Professional Email Message Guidelines

**Subject Line:** Concisely convey your purpose for writing, for example “Interested in Research Opportunity”

**Greeting:** Always include a greeting, especially if you are initiating contact. If you know the name of the person you are emailing you should include it. It is also professional to include the person’s title (e.g., Dr, Ms., Mr, Professor, etc.).

**Length:** Keep your email concise and to the point.

- Give a short description of who you are: major/minor, academic year
- State your purpose for writing: For example, “I am writing to inquire about a research position in your lab” or “I am interested in learning more about the research that you do.”
- You will want to include why you will be a good fit for the lab/research project you are applying for. Briefly indicate what about the work interests you, and how your current skills and knowledge will be an asset.
- You might also consider including how you heard about the research…. Are you currently in the faculty member’s class? Do you have a friend working in the lab who shared with you what they are working on? Did you speak to a member of the lab at a UGR event? Did you find the lab/faculty member on the UAlbany website?
- If you have any prior research experience you could briefly discuss this, and/or a brief overview of any plans for the future (e.g., if you are planning to go to graduate school, would like to publish a paper, complete an honor’s thesis).

**Font Style:** Use simple, standard fonts and avoid flashy, hard-to-read colors. If you want to convey that you are enthusiastic do so with words rather than distracting embellishments. Do not use emoticons (e.g., 😊) or textspeak (e.g., plz for please), as these should be saved for informal conversations.

**Spelling and Grammar:** Spelling and grammar are very important! Be sure to proof-read your message for these as well as for overall comprehension. A mistaken typo can quickly change the meaning of your message. An error-free email will show you have attention to detail and can avoid making you appear sloppy.

**Closing:** Sign off with a brief “Thank you” or “Best” and then your name. If you feel including your title, affiliation, or other details will be meaningful information for the recipient then you can include that as well. However, you should avoid creating an overwhelming signature with too much erroneous information (for example, few people want to see a paragraph after your name with your favorite movie quotes).
Sending your email…

Make Sure Your Message is Complete

Before sending the email, be sure you have read it over for comprehension, filled in the subject line, and checked that you have to correct recipient address written. If you referenced any materials in the message (such as your resume), be sure you actually attached it. It is also good to have briefly referenced any documents you do attach so the recipient knows to look for it.

Proof read Your Email Message

Before you hit send, also make sure you spell check and check your grammar and capitalization. They are just as important in email correspondence as they are in paper form.

Your email messages should include:

- A professional email address (students must use their UAlbany email account)
- Subject line describing why you’re writing
- Greeting
- Short message (2-3 paragraphs at most)
- Closing
- Signature with your contact information
- Optional: Updated resume. If you do include any attachments, be sure to reference them in your main email.

What Not to Include

When you are writing to apply for a research position, there are some things your message shouldn't include:

- Emoticons
- Typos and grammatical errors
- Extraneous information
- Fancy fonts or formatting
- Colored fonts
- Images (unless you are attaching a related document with images, such as a poster you have previously presented)
- Quotations in your signature
- Slang or abbreviations