

## Email etiquette for students

WHY FOLLOW ETIQUETTE?	
<p>Email users need to be aware of accepted practices regarding the use of email as a communication tool. In addition, email messages lack cues such as vocal expression and body language that we use every day when communicating with others, and as a result, it is easy to convey the wrong impression or offend recipients of your message.</p> <p>These guidelines will help you get the most from your email system and avoid common mistakes.</p>	
COMMON COURTESIES	KEEPING OUT OF TROUBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Read your email regularly - daily if possible. Email is used for many important University and class communications.</li> <li>✓ Reply promptly – if it is going to take considerable time to reply fully, acknowledge receipt of a message promptly and let the sender know when you expect to be able to answer.</li> <li>✓ If you receive a message intended for another person, don't just ignore it: reply to the sender and let them know the email was misdirected. If you know the intended recipient, forward it to them with a short explanation.</li> <li>✓ If you quote information received from any source, you should properly acknowledge it, just as you would in an academic essay or published work.</li> <li>✗ Never assume that because you have sent a message, it has been read.</li> <li>✗ Do not send chain letters, and do not forward such letters to others.</li> <li>✗ Send your email to the smallest audience possible. Do not copy your email to large groups of people unless the message is of relevance to every recipient.</li> <li>✗ Don't expect an immediate answer. Email is all about dealing with communications when you are able to do so.</li> <li>✗ Do not label every message as high priority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Don't write anything you wouldn't say in public. Emails are easily forwarded to others.</li> <li>✗ Do not redirect personal messages without the original sender's knowledge or consent.</li> <li>✗ Do not "flame". Flaming is aggressive and abusive language used to criticise others.</li> <li>✗ Avoid the expression of extreme emotion or opinion in an email message. Do not draft and send an email message when you are upset or angry - once written and sent, it can't be recalled. Take time to cool down before reviewing your message.</li> <li>✗ Do not pretend you are someone else when sending email. To pretend you are someone else is fraudulent and illegal.</li> <li>✗ Do not make changes to someone else's message and pass it on without making it clear where you have made the changes.</li> <li>! Use humour, sarcasm and irony sparingly: they may not be self-evident to all readers. You can easily convey the wrong impression.</li> <li>! Remember that all laws governing copyright, defamation, discrimination and other forms of written communication also apply to email.</li> </ul>
	HOUSEKEEPING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keep messages remaining in your electronic mailbox to a minimum.</li> <li>✓ Delete unwanted messages and messages you do not need, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivial conversations.</li> <li>• Working notes/drafts.</li> <li>• Duplicate messages and annotated replies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Save file attachments to disk, and delete original mail items from your inbox.</li> <li>✓ Develop and maintain an orderly filing system for email messages you wish to keep.</li> <li>✓ Unsubscribe from all the email lists or discussion groups you are no longer reading.</li> </ul>
SIGNATURES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Unless you are communicating with a close friend, include your email signature at the end of each message.</li> <li>✓ Your signature should be brief (4-5 lines) and informative (include a phone number).</li> <li>✗ Do not include drawings, quotations or anything non-essential in your signature.</li> </ul>	

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ADDRESSING AN EMAIL MESSAGE	RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use the To: field for key recipients, and the Cc: field for people who are sent the message for their information only.</li> <li>✓ Keep the list of recipients to a minimum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ When replying or forwarding a message, ensure that the "Subject" field still accurately reflects the content of your message.</li> <li>✓ Don't reply to all recipients of the original message - reply only to those who need a reply.</li> <li>✓ Put your reply at the top of the message.</li> <li>✗ When replying, do not quote the whole original message and signature. Delete non-essential text from the original message.</li> </ul>
EMAIL SUBJECTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Always enter a concise and meaningful subject field.</li> <li>✓ Limit yourself to one subject per message - it helps recipients manage the mail they receive.</li> </ul>	
CONSTRUCTING GOOD EMAIL MESSAGES	DEALING WITH MISUNDERSTANDINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keep your sentences and message short and concise. Leave out irrelevant detail.</li> <li>✓ Write in a style that is appropriate for the recipient.</li> <li>✗ Capitalise words only to highlight an important point or distinguish a title or heading. Capitalising anything else will be interpreted as SHOUTING!</li> <li>✓ Include enough background information at the beginning of the e-mail for the recipient to understand what the message is about.</li> <li>✓ Use spaced paragraphs, subheadings and lists of points to make your message easy to read.</li> <li>✓ Number multiple questions or requests.</li> <li>✓ If you use abbreviations or acronyms, be sure your recipient already knows what they stand for.</li> <li>✓ Avoid using HTML or complex formatting. Not all mail systems will display such messages properly.</li> <li>✓ Take the time to review your message.</li> <li>✓ Check your spelling before sending the message</li> <li>✓ Attach supporting information as a separate file. Very long messages or messages that require formatting are also best sent as attachments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If a message generates emotion, read it again; reassess the message. Assume the message was sent with good intentions.</li> <li>✓ If a discussion is becoming emotionally charged, stop sending email. Speak to the person to clear up any misunderstandings.</li> <li>✓ When you are wrong or have issued an impulsive response, promptly admit it.</li> </ul>
	JUNK MAIL AND VIRUSES
	<p>Junk email ("spam") and viruses are common on the internet. Although Curtin has anti-virus systems in place, ensure you take these preventative measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Avoid suspicious attachments from unknown senders.</li> <li>✗ Delete junk mail. Never reply to it.</li> <li>✗ Only provide your contact details to trusted organisations or individuals, and only when necessary.</li> </ul>
	ON LEAVE?
	<p>Most places you travel to will have facilities for you to check your email. If you will be unavailable for an extended period, do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use the Vacation Message facility to notify senders that you are away. Your message should state when you expect to be back, and whom they should contact if it is an emergency.</li> <li>✓ When you return, disable the Vacation Message so that senders no longer receive your away message.</li> <li>! Remember, if you have a valid reason why you cannot regularly access OASIS, you will need to apply for an "e-Exemption". While you are e-Exempt, official University correspondence will be sent to you by a means other than OASIS.</li> <li>! Visit the University Counselling Service, Student Central or your Divisional Student Services Office for details on how to apply for an e-Exemption.</li> </ul>
ATTACHING FILES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keep attachments under 2MB in size.</li> <li>✓ Use correct file name extensions so that attachments open automatically.</li> <li>✓ Check that the recipient has the necessary software to view the file.</li> <li>✓ Ask permission before sending large file attachments as they can cause problems for the person receiving your message.</li> <li>✓ Compress files to minimise their size.</li> <li>✓ Consider saving large files to your I:\WWW folder and inserting the URL of the file into your message.</li> <li>✓ Send attachments only to those who need them.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Curtin thanks the Queensland University of Technology for making content from their "Email Best Practice Guide" available for use.</p>