# How to Email a Professor[[1]](#footnote-0)

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Emailing a professor should be straightforward. You send emails all the time! But emailing a professor is different from email a friend or family member. Professional email etiquette is not something that is often taught which makes sending that first email all the more stressful. These tips will help you write an email that is appropriate and gets an answer.

**The Salutation**

Start your email to your professor with a “Dear” or “Hello”. This is email etiquette 101 and must be followed in professional emails. “Hey” is too casual for this situation and some professors also think “Hi” is too informal.

**The Title and Name**

The salutation must be followed by the professor’s title and name. This might seem overly formal to you, but it is an important way to show respect for your professor and their position and training. Omitting the title or using the wrong one could inadvertently offend your instructor. Most instructors [should](https://academicpositions.com/career-advice/what-should-i-call-my-professor) be addressed as “Professor” or “Doctor” followed by their last name (eg Dr Tai). Make sure to double check the spelling of their name before you hit send.

**Provide Context**

Some professors have hundreds of students and may need some context to be able to place you and answer your question. This is especially true if you’re emailing them for the first time. The easiest way to help them figure out who you are is by telling them which of their classes you’re in and which day your class meets (if it has multiple sections.) You can leave this part out if you are absolutely sure that your professor knows you by name.

**Keep it Short**

Professors get a lot of emails so make sure your request is simple and to the point. State your question clearly so your professor doesn’t have to read the email multiple times to figure out what you want. You can also cut down on the number of emails required to answer your question by briefly listing the steps you have already taken to try and answer your question. These include things like checking the syllabus (a must before sending any professor an email), asking a classmate, and talking to the TA.

**Sign Off**

End the email with a sign off followed by your name. A simple “Best,” “Cheers,” or “Thanks” will do followed by your name. If your university email address does not contain your full name you might want to include your first and last name in your sign off. This will make it easier for the professor to find you in their system.

**Use a Clear Subject Line**

Your email needs to have a subject line. Not only does a subject line help the professor, but it also keeps your email out of the spam folder. The subject line should be simple and reflect the content of your email. Something like“Question about [Class Name] paper” or “Meeting request” is appropriate.

**Be Professional**

You and your professor have a professional relationship which should be reflected in your email to them. This means that you must spell out words fully and use proper grammar (including capitalization and punctuation) when writing your message. Do not use any emojis. They have become a de rigueur form of communication, but they do not belong in a professional email. Read over the email to check for typos before you send it.

You should also steer clear from including any unnecessary personal information in your email. If you missed a class, you don’t need to go into details about why. Your personal life is not relevant to the professional relationship you have with your professor.

**Send It from Your University Email Address**

Using your university email address makes your email look more professional and guarantees the email will make it through the university’s spam filter. Your university email address also signals to the professor that you’re one of their students so they will take your message more seriously.

1. https://academicpositions.com/career-advice/how-to-email-a-professor [↑](#footnote-ref-0)