



Professional Communication Guide

Communication is the ability to effectively exchange thoughts and ideas with others through listening, speaking, writing, and nonverbal interactions. Your communication, whether it be in-person or via phone/e-mail is one of the first opportunities to showcase your strengths and value to a potential employer or graduate program. If you are graduating soon, be sure to use an e-mail address that you will still have access to when communicating via e-mail.

What is included:

- Networking Correspondence
 - Informational Interview
 - To Say Thank You
- Business Cards
- Letters of Recommendation
- The Job Search
 - Upcoming Interview
 - Additional Time to Accept Offer
 - Accelerated Offer Timeline
 - Accepting a Job Offer
 - Declining a Job Offer
- Best Practices
 - Voicemail
 - E-mail

Networking Correspondence

Sample E-mail for Informational Interview

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I am a second year Math major at the University of Florida interested in discovering more about the industry. I found your information through a LinkedIn search of the Miami metropolitan area and saw that you are also a Gator alumni. Through thorough research, I know that [Organization X] is a leading innovator in big data and I hope to be in a career with the same type of values of creativity, analytical thinking, and research.

Would you be open to having a brief 10 minute phone conversation to discuss career paths and what advice you have for stepping into the field of analytics? I understand that you are extremely busy and appreciate any time you may be able to offer.

My contact information is included, and I look forward to speaking to you in the near future. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Best,

Your Name

Your UFL email (or professional email)

123-456-7890



Sample E-mail to Say Thank You

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to meet with me this past week. The advice you gave about working in the field of journalism was helpful, and per your recommendation I reached out to Dr. _____ and we have a meeting scheduled this month. Additionally, I have enthusiastically pursued career opportunities at [Organization X], [Organization Y], and [Organization Z].

I would love to continue to update you on my career path in the future and appreciate having you in my network of connections. If I can ever help you with anything, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Again, thank you for your time and valuable insights.

Best,

Your Name

Your UFL email (or professional email)

123-456-7890

Business Cards

Business cards are beneficial for students for many reasons. They are an easy way to exchange information at conferences or impromptu meetings, standing out among other candidates, and establishing your personal brand.

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

firstname.lastname@ufl.edu

123-456-7890

University of Florida

College of Public Health and Health Professions

Bachelor of Health Science, May 20XX

Seeking position as a Certified Nursing Assistant

- CPR/AED Certified
- Language skills: Spanish (fluent)

www.linkedin.com/in/johnsmith

Letters of Recommendation

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I hope you have been doing well since our research in the Speech and Hearing Lab has concluded. As one of my mentors and someone who has helped shape my career path, I am writing to see if you would be interested in providing a letter of recommendation for my application to graduate programs in the field. The deadline to receive all recommendation letters is October 15, 20XX and I wanted to give you ample time because I know that you have a busy workload and schedule.

My resume and personal statement are attached to this email so you are able to see the other involvement and leadership I accomplished while also being an assistant in your lab. Please let me know



if you are also interested in providing this letter of support and if there are any other documents or materials you may need to help you with this.

Best,
Your Name
Your UFL email (or professional email)
123-456-7890

The Job Search

Throughout your job search process, it is ideal to communicate via phone or in-person. E-mail communication can be used for follow-up after initial conversations.

Sample E-mail for Upcoming Interview

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

I am a Psychology student at the University of Florida, with a concentration in neuroscience. While reviewing the website for internship opportunities at [Organization X], I saw a position posted in your department. I am extremely interested in the position and would like to learn how I can stand out in comparison to my fellow candidates.

Will you be willing to fit me in your schedule for a brief phone call to discuss the environment at [Organization X] and experiences you or participants have had with the internship program?

My contact information is included, and I look forward to speaking to you in the near future. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Best,
Your Name
Your UFL email (or professional email)
123-456-7890

Sample E-mail Asking for Additional Time to Accept an Offer

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you for offering me the position of Management Intern at [Organization X]. The position aligns very closely with my career goals and I am grateful for this opportunity. I am writing to let you know that I have a previously scheduled interview, and ethically, it is important to me to honor this commitment. In order to make an educated decision, I was hoping to be granted an extra week to confirm or deny the employment offer at [Organization X].

Please let me know your thoughts and if you need anything else from me in the interim.

Best,
Your Name
Your UFL email (or professional email)
123-456-7890



Sample E-mail Asking for an Accelerated Offer Timeline

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview with [Organization X] for the position of Associate Consultant. This position continues to be the most aligning with my career goals and where I truly feel I can bring my strengths of leadership, research, and community service to contribute to the organization.

I wanted to inform you that I have received an offer from another organization and have been given a deadline to respond. The position at [Organization X] is my preferred choice, and I am hoping to receive an offer from you before having to make a decision with the other organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Your Name

Your UFL email (or professional email)

123-456-7890

Sample E-mail for Accepting a Job Offer

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Following up to your call earlier today, I am writing to express my excitement and gratitude about accepting your employment offer at [Organization X] today, November 21, 20XX. I am looking forward to being part of the team and to be part of the [Organization X] community. Thank you again for the opportunity.

