Writing "Hey", "Hi", or "Important info" in a subject line will often times cause the recipient to pass it off as spam.
- **Never send an email when angry.**
Before sending a message, consider whether you would say what you have written to the person's face. The detached nature of email will sometimes embolden people to say things they would never say in person. Remember, email that you send can be forwarded and there are no "take backs".
- **Do not assume that email you send to someone is private.**
People forward messages all the time. Email containing confidential student information may be shared with authorized university faculty and staff.
- **Be sure to include a signature.**
Signatures that have a full name, phone number, and email address are most useful. Include student ID# if appropriate.

Sources (with modification)

Modesto City Schools: Student Email Etiquette
http://www.monet.k12.ca.us/drivers_lic/Student%20Email%20Etiquette.pdf

Tufts University, Information Technology Services: Email Etiquette
<http://ase.tufts.edu/its/emailStudentSupport.htm>