



How to Write an Email to Your Professor

You will probably need to email your professor at some point during the semester. Maybe you cannot attend office hours and need to schedule another time to meet or perhaps you are sick and will not be able to complete an assignment on time.

Whatever its purpose, your email message should be professional and courteous. Your message should be clear and concise, so you minimize any potential for miscommunication or misunderstanding. Like other forms of writing, when you write your email, you should consider your purpose, the content, and the audience. Knowing more about the email genre will help you make decisions while you draft your email.

Before you Write the Email

1. Check the course syllabus, assignment instructions, lecture materials, and Quercus to see if the professor has already answered your question.
2. Check the syllabus or Quercus for your professor's e-mail policy.

Have they indicated any specific times or formats for communicating with them? Should you email them directly in Quercus, for example?

What are their preferences for how they should be addressed? Do they prefer to be called "Professor or Dr." or have they given you permission to address them by their first name?

3. Writing the E-mail

If you are emailing your professor outside of Quercus, make sure you use your mail.utoronto.ca email address. This email identifies you as being a part of the scholarly community of the university, and it is also the email address your professor has on file for you. If your professor has given you specific instructions about how to format the subject line or body of the email, follow their guidelines. If not, consider the suggestions here.

1. Include your course code in the email Subject line. Be specific about the content of the email, too. (e.g. Subject: BIO152 homework question)
2. Start the email by addressing your professor by name. If you do not know what to call them, use "Professor [last name] or Dr. [last name]."



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3. Introduce yourself. (e.g. I am a student in your Monday BIO152 class.)
4. Ask your question. Be as brief as possible.
5. End your e-mail by signing off. Include your name as it appears on ACORN, your preferred name, and your student number.

Email Example

Subject: BIO100 Alternate Research Assignment

Hi Professor Jackson,

I'm in your BIO100 course. Would you be able to meet me to discuss the alternate research assignment? I am available on Mondays and Thursdays after 3 PM.

Thank you,

Terry Lee

Student Number 1234567890

Sending the Email

Before you send, proofread your email to make sure there are no spelling mistakes. Make sure your question is clear and brief before you hit send. Be sure you have attached any necessary attachments.

Don't panic if your professor does not respond right away, especially if you sent the email late at night or on a weekend!