

# Email Etiquette Guide



Student Success Center  
&  
English Language Program



JOHNS HOPKINS  
CAREY BUSINESS SCHOOL

# Etiquette: Basic Set-up

- Use your [jhu email account](#) for all academic and professional communication. Note that you can change the settings on your account to reflect your English name, if you use one.

ywu281@jhu.edu → [alice.wu@jhu.edu](mailto:alice.wu@jhu.edu)

- Make sure your [phone and computer](#) are [set to English](#), otherwise your email will come through in another alphabet and likely be sent to the spam folder.

吴越 <9987185005033@qq.com → ???- need to update

- Make sure the response setting also comes from your jhu account. Otherwise, it could also go to a spam folder.
- You can set up a “[signature](#)” for your email. Include: Your full name, program, University/Company, Address, Phone and E-mail. See example below.

•Yue (Alice) Wu  
MS Finance, Class of 2018  
The Johns Hopkins Carey  
Business School  
100 International Drive  
Baltimore, MD, 21202  
Mobile: (410) 821-4420  
Email: [alice.wu@jhu.edu](mailto:alice.wu@jhu.edu)

# Subject Line

Every email needs one

- Be clear and specific about the topic of the email. The subject line should be the main point of the email.
- Do not include a greeting, such as “hello” or “greetings.”
- Use logical keywords so the recipient can easily search for your email.
- Only use your name if you are applying for a job.
- If someone has referred you for a job, be sure to use his/her name.

# Subject Lines

## Examples

### Job Application:

- Sally Brown-Marketing Associate candidate
- Referred by Michael Scott for Human Resources Assistant

### Interview Follow up:

- Sally Brown following up on Marketing Associate position
- Marketing Associate interview follow up

### Interview thank you:

- Thank you for the interview

### Introduction:

- An introduction: Nicholas Barnaby-Catherine Anderson

### Meeting invitation:

- Management Consultants:  
Thursday 10:00am

### Request for feedback:

- Feedback request by COB 3/24

### Requesting information:

- Inquiring about design services

# Greetings

For all formal e-mail communication use Dear + Recipient's Title + Last name. If you're sending an email to your professor, Melvin Gordon, you would use the greeting:

Dear Professor Gordon,

The titles "Professor" or "Dr." are used for both men or women. If the person you are emailing does not have one of those titles, use Mr. for men:

Dear Mr. Gordon,

And when emailing a woman, use "Ms." So, if you are emailing your advisor, Sandra Green, use the greeting:

Dear Ms. Green,

\*Note: The title "Officer" is never used, unless you are addressing a police officer. Also, the email address is not necessarily someone's full name. For example:

[gggreen7894@jhu.edu](mailto:gggreen7894@jhu.edu) → ~~Dear gggreen7894~~ Instead, it should read: Dear Ms. Green,

# Closings

## Acceptable Closings for Business/Academic Email

- Best,
- Kind regards,
- Regards,
- Sincerely,

## Inappropriate Closings for Business/Academic Email

- Love,
- Yours/Yours truly,
- xoxo

# Tone

Inappropriate	Better option
What's the problem?	Is everything OK? Or Can I help you?
Please help me.	Would you mind helping me with this?
I want to cancel my appointment...	Could I please cancel my appointment?
I want to know how...	Could you please tell me how...?
I need to reschedule...	Is it possible to reschedule?
Cancel my appointment...	Would it be possible to cancel my scheduled appointment...?
I have some problems here.	I am having some difficulty.
I want to know why...	I was wondering...
I want to make an appointment with you	Do you have time to meet with me sometime this week?
Could you explain it more to me?	I'm not sure I understood X. Could we meet to discuss it further?

# Tone

## Example 1

Dear Professor Bernard,  
I'm working on a project on minimizing the risk in developing property. I'd like you to look at it and give me some feedback. Could you please get it back to me by next Tuesday? Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Ross Gellar

### **Problems**

*I'd like you to look at it and give me some feedback.*

This is not asking for help, this is demanding help. Acknowledge that the person you are asking for help is very busy and that you understand they may not be able to assist you. Use modals to ask politely.

*Could you please get it back to me by next Tuesday?*

Remember, this professor has not agreed to help you yet, so giving him/her deadlines is not helpful. When explaining the project you need help with, tell them when the project is due and which aspect of the project you need help with. They can then decide whether or not they have time to assist you before then.



# Tone

## Polite Example 1

Dear Professor Bernard,

I'm working on a project on minimizing the risk in developing property, which is due next Tuesday. If you have time, would you mind taking a look at it and giving me some feedback? I'm especially concerned about X. Thank you for your time.

Best,

Ross Gellar

# Tone

## Example 2

Dear Professor Vance,  
I don't understand the lecture yesterday about finance reform. I want to make an appointment with you tomorrow at 12:00 so you can explain it more to me.

Best,  
Janice

### **Problems**

*I want to make an appointment with you tomorrow at 12:00*

Appointments need to be requested. Ask politely if the professor has time to meet with you. Offer at least two times that work for you to minimize the number of emails that need to go back and forth.

