

How to write an academic email

You must always use a formal format when writing to an academic tutor or lecturer. This is because you need to ensure professionalism with all staff members. So, if you have any questions or want to know more about the module when you are applying to university or during your studies at university, you should follow the following rules/ guidelines for writing emails.



Subject:

First, you need to start with a clear subject. For example, if you wanted to ask about a specific module, you would put “prospective student module information” or even just “module information”. This is to ensure that the reason for your email is clear.

Addressee:

In the main body of your email, you want to start with a clear opener such as Dear Sir/Madam or Dear first name followed by their surname, always using a capital D for dear. After you have written the name, ensure you use a comma(,).

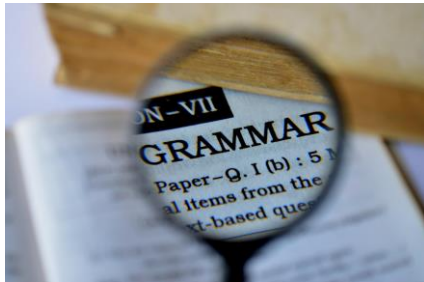
Introduction:

Now you have a clear opening and address the correct person, you can proceed to write what it is you want to ask. For example, I am writing to ask about the year one plant diversity module in BSc Ecology and Wildlife Conservation.

Once you have the summary of your questions, you can be more specific. You want to state you are a student so that the receiver will know who the email is coming from and what sort of information to provide. Then, you can ask whatever questions you have, ensuring that they are clear and precise.

Grammar & Tone:

Always use formal English and grammar when addressing the lecturers; you must ensure the emails are worded correctly. Always double-check your spelling; you can always use Grammarly or a dictionary If you struggle with spelling.



If English isn't your first language, for example, if you are an international student, then maybe ask somebody you know who understands English grammar better to double-check your email before you send it. Double-checking your work, even if English is your first language, is also a good idea.

Always be careful of your tone, as it is very easy to come across as harsh or rude through text, even when you don't mean to be. So, just ensure you use the correct tenses and don't overuse exclamation marks. Being polite is one of the most important things when writing your emails, as you will normally be contacting people in their workplace.

Ideally, you do not want your email to be longer than ten lines, so be sure to keep it clear and concise throughout. This makes it easier for the lecture to read and understand. While making sure nothing gets lost in translation or is missing from your email.



Key tips summary:

1. Always keep your email short and brief. Ask for a meeting if you need a longer discussion.
2. Always have a clear heading/subject line
3. Correctly address the recipient
4. Clearly state what it is you are asking.

5. Always be polite & be careful of your tone.
6. Always proofread emails or ask someone else to.
7. Double-check the recipient's name before sending the email.

Below is an example of an academic email:

Dear Dr Martin Galloway,

I am writing to you to ask about the upcoming exams for BSC bioscience year two.

I would like to know whether or not I need to be present for every exam on the timetable or just the exams you mentioned in the lecture.

Yours sincerely
Emma Parsley
BSc Bioscience

This email above is an example of how an enrolled student could write to their lecturer. Using the same form as above is how you should ideally create your emails going forward if you are addressing a lecturer or somebody you do not know. I hope this helps, but if you have any questions about your course options or the University of Reading, please don't hesitate to get in touch, and I will be able to answer them rapidly.