As discussed, my starting salary will be [\$45,000] with health, dental, and life insurance benefits provided immediately. I look forward to starting employment on January 13, 20XX and would be happy to provide any additional documents necessary prior to then.

Best,

Your Name

Your UFL email (or professional email)

123-456-7890

Sample E-mail for Declining a Job Offer

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you very much for extending the offer of Risk Analysis Intern at [Organization X]. I have appreciated your time in discussing the position with me during the interview process and having the opportunity to meet you and your colleagues.

The position is interesting to me in many ways when I think about how I could grow in my career and develop as a professional. However, after a challenging decision, I believe it is best to decline the offer based on next steps that are more appropriate for my career path.

Again, I am grateful for your time and consideration and hope to cross paths with you in the future.



Best,
Your Name
Your UFL email (or professional email)
123-456-7890

Best Practices

Voicemail

1. Have your voicemail inbox set with a professional greeting and cleared so it is not full. You will miss important messages without doing so also look unprofessional or unprepared. Check your voicemail frequently and return messages promptly.

Example 1: Hi. This is NAME. I am currently unable to take your call. Please leave your name, phone number, and a brief message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you.

Example 2: Hi, you've reached NAME. Sorry, I'm unable to take your call right now. Please leave your name and number and I'll be in touch as soon as possible.

2. When leaving voicemails, be sure to be concise, clear with your message, and professional.

Think First

Before you pick up the phone pause for a second and summarize, in your mind, the purpose of the call in one or two sentences.

Introduce Yourself

Begin every voicemail message by introducing yourself, so the recipient knows who calling right away. It should include your full name, title, and company name.

Speak Slowly

Speak slowly enough so the person receiving the message can hear every word. It is very frustrating when to retrieve messages only to find that the other person is speaking so quickly that you must listen more than once to understand them or to jot a short note about the call.

Speak Clearly

Speak directly into the mouthpiece of your telephone in a clear and adequately modulated tone of voice. Do not hold the phone between your cheek and shoulder so that the mouthpiece is positioned by your neck.

Keep It Short

You don't have to leave every detail on your voicemail message. Most business phone systems have a one to a two-minute time limit for messages. It is acceptable to leave a short summary of the reason for your call and end it by saying, "Please return my call and I will go over the issue with you in more detail."

End It Professionally

Just like a professional business letter, end by giving your contact information. If you the person is unfamiliar with you or might have trouble placing you, repeat your name and company along with the best way to reach you and your contact information. If you already have a strong working relationship, you may be able to skip repeating your name, but still be sure to give them the best number to reach you.



Dropped Call?

If you believe your voicemail message was dropped by the voicemail system before you were finished, try the call again and lead off by telling the person that you believe your previous message may have been dropped.

Example: "Hello. This is _____; I think my previous message may have been cut-off. So here it is again..."

Practice and Test Yourself

If you are unsure, you are speaking too fast, or not clearly enough, ask a friend or business associate to help you. Call and leave a fabricated voicemail message on their phone. Ask them to listen to it and evaluate it based on the tips listed above. Listen to it yourself and see if you sound professional.

E-mail

1. As with voicemails, check your email inbox frequently. Response time for email can vary but the average is about 24-48 hours at least. You can respond that you have received an email but share you have to do some more work/digging to get the answer/work to at least give courtesy to the sender that they know it was received.
2. Double-check that you have selected the correct email recipient.
3. Watch attachments – make sure the file is actually attached with an appropriate, relevant name.
4. Personalize your emails. This builds rapport and a connection.
5. Be mindful of email length. Keep it short and concise but not too casual.
6. Thank people for their time.
7. Watch the recipient list, especially order. If you are emailing your boss, her colleagues, and their assistants, start with your boss's name and then list the recipients in order of importance/seniority.
8. Review your carbon copies (CC's). Make sure that the people who are supposed to be copied on the e-mail, are on the email. Sometimes, it can help to address the multiple people in an email why they are included in the email to ensure everyone is on the same page.
9. Watch out for forward and reply all. This button can get you in A LOT of trouble. Don't accidentally send a message to someone you didn't mean to send it to you. Double check!
10. Double check the sender! You'd be surprised how many people have similar names.
11. Beware of the paper trail. Don't write anything you wouldn't want someone else to see.



12. Check the blind carbon copy (BCC). If someone BCCs you on an email, it typically means the point of the email is to make you aware of the information and keep you in the loop, but it doesn't mean that you should directly respond. In fact, usually if you are BCC'd it means the person sending the e-mail does not want you to respond. Usually, they don't even want the person the e-mail was sent to realizing that you were on the email. If you aren't sure if the email requires a response, ask your supervisor.
13. Out of office away messages – look at others emails and see other best practices to incorporate into their practices --- wording, signing, etc.
14. Close the email appropriately. Sign with “Best” or “Regards.” Your email signature should be set up within your organization – but if not, it should include the following information:

First and Last Name Position/Title
Company Name Company Website Phone Number