*So you can explain it more to me.*

This is not only demanding, but you are also blaming the professor, implying that he/she did not explain it sufficiently in class.

# Tone

## Polite Example 2

Dear Professor Vance,

I'm still a bit confused by aspects of the lecture yesterday about finance reform. Would it be possible to schedule an appointment with you this week to discuss it further? I am free either Tuesday or Thursday afternoon, or Friday morning. Thank you.

Best,

Janice Lin

# Template

## Absence

### Explaining Lateness

Subject: Quantitative Finance 4/29

Dear Professor Scott,

I am writing to let you know that I will be late for class because there is an urgent maintenance issue at my apartment now. I apologize for the short notice; I will be at school by 2:00PM.

See you in class.

Best,

Monica Gellar

### Explaining an Absence

Subject: Appointment to discuss X

Dear Professor Beasley,

I missed your class last week because of an illness. I've already talked to some of my classmates about the materials I missed, but I don't think I completely understand X. Could I make an appointment to meet with you tomorrow at 2pm or 5pm to discuss it?

Best,

Joe Tribianni



# Template

## Appointment Request

Subject: Appointment request to discuss X

Dear Dr. Watson,

After reviewing my notes on your lecture about X last week, I still have some questions about it. I'm specifically confused about... Would it be possible to schedule an appointment sometime this week to go over it? I'm available Wednesday and Friday afternoon this week.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Megan Chen

Subject: Seeking advice on X

Dear Professor Myers,

I'm interested in a career in X, and I know you worked in this field at Morgan Stanley for many years. If you have the time, would it be possible to meet to discuss your experience? I would like some advice on what I should be doing now to prepare for this career, and I would really appreciate any advice you could give me. Thank you.

Regards,

Mike Wayne

# Template

## Favor/Question

Subject: Request for more idioms materials

Dear Professor Halpert,

I really like the idioms part of your lecture and I have recently finished the idiom book "Speak Business English like an American." I have really learned a lot of useful idioms. Do you have any further material regarding idioms? I would appreciate it if you could recommend something for me.

Thanks.

Best,

Rachel Green

Subject: Request for investment summary feedback

Dear Professor Schrute,

I am having a problem with the financial report I'm working on, which is due in two weeks. I've already completed the forecasting portion, but I am not sure what should be included in the investment summary.

Attached is my investment summary draft and the related worksheet. I was wondering if you could take a look at it if you have the time and give me some suggestions. I would really appreciate it.

Thank you.

Best,

Phoebe Buffay

# Before you hit “send”

✓ Did you spell the recipient’s name correctly?

Misspelling the name of the person you are writing looks unprofessional, particularly when that person’s name is part of their email address. Don’t use a nickname unless the recipient has said it’s ok.

Example: Don’t call “Patrick” “Pat,” unless he tells you that you may do so.

✓ Did you hit “Reply All” when you should have hit “Reply”?

✓ Does your email look like a text message?

- You don’t want to write an academic or professional email the way you would speak or text. Double check to make sure you haven’t used text abbreviations or shortened things like “going to” to “gonna.”

✓ Did you use the spell check function?

- Spell check will not pick up every mistake, so make sure you read through it as well!

✓ Did you include a subject line?

✓ Do you also have an appropriate greeting and closing?

✓ If responding to a message, have you answered the questions that were asked?

- Failing to answer questions in a response, or asking questions that were answered in the previous email, shows that you have not taken the time to thoroughly read the email.

✓ Were you angry or upset when you wrote the email?

- If so, wait 24 hours (sleep on it) before hitting “send.”

# After you hit “send”

## Be patient!

- Remember, emails are not for issues that are time sensitive. A phone call is better if an immediate response is necessary.
- If you have sent an email after 5pm or on the weekend, you shouldn't expect a response until the recipient returns to work. Many people do not check their professional email accounts on their personal time.

## Follow-up:

If you have asked for assistance, a follow-up email may be necessary. Wait a few days before following up. They may just be working through a busy inbox!

# Appendix/Glossary

## Common Abbreviations and Terms

ASAP- As soon as possible.

FYI- For your information. This doesn't usually require a response, and is for informational purposes only.

COB- Close of business. (5:00PM)

RSVP- This stands for the French phrase, "répondez, s'il vous plaît," which means "please reply." This signifies a commitment.

Regrets only- You only need to respond if you can not attend.

# Appendix/Glossary

## Exclamation marks!!!!

In an academic or professional email, you want to avoid exclamation marks because they can be misinterpreted as angry, immature or too enthusiastic.

Exceptions can be made when you are praising someone (great job!).

## Explaining an absence

Do not “request a leave” or ask if it’s ok if you are absent.

If you are sick, simply inform your professor that you are not feeling well, or are “under the weather.” It is unnecessary to include details of your sickness or symptoms.

Scheduled doctor/dentist appointments are not considered an excused absence.





# JOHNS HOPKINS

CAREY BUSINESS SCHOOL

Where business is taught with humanity in mind.