Top tips

Using e-mail

Give your e-mail a title: use the subject box.

This makes it easier for the recipient of to prioritise, file and find your e-mail. For example "Opportunity: review of materials for a heart failure study".

Identify yourself

Set up a signature so that every time you send an email or reply to an email, the person at the other end can easily identify who you are and how to contact you.

Give enough information

When you are replying to an email, make sure that the person at the other end can do two things: identify who the email is from and understand what the email is in regard to.

If you are replying to an opportunity advert, avoid one-line responses such as 'I would like to be put forward for this'. Read the advert carefully and reply with the information it asks for.

Acknowledge important emails

Send a quick reply to show that you have received the email, especially if you have been asked to confirm something.

Use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar

E-mails with no full stops or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text. And don't forget about spell check – it's a quick way of checking and correcting your spelling.

Use lower case

DON'T WRITE SENTENCES USING CAPITAL LETTERS – IT CAN LOOK LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING.

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Exclamation marks are fun and can add humour and emphasis to your text, but they can rub some people up the wrong way. Only use an exclamation mark if you are emailing someone you know well and the tone of the email is personal and friendly. Never use an exclamation mark in an introductory email or a business email.

Do not forward someone else's email without their permission

It is good etiquette to check with the author before forwarding their email to someone else. It may have been written with you specifically in mind and may be relevant to you and you alone. The author may be perfectly happy for you to send it on, but it's worth checking first (and giving them the chance to make some changes for a different audience).

Beware of 'reply all'

Don't 'reply to all' unless you really mean to or need to. Do you really want everyone on the distribution list to know that you 'can't make the meeting date because you have an appointment at the dentist' when really only the organiser needs to know? Stick to 'reply' to be on the safe side.

Read through your email before you send it

A final check can never hurt. Resist the urge to press 'send' the minute you finish typing and take a minute or two to read over what you've written. Is your meaning clear? Have you included everything you need to? Is there a title in the subject box? Are there any mistakes? Only when you are satisfied that the email is ship shape should you press the 'send' button.