When writing a formal email to a professor or a staff member or to someone outside the university keep in mind the following dos and don'ts. They can significantly improve the effectiveness of your email messages.

Do:

Begin your email with a proper greeting or salutation. For instance, "Dear Sir", "Dear Madam", or "Dear Professor".

When writing to your professors, use surnames with titles, if you address them by their name. For instance, say **Dear Professor Einstein,** rather than **Dear Professor Albert.**

Use a concise and specific subject line. A subject line that succinctly indicates the subject of the message helps recipients prioritize messages and respond promptly. To solicit a quick response use words, like "important" or "Urgent" in the subject area.

Know the difference between a command, a request, an order and an instruction. For example, "please look into this" is most likely to be interpreted as a command and not a request. "Help me please" is a cry of anguish, and not a formal request. "I request you to reconsider my grades" is a proper way of making a request.

Explain why you're writing the email in the introductory line of the message; do not assume that the recipient will figure out what you want to convey.

Maintain cohesion and coherence in your writing; the sentences must be complete and arranged in a logical order.

You must use significant excerpts from previous emails to clarify the context of your response.

Please put yourself in the readers' position and imagine how they will react to what you have written.

Please proof-read your message more than once before hitting the send button and look out for redundancies, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

If you are writing to make an inquiry, please make sure that you provide all the relevant details such as your entire name, major, programme, enrollment number, class, section, subject, date, etc.

Follow the common courtesy and do not forget to use the magical words "please" and "thank you."

Please check the tone of your message, avoid aggression, condescension, mockery, and sarcasm on all accounts.

Conclude every email with a complimentary closing, a signoff phrase such as "Yours sincerely", followed by your name/signature

Don't:

The usage of casual or informal tone must be avoided. Crude expressions in the form of slang and acronyms are not suitable for a formal message. Similarly, refrain from the highly ornamental usage of language to avoid ambiguity.

Do not begin a new subject in the middle of an email thread. Instead, draft a completely new email with a fresh subject line.

Do not use exclamation marks and emoticons; moreover, refrain from capitalisation of text because it it is interpreted as you are yelling.

Do not mark copies to everyone on an email unless it seems absolutely necessary. If you are in a habit of marking copies to extra people, they will eventually stop responding to your emails.

Do not use the reply-all option if you want to address only one person from the long list of recipients.

Do not write your emails using glaring colours and unreadable font styles/sizes, they look hideous and tend to distract a reader from the content.

Do not attach large files to your email; ideally you should provide a download link to the document or the multimedia file.

Avoid sending negative criticism through an email; such criticism has a high possibility of being misinterpreted.

Never write an email in anger, instead of hitting the send button save it as a draft. Look at it again after an hour and you may realise you would prefer not to send it, or modify it before sending it. Writing in anger is counter-productive and it can cause embarrassment later on.

Do not expect an instantaneous reply from the recipient of your email. Try using other forms of communication, if there is an urgent need to establish contact.

Do not forget to give a timely reply to the genuine emails addressed to you, and be polite and forthcoming in your response.

Do not assume that your email is private. Please avoid sending very personal or sensitive data via email.