

A Guide to Ethical Communication with Academic Officials via Email

During your university journey, you will inevitably contact the administrative officers of the institution a handful of times. Namely, the Admissions Office, the Academic Office, the departments, which, in addition to the professors you encounter in the classroom, are responsible for documenting and organizing your academic life.

As adults and citizens of the University, it is only fitting that you conduct yourself accordingly and treat everyone with respect. While fellow students can be addressed in an informal or casual way, your professors and officers are to be treated politely, in a formal manner.

Here is a short guide detailing the kind of ethical norms that should be considered when contacting an academic official.

First and foremost, formally addressing an individual is possible in multiple ways:

- by their last name (e.g. *Dear Ms. Szabó*)
- by their first name, if you are moderately familiar with each other (e.g. *Dear Mária*)
- by their title, if you would like to maintain distance or you do not know the name of the individual in charge (e.g. *Dear Professor/Academic Officer etc.*)

It is recommended to address professors and officers by their title or last name the first time you contact them. Especially since it is the first impression you make on the reader when they open your email. If they prefer a less formal approach, they oftentimes let you know that you can use their first name when exchanging emails or greetings.

When composing the main body of your email, use courtesy formulas in your sentences to express respect and gratitude.

A few examples of these could be: Could you please; I would be grateful if you could; I would like to; May I request to...

It is important to note that these expressions of politeness are expected to be maintained even if you intend to indicate the urgency of your situation. (e.g. *Looking forward to your swift reply; I would be grateful if you could assist me promptly, since my situation is highly urgent.*) Do not send multiple emails within a short time period, especially regarding the same matter, as it is considered decidedly impolite and demanding. Replying to an email—that you sent or otherwise—with no salutation, no message but a solitary question mark, for instance, is exceedingly offensive and is, thus, to be avoided at all times.

In order to direct focus on the reason behind your email, write the subject of the email in the first sentence. (e.g. *I am writing with regard to "subject of the email"*) Furthermore, to make your email easier to navigate, organize it into paragraphs.

Finally, the last step to composing your formal email is a closing sentence in addition to your name signed below it.

For example: *Best regards, Kind regards or Yours sincerely*

With your full name, current university year of attendance and Neptun code marked for smoother process of identification.

Thank you for reading this short guide on the ethical way of exchanging emails. The staff of the University of Szeged wishes you the best in your studies.