TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING
E-MAIL TRAFFIC

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

EMAIL TRAFFIC

In this section, we will consider the specific aspects that are important for writing a good email. Just to be clear, the practical tips set out in the style guide still apply, of course, to writing a clear email. Thus, where necessary, the tips for email traffic will also include references to the style guide.

SUBJECT

The subject is an important part of any email. Based on the subject, the recipient can select and filter the messages in their mailbox before reading them. If nothing else, a good choice of subject will make it more likely that your message will actually be read.

Thus, use a clear subject line that reflects the contents of the email. You should preferably wait until you have finished typing your message before filling in the subject line. That way, it is easier to rephrase the main theme of the email.

USE 'CC' AND 'BCC'

Try to restrict the number of addresses added to the 'CC' to the absolute minimum. Provide those you want to inform with a brief summary, with any correspondence attached for information purposes. If you do include someone in the 'CC', give them a clear indication of what you expect. This usually implies that no immediate action is required, but exactly how should the recipient respond to your mail?

If you add someone's address to the 'BCC', then this recipient will not be visible to the other recipients. Use this for large mailings, for example. There is no point in unnecessarily revealing other people's email addresses. In other situations, transparency is required, so put them in the 'CC'.

SALUTATION (OPENING) AND VALEDICTION (CLOSE)

Emails, too, should include an appropriate salutation and valediction. Use an ordinary business salutation such as *Dear Mr Smith* or *Dear Ms Jones*. You have more freedom in the case of replies to emails or of informal internal emails, for example: *Dear Geert, Hi Marjolein*.

The valediction can vary and is adapted to the situation. *Yours faithfully* is commonly used in business messages for external contacts. In subsequent correspondence the valediction can be more informal, for instance *Regards* or *Best regards*. There are clearly more options in the case of informal or internal emails. Always make sure that the salutation and valediction match one another.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction contains the essence of the message, and the background details. You can, if you wish, use the five Ws + H for this purpose (who, what, where, when, why, how).
An example may help to clarify this.

> "Our work here at the Marketing & Communications department (M&C) involves providing the most effective possible support to University of Twente staff in preparing their own communications. In addition to various resources, M&C also offers a number of training courses, such as the 'Writing for the Web' course, with which you are already familiar. We'd like nothing more than to sit down with the staff of the Centre for Training and Development (CTD) and look at the complete range of training courses in the field of communication."

MIDDLE SECTION

The introduction is followed by a more detailed message, to further explain the introduction. Following on from the example given above, the explanation could be:

> "The questions raised by this include: Is our appraisal complete? What are the customers' current requirements? Is there a need to expand/modify the products on offer? Are there any opportunities for cooperation between CTD and M&C? "

You could also combine these four questions into a list, as a way of adding structure. This could involve the use of 'bullets', numbering, or first of all, then, finally.... This, in turn, is all about creating an uncluttered layout. In this connection, it is important to select
- a single, easily readable font
- a single font size

Write text that can be scanned with ease. People tend to scan, rather than read.
Readers scan texts or emails. If (after the scanning process) the email seems to be sufficiently interesting, then the reader will undoubtedly go on to read it in more detail.

If necessary, prepare the text in Word first, as this makes it easier to revise. That way, you can avoid sending an incomplete text by mistake. Moreover, this enables you to concentrate on preparing a text that can be scanned with ease. When you are done, it is only a matter of copying and pasting.

Use the following elements to create a text that can be scanned with ease:
- Subject;
- Introduction;
- Subheaders;
- Photographs; (see also 'Use of photographic and video material')
- Links; (see also search-engine-friendly writing)
- Key sentence at the beginning of the paragraph.

THE IDEAL CLOSURE
Close your email with a review or summary.
> - I trust that I have correctly confirmed our agreements.
> - I hope that this letter contains all the information you require.

ALTERNATIVELY, IT COULD INVOLVE A CALL FOR CLEAR ACTION.
> - I'll phone you next week to discuss your views on the matter. Would you like to ask any questions before then? If so, please contact me at @
> - Please issue an acknowledgment of receipt / respond to my question before <date>
> - You can sign up via...

