### Writing a formal email

**Ask yourself**
- Why am I writing this email?
- What do I want to tell my recipient?
- What do I want them to do as a result of my email?

**It should be clear to the recipient**
- Who is the email from?
- What the email is about.
- If a reply is necessary.

**General suggestions**
- Write the most important information first.
- Only include necessary information.
- Be concise and use simple grammar.
- Use numbers/bullet points and divide into paragraphs for a clear message.
- Be polite.

**Write a clear and informative subject line**
- Convince people they need to actually pay attention to your email.
- Ask that an action be taken by someone.

**Clear opening statements**
- In reply to your letter...
- Thanks for your email...
- Following our (phone) conversation...
- I am writing to inform you that...

**Formal greeting**
- To Whom It May Concern,
- Dear [name], / Dear Dr. [name],

**Proofread before sending**
- Is the recipient list correct?
- Check attachments/links.
- No missing words or other errors.

**Closing statements**
- Thank you:
  - Thank you for your help. / time / assistance / support.
  - I really appreciate the help. / time / assistance / support you’ve given me.
  - Thank you once more for your help in this matter.
- Future focus:
  - I look forward to hearing from you soon / meeting you next Tuesday.
  - I look forward to seeing you soon.
  - I’m looking forward to your reply.
  - We hope that we may continue to rely on your valued custom.
  - We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future.
- Offer assistance:
  - If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.
  - Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.
  - Please let me know if you have any questions.
  - Let me know if you need anything else.

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**What is the purpose of your email**

- **Introduce yourself:** As a second-year student in the Executive MBA program, I am writing to request a brief meeting with you to discuss opportunities in market research.
- **Deny a request:** Thank you for writing to ask about attending the conference in Baltimore. I wish I could approve your request.
- **Apologize:** Please accept my apology for missing the meeting yesterday. I am sorry that a medical appointment prevented my attending.
- **Congratulate:** Congratulations on successfully passing the bar exam. Your hard work has paid off!
- **Invite:** You are invited to the opening of the ‘2017 Fashion Fair’ on Sunday, 16 April, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the AHOY in Rotterdam.
- **Respond to a letter of complaint:** Thank you for writing to us about your experience in the airport last week.
- **Confirm an agreement:** I am happy to confirm our agreement about the summer institute.
- **Provide a reference:** Jessica Dell has asked me to provide information to you in support of her job application, and I am pleased to do so.
- **Request a letter of reference:** I am applying to graduate schools in marine biology, and I would be very grateful if you would write a letter of reference for me.
- **Request approval:** I would appreciate your approval to attend a training program on project management to meet my annual performance goals. Here are the details:
- **Request information:** I am seeking the answers to two questions about customs declarations for a shipment to Russia.
- **Share information:** I received some important information from Dr. Owens, and I believe it will be useful to you as you analyze the research data.
- **Explain a change in policy:** I want to let you know about a new tuition reimbursement policy we will implement in January.
- **Introduce a new employee:** I am pleased to introduce Kathryn Vargas, Manager of Training and Development.

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**Try to avoid**

- Contractions (don’t → do not).
- Exclamation marks (only special occasion).
- Abbreviations and acronyms.

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Adapted from slide share (author Matthijs Van Eijk) & MIT EECS Communication Lab. @OpenAcademics