

## **Email Etiquette in the Department of English**

Please note that all members of the department have to deal with a large number of emails every day. We therefore ask you to take extra care when writing to staff. In particular, please pay attention to the following guidelines:

- Do think about the message's content before you send it out. Ask yourself if the answer to your question involves information that is already available on our website (e.g. [Exams FAQ](#)), on moodle (e.g. the "Nachrichtenforum") or simply via google. Please understand that we may not have time to respond to questions when the answers have already been communicated, for instance via your UdS email address, via moodle, or via the websites given above.
- Do avoid using a personal email account to email staff or to conduct University business. Using a personal email account for UdS business can mean a lack of audit trail and could also result in inadvertent breaches of the Data Protection Act. It also makes it much harder for staff to find you in the system and to add you to e.g. moodle and MS Teams. Personal email accounts should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Forwarding emails from your UdS account to a personal account (e.g. Gmail) is no longer possible.
- Do make sure that the reason for writing is clearly identified in the subject line. If your questions relates to a specific course or lecture, clearly identify it in the subject line and the body of your email. If there has been an earlier exchange about a specific topic, make sure to include the thread in your email. However, do not reply to an old message in order to raise a completely different topic. It will be less confusing to begin a new thread with its own subject line. Do include a brief signature (including, for example, which course you are referring to and your matriculation number (this is especially useful if you wish to be added to a course)) in your emails to help the recipient understand who it is from, especially if the person is unknown to you.
- Do make sure that you phrase your mail in a clear and direct way, and keep it as brief and to the point as possible.
- Do make sure to always re-read your message, both for correctness and for clarity of expression, before you hit the 'Send' button.

Please also pay attention to the following formal guidelines:

- Do pay attention to the recipient's name and title (including the spelling of names). For a university, these include: Professor, Dr, Mr, Ms (this is the preferred title for any female member of staff without a PhD), or Mrs (this should be avoided unless you have been told otherwise by the member of staff in question). Getting such details correct suggests that you have taken time and care over your email. These details are easy to check via the departmental website.
- Do open your mail with a polite address, i.e. 'Dear Dr Smith', 'Dear John', etc. For members of staff with more than one title, simply use the most advanced one in your address, e.g.

‘Dear Professor Fitzpatrick’.

- Don’t address someone by their first name unless you know they are OK with it. Usually, if someone signs off with both their first and family names, this is an indication of formality, and you should reply by addressing that person with their title and surname. If someone signs off with just their first name, they are probably inviting you to call them by their first name, but if in any doubt, use the more formal form of address, or begin with ‘Dear Clive (if I may)’.
- Do use a capital letter at the beginning of the email (unlike in German). Keep punctuation clear, spelling sound, avoid obscure abbreviations, and use paragraphs to separate your points. Don’t fire off emails without any structure, as this makes a message difficult to follow.
- Do use an acceptable sign-off, e.g., ‘Yours (sincerely)’; ‘Best’; ‘Best wishes’ etc.
- Do send all emails from your official UdS email account.