

Hello, Professor: Professional Communication in College

Tips and Advice from Academic Writing at Marymount Manhattan College

Effective communication with your professors is essential to college success. It is also vital preparation for entering the workforce, where this same skillset will serve your career. When writing to a professor, follow these quick, universal tips to ensure professionalism:

Dear Professor,

- 1) Always use a form of address, even for a short email.
 - You should always assume that your professor holds a doctorate, and therefore should be addressed as “Professor” or “Doctor” (“Dear Professor Smith,”/“Good afternoon Dr. Smith,”).
 - *Never* email a female professor with the address “Ms.,” “Mrs.,” or “Miss.” If you would not call your male professor “Mr.,” you should not call your female professor “Ms.”
 - Remember, your professors studied for many years, becoming experts in their fields, and have earned their honorifics.

Sincerely,

- 2) Always end with a signature:
 - “Sincerely, Alex”
 - “All the best, Dylan”
 - “Thank you for your consideration, Jean.”

Importance Level:

- 3) Only email your professors if absolutely necessary; respect their time. If you have an question and the answer cannot be found on the syllabus, in your class notes, or through a friend in the class, then you may send an email.

Please and Thank You

- 4) Craft your email with care and take your time—never dash off something quickly to a professor. Pay careful attention to word choice and sentence structure. Be concise and clear. Edit for grammatical errors. Most importantly, consider the tone of your request: could your email come off as demanding or inconsiderate? Play around with words, phrases, and sentences to achieve the right tone. This is of especial significance when you are asking your professor for a favor, such as looking at a draft, or writing you a letter of recommendation.

Please See Attached

- 5) Never send unsolicited work. Ask your professor first if it would be all right to send by email.
- 6) If you send work late—after the due date and after your professor has asked you to send it—do not expect a reply.
- 7) Do not expect answers to your email inquiries outside of business hours, like evenings, nights, and weekends.
- 8) If you have concerns you’d like to share with your professor, doing so in person, in a timely manner (as your concerns arise), is always best.

Check out this humorous and irreverent [Medium](#) article on college email etiquette:

How to email your professor without being annoying AF



MarymountManhattan