# Policy and Procedure:

# eMail Etiquette

**IOWA** | College of Dentistry and Dental Clinics

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## Scope

This policy applies to the College of Dentistry's protocol for email etiquette.

## Policy

The College of Dentistry uses email services provided by University Information Technology Services (ITS), and follows the University acceptable use policies and procedures. As an educational institution, we are bound by FERPA regulations and as a healthcare facility, we are bound by HIPAA regulations. Practicing good email etiquette is essential since email is one of the primary forms of communication within the college. Use the email etiquette tips below when composing and sending email messages.

**Include a clear, direct subject line**

Examples of a good subject line include 'Meeting date changed', 'Quick question about your presentation', or 'Suggestions for the proposal'. People often decide whether to open an email based on the subject line. Choose one that lets readers know you are addressing their concerns or business issues.

**Think twice before hitting Reply All**

No one wants to read emails from multiple people that have nothing to do with them. Refrain from hitting Reply All unless you really think everyone on the list needs to receive the email.

**Using Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) to send to a large number if recipients**

When sending an email to a distribution list always use the BCC To option. If the recipient clicks on reply all, the sender will be the only person receiving the reply email.

**Include a signature block**

Provide your reader with some information about you. Generally, this would state your full name, title, company name, and your contact information, including a phone number. A confidentiality statement must be included in the signature block. An example confidentiality statement is below.

**Reply to your emails**

It is difficult to reply to every email message ever sent to you, but you should try to. A reply is not necessary but serves as good email etiquette, especially if this person works in the same company or industry as you.

**Proofread every message**

Your mistakes will not go unnoticed by the recipients of your email. Do not rely on spell-checkers. Read and reread your email a few times, before sending it off.

**Double-check that you have selected the correct recipient**

Pay careful attention when typing a name from your address book on the email To line. It is easy to select the wrong name, which can be embarrassing to you and to the person who receives the email by mistake.

**Monitor your tone**

Just as jokes get lost in translation, tone is easy to misconstrue without the context you would get from vocal cues and facial expressions. Accordingly, it is easy to come off as more abrupt that you might have intended. To avoid misunderstandings, read your message aloud before hitting send. If it sounds harsh to you, it will sound harsh to the reader. For best results, avoid using unequivocally negative words (failure, wrong, neglected), and always say please and thank you.

**Nothing is confidential--so write accordingly**

A basic guideline is to assume that others will see what you write, so do not write anything you would not want everyone to see.  The contents of Campus email accounts are accessible to the public via "public records requests".

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# Resources

Public Records Requests: https://transparency.uiowa.edu/public-records-requests