

Gilmore Guide to ACADEMIC ETIQUETTE & PROFESSIONALISM

Good English, well spoken and well written, will open more doors than a college degree. Bad English will slam doors you didn't even know existed." --- William Raspberry

The way in which you communicate and present yourself when interacting with faculty, advisors, or other professionals both on and off campus is extremely important. Little things matter. As students aspiring to careers in medicine and healthcare, you are expected to conduct yourselves professionally. Remember, the faculty and advisors you have now may be the key to a successful application or strong letter of recommendation down the road. When in doubt about how you should speak, write, or act, **always err on the side of formality**. You will never offend someone by being overly formal or polite. Use the following guidelines for communicating:

Addressing Professors In-Person

- Always address faculty as **“Professor Smith”** or **“Dr. Smith”** unless they request otherwise. If your professor has a PhD, you should refer to them as “Dr. Smith”. If unsure of credentials, “Professor Smith” is always appropriate. Faculty will usually tell you how they wish to be addressed – follow their lead.
- For non-faculty, you may address by professional title, if known (ex: Dean Smith or Director Smith).
- **Do not use first names** when addressing those in authority else **until they explicitly ask you to do so**.

Email Communication with Professors

When you write to a professor, advisor, or supervisor of any kind, you should view it as a professional exchange (i.e., write it as if it is a business letter). How you choose to interact conveys your level of seriousness. It not only affects how someone views you, but it also determines how much time they may take to deal with your issue or request. If you come off as rude, clueless, or irresponsible, then it will likely affect the outcome. Follow these tips when corresponding via email:

- **Always use your university email address.** Non-QU emails may get sent to spam/junk folders.
- **Address appropriately.** Begin the email with “Dear Professor Smith,” “Dear Prof. Smith,” or “Dear Dr. Smith.” Do not begin the email with just “Hi” or without the recipient’s title and surname.
- **Properly identify yourself.** Indicate your course title/time. When contacting advisors or those not currently teaching you, always provide your major, class year, and QU ID number. *Tip: Many students set up a “signature” at the bottom of their QU email to automatically provide their full contact information.*
- **Utilize correct grammar and spelling.** ALWAYS write in complete sentences. DO NOT use text abbreviations (Ex: LOL, B4, TTYL, etc.) or emojis. Proofread!
- **Have an informative subject line** (do not leave blank). Ex: "Math 141-Question about Homework"
- **Be clear and concise.** Do not go into unnecessary details. Is your message easy to understand? Provide necessary information upfront for the recipient to address your concern/request.
- **Use an appropriate tone.** Any email to a professor should sound like a formal letter, not a text message. Use full sentences, fully introduce yourself if applicable, use “please” and “thank you”.
 - **Do not use your email to vent, rant, or whine.** If you have a complaint, or are not happy about something, explain yourself calmly and ask if anything can be done.
 - **Do not make demands.** Politely and professionally requesting something is always best.
 - **Be respectful,** and consider whether anything you have written might sound rude or offensive. For example, don't flippantly say that you slept through class, you don't like the subject, or that you think the professor is too strict. This is offensive and inappropriate.

- **Do not write your professor asking if you “missed anything important”** or if there is “anything I need to know” from a class you missed - by doing so you imply that most of what was covered in class is not important. Not a good impression to make!
- **Do Not Waste Your Professor’s Time.** They are incredibly busy, so avoid sending emails with trivial requests or asking a professor to do things you could easily do yourself. Avoid these common mistakes:
 - **Do not email to ask basic questions you can answer for yourself. Check your syllabus!**
 - **Do not write your professor asking for copies of their notes** when you missed class. Ask a classmate instead.
 - **Do not write asking for extra credit.** If there is an extra credit option, you will know.
 - **Do not email to ask what your current grade is,** or how many points you need on the final to get a certain grade in the class. This is your responsibility. If you are concerned about your grade, go to office hours and talk about it in person rather than sending an email.
 - **Allow time for response.** Do not expect professors to respond during evening hours or weekends. Allow *at least* 1-2 business days for a response before contacting someone again.
 - **Do NOT use email as a substitute for face-to-face conversation.** Hot tip: you ALWAYS get more in person than you will via email or phone! Take advantage of office hours and interact in person if possible. This may open up an opportunity for mentorship or great advice.

DO write emails like this:

Dear Dr. Smith,

I have some questions regarding this week’s content for MA 141, but unfortunately cannot come to your office hours. Are you available at any time on Monday instead?

Sincerely,
Jane

DO NOT write emails like this:

Hi, I need to talk to you about the test. can I come by Mon? Thx

I’m a senior and I need your class to graduate. MyQ says I need permission. I need you to enroll me immediately. Jane

R U gonna have ur class 2morrow cuz i won't b there

