

In the beginning, it can be difficult contacting a professor, lecturer or other teacher that you are unfamiliar with. To receive the required signatures for the document „Attendance of University Courses“, we want to help you with the following three suggestions and tips!

A. Via E-Mail

The quickest way is probably to contact a lecturer by email – but how do I phrase and write such an email? How do I find the right expression? What should I consider when writing to a lecturer? With these ten helpful tips and suggestions, we explain what you should consider and keep in mind when corresponding with the lecturer by email.

1. Sometimes you do not get a second chance at a first impression – an email enquiry is an official form of contact. Therefore please consider and carefully prepare the content of the email.
2. Never send an email enquiry to multiple persons at the same time (in cc/copy or to several email addresses)! Oftentimes these types of emails are not even read due to the fact that the recipient does not feel personally addressed. Write to the recipient!
3. Please avoid writing emails without a subject line. Typically, emails without a subject line sent from an unknown sender are deleted unread. The subject line is important too: it should give brief and exact information about the content.
4. Start your email with a formal opening. The typical greeting is „Dear Mr./Ms. [last name]“. In the QIS/LSF information system, further information about the course – as well as the contact data of the instructor is listed. If you are unsure about the salutation, the instructor's gender can be found here. In most cases, the title of the instructor (Prof./Dr.) is listed as well. Please note: for professors, just use the title „Professor“ – „Dr.“ held by almost all professors does not need to be included. Following the title, only include the last name and not the first name. So: „Dear Professor [last name]“ or „Dear Dr. [last name]“ and never write „Dear Mr./Ms. Professor Dr. [first name] [last name]“. Please avoid writing „Hi“ or „Hello“. Not using any kind of salutation is disrespectful; almost as disrespectful as just to write „Dear [first name] [last name]“. Write the name of the recipient correctly.
5. Please avoid asking the recipient about his/her health at the beginning of the email. In Germany it is uncommon for strangers to ask about someone's health. After the salutation, you can address the matter right away.
6. Phrase your matter as precise as possible and give enough information for someone to understand your matter. For example: which course are you referring to?
7. Please use a standard style and Standard English. Avoid using flippant remarks or very formal language.
8. Your closing phrase could be: „Sincerely“ / „Sincerely yours“. It is uncommon to sign your letter with „Kind regards“ if you have never spoken to the professor before.
9. Sign the email with your full name (first and last name).
10. Sometimes it is not possible for the instructor to answer his/her emails immediately and you will receive a delayed response. If you do not receive an answer within a week, it is possible and not impolite to send an email again. If you still do not receive a reply, try to contact the instructor personally (if necessary by telephone or during advisory hours, contact data is listed on QIS/LSF).