

*Memorandum*

TO: Students in TCOM 600, Cybersecurity, Winter 2025

FROM: Nicola Harris, Communications Instructor

Arts & Science

**RE: Professional Writing Email Assessment; Occurs in class on January 29th.**

**Assignment Overview:** For this assignment, you will write a professional email to communicate and resolve problems at work based on the scenarios below. You will be assessed on your ability to communicate appropriately, clearly, and apply business writing strategies.

**Email Scenarios:** Use the scenario below for your email. For the scenario, you will imagine that you are a professional working in your field as a cyber security specialist.

* You are working on a proposal for a client (cybersecurity-related topic of your choice) with two other team members. It is Wednesday afternoon, and the proposal is supposed to be sent to the client by the end of the day on Friday. You agreed to get your portion of the work submitted *yesterday* but you are having problems and cannot get it done on time. Send your team members (Jane and Gregory) a clear but diplomatic email explaining the problem causing the delay and request assistance (provide specifics) to ensure the project gets completed on time.

**Assignment Procedures:** You will have about 30 minutes to write a concise, polite, and professional email that relates to your prompt. In your email, please employ the “10 Cs” (clear, complete, concise, coherent, concrete, correct, credible, conversational, considerate, and courteous) of professional writing style. Your email will be assessed on the requirements listed below. Please see the assignment rubric for more details about the grading breakdown.

* **Email Formatting**
* Clear and appropriate subject line
* Appropriate greeting and closing
* Complete contact information (block email signature)
* **Writing Style**
* Appropriate tone –positive, professional, and, polite with appropriate formality
* Concise writing with correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar
* **Organization**
* Uses a three-part email structure
  + Clear statement of purpose,
  + Background and details
  + Action closing
  + Appropriate length/level of detail to provide information *efficiently.*
  + Effective use of paragraphing, spacing, bullet points, images, diagrams, lists, etc.
* **Content**
  + Email purpose is clear to reader
  + Sufficient but concise details provided to understand the purpose
  + Follow up actions are clear and easy to follow

**Grading and Due Date:** The business email assessment is worth 10% of your grade. Please view the assignment rubric on the last few pages of this document for a detailed breakdown of the grading.

**Assignment Submissions:** When the assessment period is over, submit your assignment in **two ways.**

1. **Send me your message by email** ([harrisni@saskpolytech.ca](mailto:harrisni@saskpolytech.ca)), so I can assess your ability to use email features and formatting.
2. **Submit a copy of the message to Dropbox.** After sending your email, copy and paste your message into a document and upload it to dropbox, so I can grade the assignment and give you feedback.

**Academic Integrity:**This assessment is a “test” of your professional writing skills. Like with any other test, you must demonstrate your email writing on your own. Your email must follow the Saskatchewan Polytechnic guidelines for academic integrity as outlined in Policy 1211(a) – “Student Code of Conduct – Academic.”

**What does this mean for your email?**

* Your email ***must be written independently in your own words***.
* You ***cannot*** use other people’s ideas or words in your email. This may include online examples, course examples, generative AI tools (Chat GPT), classmates, etc.
* You***can*** use compatible editing tools such as the built-in *Outlook Editor*, or *Grammarly* plug-in to check your grammar.
* You ***can*** ask your instructor questions if you are unsure about meeting academic integrity requirements or assignment expectations.

Work that does not comply with academic integrity expectations will not be accepted and your program head will be informed of your misconduct. Any sanctions for academic misconduct will follow the lead of your program and school. In the School of ICT, the **first** academic integrity offense usually results in a grade of **zero** on your assignment.

**Assignment Rubric:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Email & Writing** | **Highly Effective**  **4 points** | **Mostly Effective**  **3 points** | **Satisfactory**  **2 points** | **Needs Improvement**  **1 point** |
| **Email Components**  /4 | All email components are included; all components are complete, correct, and appropriate for the situation:   * Clear, specific subject line * Appropriate Greeting and closing * Detailed block signature | All email components are included, but one component is incomplete or inappropriate for the situation:   * Clear, specific subject line. * Appropriate greeting and closing * Detailed block signature | One email component is missing; or, multiple email components are incomplete or inappropriate for the situation:   * Clear, specific subject line. * Appropriate greeting and closing * Detailed block signature | Two or more email components are missing; or, all email components are incomplete or inappropriate for the situation:   * Clear, specific subject line. * Appropriate greeting and closing * Detailed block signature |
| **Organization**  /4 | * Uses three-part email structure. * Message has a clear statement of purpose, appropriate details, and a clear action closing * Message has effective use of paragraphing, spacing, bullet points or lists. * Organization enhances understanding. | * Uses three-part email structure. * Message has a somewhat clear statement of purpose, somewhat appropriate details, and a somewhat clear action closing. * Message generally uses effective paragraphing, spacing, bullet points or lists. * Elements of organization occasionally impede understanding. | * At least one element of the 3 part structure (purpose, details, action closing) is missing or  underdeveloped. * Message occasionally uses effective paragraphing, spacing, bullet points or lists * Elements of organization sometimes impede understanding. | * Limited evidence of 3 part structure. Two or more elements (purpose, details, or action closing) are missing or severely underdeveloped. * Message does not use effective paragraphing, spacing, bullet points or lists * Elements of organization impede understanding. |
| **Grammar & Writing Style**  /4 | * Correct punctuation, spelling & grammar; * Appropriate polite, positive, and non-technical writing style. * Helpful "You" focused attitude throughout. | * A few minor errors in punctuation, spelling & grammar; errors *never* impede understanding * A few minor errors in tone; errors do not detract from overall message. * Generally uses a helpful "you" focused attitude. | * Some minor errors in punctuation, spelling & grammar; errors sometimes impede understanding * Some minor errors in tone; errors sometimes detract from overall message. * Sometimes uses a helpful "you" focused attitude * Errors in grammar and tone decrease memorability and/or reader comprehension. | * Frequent errors in punctuation, spelling & grammar; errors impede understanding * Frequent errors in tone; errors detract from the overall message. * Uses a helpful "me: focused attitude * Errors in grammar and tone impede reader comprehension. |
| **Content**  /4 | * Appropriate message for the situation. * Effectively expresses message in a clear and concise way. * Effectively communicates with a non-technical audience. * Language and writing style help clarify information for the recipient. * Recipient can easily follow instructions, guidelines, etc without additional support. | * Appropriate message for the situation. * Effectively expresses message in mostly clear and somewhat concise way. * Generally communicates effectively with a non-technical audience. * Language and writing style usually help clarify information for the recipient. * Recipient can follow instructions, guidelines, etc without additional support. * Some errors in clarity, conciseness, or level of  technicality cause occasional confusion for the recipient. | * Somewhat appropriate message for the situation. * Message has some issues with clarity and/or conciseness. * Message sometimes is incomprehensible for a non-technical audience. * Language and writing style sometimes help clarify information for the recipient. * Recipient may struggle to follow instructions, guidelines, etc without additional support. * Errors in clarity, conciseness, or level of  technicality cause some confusion for the recipient. | * inappropriate message for the situation. * Message has significant issues with clarity and/or conciseness. * Message is often incomprehensible for a non-technical audience. * Language and writing style do not clarify information for the recipient. * Recipient will likely struggle to follow instructions, guidelines, etc without additional support. * Errors in clarity, conciseness, or level of technicality cause significant confusion for the recipient. |

**Total Score of Professional Business Email / 16**