

E-MAIL ETIQUETTE: GUIDELINES FOR CAFNR STUDENTS

E-mail is a very popular way to communicate today. In fact, along with other forms of Internet communications, it far surpasses “snail mail” in popularity. The advantages are obvious: E-mail is fast and free. However, these advantages make it tempting to be less than professional when sending an e-mail to a contact, employer or faculty member.

Consider the following e-mail message:

Subject: Hey!

Hey...I found a job posted that I was intrested in...events cordinater...lets talk soon...e-mail me back TTYL!!!!

So, what’s the problem? This message, sent to a potential employer, creates an unfavorable impression. The message doesn’t adhere to even one of the points in CAFNR’s E-mail Guidelines. If I’m seeking someone who is professional and detail oriented to plan my events, the person who wrote this message IS NOT THE ONE I WOULD CHOOSE!

Make it a habit to communicate professionally and remember that not everyone, especially faculty and employers, will appreciate the brevity of a text-style message!

E-MAIL GUIDELINES FOR CAFNR STUDENTS

1. All messages should have a concise and descriptive subject line. The purpose of the subject line is to alert the reader as to the content of the message.
2. Begin with a salutation. For example, if you are e-mailing a professor, it would be appropriate to begin your e-mail with “Dear Dr. Smith” or “Professor Smith” or even “Ms. Smith.” If you typically call Dr. Smith “Pat”, then go ahead and begin the e-mail with “Pat.” If you are unsure of how to address a professor, “Professor Smith” is the best choice.
3. Utilize traditional rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation in your message. Use spell check but also remember to proofread the message yourself as spell check won’t catch everything.
4. Avoid abbreviations associated with texting. Remember, not everyone understands texting lingo...and if you are writing to professionals, chances are good that you are addressing one of the “more experienced” generations who text less frequently.
5. Close your message with a signature. Be certain that you have included your full name and, if appropriate, some context as to the nature of your relationship with that individual. For example, you might share your major, the fact that you are in a specific class, or that you are an officer in a club.
6. Reply to e-mail requests in a timely fashion. Most expect that you will reply within one business day. This means you need to make it a habit to check your e-mail account(s) on a daily basis.
7. Send attachments only as they are requested or if you have alerted the receiver. For example, if you are sending your resume to a contact, you may want to alert him/her first to anticipate it. This will help you to avoid the possibility that a SPAM filter keeps your message from getting through.
8. Confidential information, such as your Social Security, credit card and student ID numbers, should not be shared using e-mail.

continued

SAMPLE E-MAILS

Writing for the first time to a CAFNR Connections mentor or another alumni/friend contact:
<http://cafnr.missouri.edu/career-services/connections/sample-email.php>

Writing to a professor for clarification regarding an assignment:

Subject: AGRIC 1115 Career Fair assignment

Dr. Smith,

I am in your AGRIC 1115 course and missed class last Wednesday due to a family emergency.

I am looking forward to attending the CAFNR Career Fair next week and have a question about the assignment you recently posted to Blackboard. Do we need to have our resume reviewed prior to attending the fair? I know the review is part of the career assignment; I am not sure when the resume review is due. I have asked a couple of my peers who are also in the course, but they are also unsure.

Thank you for answering my question. I will share the information with others.

Stephanie Chipman
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Major
Mizzou Meeting Planners Association

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR POLISHING YOUR E-MAIL COMMUNICATIONS:

<http://www.emailreplies.com/#rules>

<http://www.iwillfollow.com/email.htm>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01/>

<http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/65mailet.htm>

<http://michaelhyatt.com/2007/07/e-mail-etiquette-101.html>