

101 Email Etiquette Tips

It is important that whether for school or personal use that all ASU Students follow the basics of email etiquette. This document covers for you the top tips for email etiquette that everyone needs to be aware of and follow. By doing so you will be a joy to communicate with while being perceived as a caring and intelligent human being.

Sending Emails

1. Make sure your e-mail includes a courteous greeting and closing. Helps to make your e-mail not seem demanding or terse.
2. Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality and make sure you spelled their name correctly.
3. Spell check - emails with typos are simply not taken as seriously.
4. Read your email out loud to ensure the tone is that which you desire. Try to avoid relying on formatting for emphasis; rather choose the words that reflect your meaning instead. A few additions of the words "please" and "thank you" go a long way!
5. Be sure you are including all relevant details or information necessary to understand your request or point of view. Generalities can many times cause confusion and unnecessary back and forths.
6. Are you using proper sentence structure? First word capitalized with appropriate punctuation? Multiple instances of !!! or ??? are perceived as rude or condescending.
7. If your email is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Review the Sender's email again so that you are sure you are not reading anything into the email that simply isn't there.
8. If sending attachments, did you ask first when would be the best time to send? Did you check file size to make sure you don't fill the other side's inbox causing all subsequent e-mail to bounce?
9. Refrain from using the Reply to All feature to give your opinion to those who may not be interested. In most cases replying to the Sender alone is your best course of action.
10. Make one last check that the address or addresses in the To: field are those you wish to send your reply to.
11. Be sure your name is reflected properly in the From: field. Jane A. Doe (not jane, jane doe or JANE DOE).

12. Type in complete sentences. To type random phrases or cryptic thoughts does not lend to clear communication.
13. Never assume the intent of an email. If you are not sure -- ask so as to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.
14. Just because someone doesn't ask for a response doesn't mean you ignore them. Always acknowledge emails from those you know in a timely manner.
15. Be sure the Subject: field accurately reflects the content of your email.
16. Don't hesitate to say thank you, how are you, or appreciate your help!
17. Keep emails brief and to the point. Save long conversations for the old fashioned telephone.
18. Always end your emails with "Thank you," "Sincerely," "Take it easy," "Best regards" - something!

Formatting Emails

19. Do not type in all caps. That's yelling or reflects shouting emphasis.
20. If you bold your type, know you are bolding your statement and it will be taken that way by the other side - X10!
21. Do not use patterned backgrounds. Makes your email harder to read.
22. Stay away from fancy-schmancy fonts -- only the standard fonts are on all computers.
23. Use emoticons sparingly to ensure your tone and intent are clear.
24. Typing your emails in all small case gives the perception of lack of education or laziness.
25. Refrain from using multiple font colors in one email. It makes your email harder to view and can add to your intent being misinterpreted.
26. Use formatting sparingly. Instead try to rely on choosing the most accurate words possible to reflect your tone and avoid misunderstandings in the process.

Email Attachments

27. When sending large attachments, always "zip" or compress them before sending.
28. Never send large attachments without notice! Always ask what would be the best time to send them first.
29. Learn how to resample or resize graphics to about 600 pixels in width before attaching them to an email. This will greatly reduce download time.

30. Never open an attachment from someone you don't know.
31. Be sure your virus, adware and spyware programs are up to date and include scanning of your emails and attachments both incoming and outgoing.
32. It is better to spread multiple attachments over several emails rather than attaching them all to one email to avoid clogging the pipeline.
33. Make sure the other side has the same software as you before sending attachments or they may not be able to open your attachment. Use PDF when possible.

To, From, CC, BCC, RR, Subject:

34. Only use Cc: when it is important for those you Cc: to know about the contents of the email. Overuse can cause your emails to be ignored.
35. Don't use Return Receipt (RR) on every single email. Doing so is viewed as intrusive, annoying and can be declined by the other side anyway.
36. Include addresses in the To: field for those who you would like a response from.
37. Include addresses in the Cc: field for those who you are just FYI'ing.
38. Make sure your name is displayed properly in the From: field.
39. Remove addresses from the To:, CC; and BCC: field that don't need to see your reply.
40. Always include a brief Subject. No subject can get your email flagged as spam.
41. Think about your motives when adding addresses to To:, CC:, BCC. Use your discretion.
42. Never expose your friend's or contact's email address to strangers by listing them all in the To: field. Use BCC:!
43. Make sure when using BCC: that your intentions are proper. To send BCC: copies to others as a way of talking behind someone's back is inconsiderate.

Email Forwarding

44. Don't forward emails that say to do so--no matter how noble the cause may be. Most are hoaxes or hokey and may not be appreciated by those you send to.
45. If someone asks you to refrain from forwarding emails they have that right and you shouldn't get mad or take it personally.

46. When forwarding email, if you cannot take the time to type a personal comment to the person you are forwarding to--then don't bother.
47. Don't forward anything without editing out all the forwarding >>>>, other email addresses, headers and commentary from all the other forwarders.
48. If you must forward to more than one person, put your email address in the TO: field and all the others you are sending to in the BCC: field to protect their email address from being published to those they do not know. This is a serious privacy issue!
49. Be careful when forwarding email on political or controversial issues. The recipient may not appreciate your POV.

