

Elements of a Professional Email



Not sure what to say when contacting a recruiter about a job opportunity? When emailing a professor? An effective professional email goes beyond proper grammar and spelling. Use this outline to help:

1. The Subject

Adding a subject to your email is vital. An email subject lets the recipient know of the content and purpose of the email. It should be concise, ideally no more than 6-8 words. Example: "Internship Application Inquiry"

2. The Greeting

Rather than "Hey" or "Hi," use a slightly more formal greeting such as "Hello" or "Good Afternoon."

3. Introduction

You must introduce yourself at the beginning of an email to someone you do not know. An introduction should include your name and some context. You can give context by saying how you are connected to the recipient, or how you got their email. You may include a brief, written "elevator pitch," which summarizes your accomplishments and shows interest in the recipient.

4. Purpose of the Email/The Ask

You should clearly and succinctly articulate the purpose of your email. Use prompts such as "I am emailing to..." and "I am writing to follow up on..." when sending a professional email. This is also called the "ask." Be clear about what you are asking of the recipient.

5. Follow Up Information

You should close your email with information about how you would like the recipient to follow up. Examples: "I look forward to hearing from you soon" and "Please contact me should you need any more information."

6. Closing Line

Before the email signature, you should use a closing salutation to politely end the email. There are many acceptable examples, including "Sincerely" and "Best Regards."

7. Email Signature

Your professional email signature should appear at the bottom of every email. It should include your full name, phone number, and professional email address.

Examples



Example of an unprofessionally written email:

Hi my name is _____ and I am writing to you to ask if it is possible to get more information on the internship that the company is and if it would be possible to join the program as well. Thank you.

Example of a professionally written email:

Good Morning Ms. [Recipient's Last/Family Name],

My name is _____ and I am a sophomore at University of Illinois Chicago. I learned of [Company]'s summer internship program through my university's Career Center newsletter. I have written programs in C++ and Java for my course projects, and I was recently elected to a leadership role in a student organization.

I am emailing to express my interest in your internship program. Would you please let me know the best way to apply to [Company]'s internship program? I have attached my resume, and I am happy to provide any additional information.

I hope to hear from you soon about internship opportunities at [Company]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
555-555-5555
student@uic.edu

Adapted from: Camille Elmore. "Email or Fail: Preparing Youth for Professional Communication," National Career Development Association (NCDA) Career Convergence. March 1, 2021.