

# Fifteen Essential Rules for University E-mail Communication



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The 1st and most essential rule is: Always write your English professors in English.

Do not write in Chinese. This is an *English* class. Your western professors probably can't read Chinese and you need the practice in English, anyway!



formally: + 'Re' eg. Re: Asking about ...

## Rule #2:

Fill in the subject line with a very few factual words.

Professors and administrators receive lots of email. Weird subject lines will get your email delayed, if not outright deleted.



For example:

Missing class today.

Question about the assignment.

Problem with Blackboard.

Requesting an appointment.

Question about the online quiz.

A grammar question.

Apology for late submission.

Help with an application.

A question about policy.



~~Don't~~  
↓  
Do not

~~isn't~~  
↓  
is not

Please DO NOT offer lines like:

DoNt miss ReaDiNg this LOL.

The funnest story you will 4ever read!!!!

I'm such a idiot!



Hi

Can you help me with this?

just wondering

you ROCK!!!!!!!!!!!!

Confuzion

tha reel deel



Dear/Hi, Pro. xxx  
Dr.

Regards,  
Wenjie

Rule #3:

Begin your email by introducing yourself with your full name in pinyin. End your email with your personal name in pinyin.



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Rule #4:

Tell your professor your section number and class time.



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## Rule #5:

If you are writing an administrator, you should include your student ID number and your year at CUHKSZ (eg: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student). You may also need to tell administrators your college (eg: Shaw, Diligentia) and/or your school (eg: HSS, SME, SSE).





For example:

Good morning, professor, this is Tan Twan Eng from your 8:30 class on Monday, section 36.



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For example:

Good morning. My name is Twan Eng and I am a student from Diligentia College and SME. My student ID number is 020200000.



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## Rule #6:

Get to the point.

Professors and administrators are busy and receive many emails. Your message must be quickly understood. Keep your message short. Five or six sentences at most. If you **MUST** write a longer message, be as brief as possible. Don't wander off topic. Don't philosophize. If you want to have a long conversation, request a face-to-face meeting.



For example:

Good morning. My name is Twan Eng and I am a student from Diligentia College and SME. My student ID number is 020200000. I am writing to request a meeting with an academic advisor to discuss changing my major.



1. could you please  
~~2.~~ I was wondering if you could...

## Rule #7:

### Be polite!

The key word here is to manage your tone. Be polite. You may be frustrated, or even angry. But do not let your frustration show in your message. You don't want to offend anyone or start a fight. If you want to solve a problem, then keep calm. Explain the problem and work together to build a solution!



Rule #8:

Attachments.

If your email includes an attachment, please say so and identify the attached file or files. Then be certain that you have attached the correct file or files!



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Attached please find ...

For example:

I have attached a copy of my medical report and a letter from my physician.

I have attached the application and a copy of my receipt for payment.

I have attached my transcript and a letter of recommendation from Professor X.

↑  
Last name



# Grammarly

Rule #9:

Use your best English.

Remember that all writing is practice for your final exam.

Write in complete sentences and proofread your email before you hit “send.” You need the practice, and your reader wants to understand your email with no confusion!



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## Rule #10:

When you send email to people within the university, use your official university email account.



Rule #11:

Avoid “txt spk.”

In other words, don’t use “text speech” or other shortcuts.

Please write your message in the best English that you can.

Avoid “slang” text speech like “thx” and “wtf.” You are now living and working in a professional environment. You are learning how to communicate like professionals.



Rule #12:

Please don't use emojis.

University professionals just need the facts. We have a lot of mail to read and we make decisions based upon contents, not decorations.



And under no circumstances should you ever use a “lewd” emoji in professional communication!



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Rule #13:

Conclude with a polite “sign off.”

You’ll want your closing to be friendly, professional, and respectful. You may also want to reflect your personality and to acknowledge your good relationship with your professor.



For example:

Common endings include:

Thank you very much,

Thanks for your time,

Sincerely,

All the best,

Thanks so much,

Thank you,

With appreciation,

With thanks,

Respectfully,

Regards,

Thanks,

With regards,

Your student,

With thanks,

Best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



Avoid unprofessional endings like:

Sent from my i-phone,

Awaiting your reply,

Love,

Yours truly,

Expectantly,

Urgent,

Hopefully,

Faithfully, (*religion*)

Always,

In anticipation,

Thx,

Top priority,



## Rule #14

If your email is an emergency, and you need a call back, say so! Then be sure to leave your mobile number. But only ask for call-backs in real emergencies.



## Rule #15

Before you hit “reply” make certain that you have proofread your email, that your message is polite, and that you have included all the necessary information including contact details. Then. Do not hit “reply to all” unless you must send everyone in the chain a copy of the email. Otherwise, just hit “reply.”