Email and Perception, Privacy, Copyright

50. Choose your email address wisely. It will determine, in part, how you are perceived.
51. Try not to make assumptions when it comes to email. Always ask for clarification before you react.
52. Posting or forwarding of private email is copyright infringement -- not to mention downright rude. You need permission from the author first!
53. Even though it isn't right; emails are forwarded to others. Keep this in mind when typing about emotional or controversial topics.
54. When there is a misunderstanding by email, don't hesitate to pick up the old fashioned telephone to work things out!
55. Know that how you type, and the efforts you make or don't make will indicate what is important to you and if you are an educated courteous person.
56. If you forward an email that turns out to be a hoax, have the maturity to send an apology follow up email to those you sent the misinformation to.
57. When filling out a contact form on a Web site, do so carefully and with clarity so your request is taken seriously.
58. If a friend puts your e-mail address in the To: field with others you do not know, ask them to no longer expose your address to strangers without your permission.

Business Email

59. Think of your business email as though it was on your business letterhead and you'll never go wrong!

- 60.If you cannot respond to an email promptly, at the very least email back confirming your receipt and when the sender can expect your response.
- 61.Emailing site owners about your product or service through the site form is still spam. Ask them if they want more info first!
- 62.When replying to emails always respond promptly and edit out unnecessary information from the post you are responding to.
- 63.Formality is in place as a courtesy and reflects respect. Assume the highest level of formality with new email contacts until the relationship dictates otherwise. Refrain from getting too informal too soon in your email communications.
- 64.Never send anyone an email they need to unsubscribe from when they didn't subscribe in the first place!
- 65.Be very careful how you use Reply to All and Cc: in a business environment. Doing so for CYA or to subtly tattle can backfire and have you viewed as petty or insecure.
- 66.When replying to an email with multiple recipients noted in the To: or Cc: fields, remove the addresses of those who your reply does not apply to.
- 67.Never send business attachments outside of business hours and confirm that the format in which you can send can be opened by the other side.

Chat, IM, Texting

- 68.When Texting or participating in IM and Chat, try not to be overly cryptic or your meaning can be misread.
- 69.Use Instant Messaging (IM) for casual topics or informational briefs. IM is not the place for serious topics or confrontational issues.
- 70.Start by always asking if the person you are IMing is available and if it is a good time to chat. Refrain from IMing during meetings or when your attention is required.
- 71.Practice communicating briefly and succinctly.
- 72.Always consider if calling the other party on the phone is better when Texting about sensitive topics.
- 73.IMing is not an excuse to forget your grade school education.
- 74.If you are not a smooth multi-tasker, do not continue multiple IM sessions and leave folks hanging while you communicate with others.
- 75.Learn how to use the features of your IM program. Specifically your "busy" and "away" message features.
- 76.Never IM under an alias to take a peek at friends' or associates' activities.

77. Take into consideration who you are communicating with to determine the acronyms and emoticons that should be used - if at all.

Social Media, Blogs and Forums

78. Keep in mind when Tweeting, on Facebook or message boards that you are in a global arena.

79. When discussions get out of control; don't stoop to name-calling or profanities. You are better than that!

80. In forums, keep your signature file to no more than 2-3 lines.

81. Keep commercialism to no more than a link at the end of your comment or contribution.

82. Stay on topic and discuss issues only relative to the thread/topic in question.

83. If new to a group or forum, "lurk" for awhile to get a feel for the community and personalities of the regulars before you post.

84. Never give out personal information or specifics to your location on online -- nor should you give out the personal information of others!

85. Keep in mind there will always be differences of opinion. Try to remain objective and not personalize issues.

86. Don't fall for trolls. Trolls are folks who will post rude comments just to get a rise out of everyone.

87. Be sure to down edit, or remove any part of the post you are replying to that is no longer necessary to the ongoing conversation.

Email Considerations...

88. Before getting upset because you perceive someone didn't respond, check to see if their reply was inadvertently deleted or sent to your Trash or Junk folder.

89. With emotionally charged emails, wait until the next morning to see if you feel the same before clicking Send.

90. Feel free to modify the Subject: field to more accurately reflect a conversation's direction.

91. When it comes to your email communications, know who you can trust; trust only those you know.

92. Take the time to review each email before clicking Send to ensure your message is clear and you are relaying the tone that you desire.

93. Never use an old email to hit reply and start typing about an entirely new topic.

94. Regardless of how noble a forwarded email may be, don't just forward without investigating its authenticity @ Snopes.com.
95. Always add the email addresses of Web sites and new contacts immediately to your approved senders or address book so they get through Spam filters.
96. Before completing a Web site's Contact form; make an effort to review the site to be sure the information you seek is not already available.
97. Take a quick look at the e-mails in your Trash before you delete them just in case a good e-mail landed there by mistake.
98. If any email states to forward to all your friends, or just 5 people -- do everyone a favor and just hit delete!
99. Don't mass e-mail people who didn't ask to be on your personal "mailing list".
100. Double check that your adware, spyware and virus programs are set to automatically update at least once each week so the software knows what to protect you from.
101. And finally... *Type unto others as you would have them type unto you!*