

# Email etiquette at CQUniversity

## The Basics

- **Is an email really necessary?** Sometimes an actual conversation is more useful, consider if you should be picking up the phone or walking down the hallway instead. Email can be a useful tool to record a conversation or decision after the fact 'As we discussed...'
- Ensure that your **layout, grammar, spelling and punctuation** are correct and professional, the way you present yourself on email reflects on you personally and the University as an institution – emoticons ☺ and text message abbreviations (lol and OMG) do not belong in professional communications.
- **Review your email prior to hitting send** – is the message and the request clear? Are any of the messages ambiguous or confusing? Have you attached the appropriate attachments?
- Use the **out of office assistant** when you are on holidays or away from the office for an extended period of time – always include a contact person for enquiries in your absence and details on when you will be in a position to reply to emails.
- **Reply to messages in a timely fashion**, even if it's just to confirm that you have received the email and will respond when you are able. Give your recipient time to respond. If the message involves a request include a timeframe or deadline for response, if necessary and consider a phone call or conversation if the matter is urgent.
- **Don't assume** that because you've sent someone an email that they have received, understood and/or actioned the request – if confirmation is required and required quickly, again consider a phone call or conversation for urgent enquiries.
- Consider your recipients who are **accessing emails on devices other than a desktop computer**, keep your message short and to the point, check attachments are not huge!

## The Message

- **Keep it clear and concise** – respect your receivers time. Keep messages clear and to the point, but include enough background information to allow for an action or judgment. Indicate a meaningful subject line and use urgent or important tags sparingly.
- **Are you a serial CC user?** Does your message need to be copied to a wide group of people? Only include the people who are directly affected by your email. Only use CC when it is important that the person on the CC list needs to know but is not expected to action anything. Do not fill your colleagues' email inboxes unnecessarily and also reconsider hitting 'reply all' unless absolutely necessary. The use of BCC should be limited to newsletters and bulk mail.
- **Apply normal business manners** – ensure your message has a courteous greeting (Good morning/afternoon, Dear...) and a professional sign off (Kind regards, Sincerely).
- **Include your University email signature** – including the official email signature not only projects a professional image, but also provides vital details for the receiver such as your phone number, location and job title. University email signatures should not be modified – professional communications do not require quotes, marching ants, coloured text or images (other than the campaign images).
- Consider **just using the subject line** for internal messages, e.g. message to the Deans 'Hilary will be OCC in Hong Kong Mon 23<sup>rd</sup>-Fri 27<sup>th</sup> March' (NFM).

## Don't hide behind your email

- Email communications should still maintain a normal approach to **courteousness and manners**, as a general rule if you wouldn't say something to a person's face, don't put it in an email – likewise, if you wouldn't like to see your email on the front page of 'the Australian', maybe reconsider what you are writing.
- Email communications are subject to the normal [code of conduct](#) – ensure your communication doesn't breach any discrimination or harassment policies.
- **Lose the attitude!** – there are actual human beings on the receiving end of your email, a bad attitude, anger and frustration are still palpable via email.