The sample mail could then conclude with the following closing sentence.

> We would very much like to make an appointment to learn more about your bid. With regard to planning, given the large number of CTD staff involved with this subject, we feel that the most practical solution would be for the CTD to propose a date for a meeting. It will be no problem for those of us at M&C to fit in with their plans. We very much hope to hear from you soon,
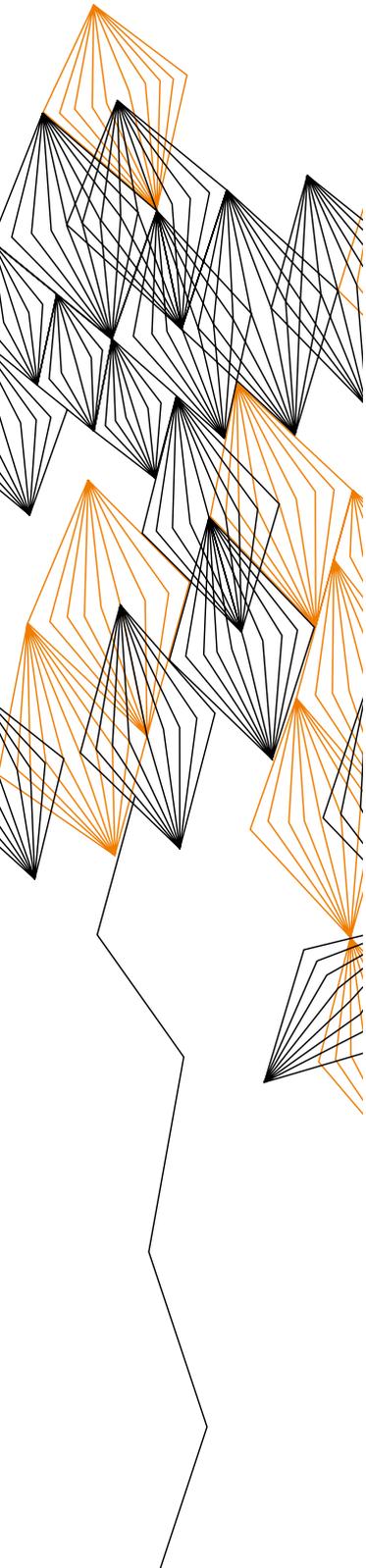
SIGNATURE

Be sure to use a professional signature. Be sure to include your contact data in an automatic signature. We have prepared a **sample** (email signature) that you can use, along with some special images that you can add to your signature. You can find more examples at the M&C website, relating to templates and downloads.

https://www.utwente.nl/organisatie/feiten-en-cijfers/intranet/huisstijl/templates/

First name Last name | Job description
University of Twente | Faculty / Institute / Service department | Department XXX
Campus building: XXX, room XXX | T: +31 +31-(0)53 – 489 XXXX | XXX@utwente.nl | www.utwente.nl/xx

UNIVERSITY
OF AWARD-WINNING ENTREPRENEURS.
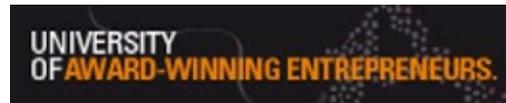
APPENDIX

You can send an electronic appendix or attachment along with the email. Give clear names to the files you are sending, for the convenience of the recipient, and state in your email exactly what kind of file you are sending. Take care not to send excessively large files. It is best to compress these using a zip program. And always check to make sure that you really have attached the file to the email.
You've probably lost count of the times that you've had a subsequent email saying something like **'Oops .... here's one with an attachment....'**

EMAILING STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS

The issue of sending a mail to one or more recipients has been discussed above. You will need to meet special conditions if you want to send an email to all members of staff or to a large group of students or staff. Check **guidelines** for details. Of course, all of the tips discussed here also apply to these emails.

INTERESTED IN MORE TIPS?

- Tips for effective writing
- Use of photographic and video material
- Search-engine-friendly writing
- House style, templates and downloads.

www.utwente.nl/tips-for-effective-writing

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