E-mail Protocol

This document describes the expectations concerning e-mail communication between students and university faculty or staff. This document uses the term *instructor* throughout, but the protocol applies to any university employee with whom you may have reason to correspond via e-mail.

E-mail is considered an official form of correspondence, although some instructors *much* prefer to see you in person if there is anything you wish to ask or discuss. The individual instructor will inform you of his/her preferred method of communication. Even if you do not normally use your UNB e-mail account you **must** do so for this course. This is a requirement and compliance is your responsibility.

Several times throughout the term important information will be sent to every student by electronic mail. ***It is the instructors assumption that you have read and understood the material sent to you.*** It is advisable that you check your UNB e-mail at least once a day. *It will be assumed that you check it regularly.*

All e-mail correspondence you send to your instructors **must** come from your UNB e-mail account. Mail sent from any other accounts like Hotmail, Yahoo!, etc., will not be considered — some instructors filter mail from these domains directly to the trash. Some instructors are not comfortable sending confidential student information via e-mail to non-UNB domains.

Anonymous mail messages will not be considered. Any e-mail correspondence you send to your instructor must clearly identify you as the sender. It **must** include your name and student number, and it should indicate which course the correspondence refers to. If you have your UNB mail account forwarded to a different account, make sure you keep your mailbox limit from being reached. Your UNB e-mail box may also fill up; it is your responsibility to keep it clear enough that mail can be received. If you do not receive messages because they are bounced from a full mailbox then you will miss important information. Making sure that you receive your university mail is *your responsibility*. Instructors will make no special effort to accommodate any unusual mail handling procedures you may have adopted.

If your reason for contacting the instructor is not something fairly simple, before you send mail or phone, try to see the instructor in person. It is generally much easier to resolve an issue if we can have a short conversation, rather than exchanging several e-mail messages. However, it is fine to use an e-mail message to set up a convenient meeting time.

Faculty members will typically reply to your mail within 48 hours (two business days) of having received the message. Do not expect an immediate answer; instructors do not sit in front of their computers nearly as much as one might think. If your question requires an immediate answer then e-mail is not the means of communication to use. Instructors have lives too, so will not necessarily read e-mail on the weekend. They *may* do so, but it should not be expected. And just because you have not received a reply does not mean that the instructor has not read the message. At times there are other reasons for a delay in response. Many instructors receive more than 100 e-mail messages per day and responding to this volume of mail can take a great deal of time.

When corresponding with an instructor — or anyone, for that matter — the following rules of etiquette should be observed:

- Include a subject line in the mail message and make it meaningful. If your mail message has no subject line, or one that conveys no relevant information, then there is less chance that it will be read or get prompt attention.

- Adopt an appropriate tone in your message. You have only the words to convey information (there is no tone of voice, gesture, or other paralinguistic aspect of speech to help convey your meaning), so be careful in your choice of words. Rude or aggressive messages will not be tolerated.

- Check and correct spelling and grammar errors. You will be taken more seriously if you show care in everything you do, including the quality of writing in your correspondence. Correspondence written in the style typically found in internet chat rooms is not acceptable.

- Stick to the point and get it across clearly and concisely.

- Do not write in ALL CAPS. It is the written equivalent of screaming at the recipient.

- Sign with your name and student number and indicate the course to which your message refers.

- Do not hit the "Send" button until you have done all of the above. If you are upset when you write the message, adopt the 24 hour rule; do not send the message immediately, but rather wait until the next day and then re-read the message. More than likely you will want to edit it before clicking on "Send."

Keep in mind that your e-mail transmissions are not private. While it is highly unlikely that your mail will be made available to any other person due to a purposeful act of an instructor, there are many ways that your message could unintentionally become public. Keep this in mind for all of your mail transmissions. If you would not like someone other than the recipient to see it, maybe you need to re-think the contents of the message.

If you would like to read more about e-mail etiquette, type "*e-mail etiquette*" into an internet search engine and examine some of the material at the links returned by the search. There are many good mail etiquette expositions available.