

Title	Kennesaw State University Email Best Practices
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Responsible Office	Office of the Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
Contact Information	Office of the Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Office of Cybersecurity Phone: 470-578-6620 Email: ocs@kennesaw.edu

Effective email communication at Kennesaw State University enhances accessibility, readability, and security while fostering a sense of community and leaving a positive impression. By following these guidelines, you will enhance the quality of your messages, promote accessibility, and maintain data security.

Protect Your—and KSU’s—Data

- Adhere to [KSU’s Data Management Guidelines](#).
- **Never share confidential data via email:** If a message must contain sensitive information, encrypt the attachment and share the password through a separate channel.

Examples of confidential data: passwords, Social Security numbers, driver’s-license numbers, bank-account details, credit/debit-card numbers, identifiable medical information, visa and passport numbers.

Define Your Purpose and Determine Audience

- **Define your purpose:** Begin by asking yourself what you are trying to achieve with your email. Are you informing, requesting, persuading, confirming, or reminding?
- **Determine your audience:** Determine the individual(s) or group you need to address. Consider their roles and responsibilities, as well as their relationship to you. *Always* tailor your message based on your audience.
- **Determine whether the message is for the entire university or a subset of recipients.** (e.g. students, faculty, staff or subsets thereof) When mentioning multiples of these groups, list groups in this order: first students, then faculty, and then staff.
- **Consider tone and style:** The purpose and audience will help you decide whether your email should be formal, casual, or neutral, and whether you need to provide a detailed explanation or a simple message.
- **Ensure the content is relevant, timely, and in alignment with university priorities.**
- **Use descriptive subject lines** that summarize the content.
E.g., “Science 1101: Our Group Project”
- **Avoid vague language** like “Important Update” or “Read This Now.”

Begin with a Salutation

- **Use an appropriate salutation.**
E.g., *Dear Professor Jones*, if you are emailing a professor, or *Hi, Jane!* If you are emailing a classmate.

Share Key Information Early in the Message

- **Begin with a summary of the most important details**, including dates if applicable.
E.g., "Starting February 1, we will . . ."
- **Ensure critical updates are immediately visible** without scrolling.

Keep Content Concise and Scannable

- **Use bullet points, numbered lists, or headings** for easy readability.
- **Limit each paragraph to 2–3 sentences.**
- Use **bold** and **highlights** strategically
E.g., You might put the main point of the message in bold font and/or highlight key dates or deadlines.
- **Include links to additional resources** rather than overloading the email with excessive details.

Use Descriptive Hyperlinks

- **Use meaningful text that reflects the link destination**
E.g., View the [event schedule](#).
- **Avoid embedding URLs behind generic words** like “here” or “click here.”
- **Avoid typing out long URLs**, and avoid including “https://” or “http://”.

Use Inclusive and Professional Language

- **Address all recipients respectfully**, using gender-neutral language when appropriate (e.g., “they” instead of “he/she”).
- **Tailor the tone to your audience:** formal for external communications, and conversational for internal emails.

Keep Attachments to a Minimum

- **Share content via secure, campus-approved platforms** such as OneDrive rather than large attachments. *Learn more about sharing documents securely here:* [How to Determine Where to Store and Share Information](#)
- **When sharing attachments, include a brief description of the file’s purpose.**

Prioritize Accessibility

- **Use clear fonts** and ensure text is easy to read on all devices.
 - Suggested fonts for the body of emails: Aptos or Calibri
 - Suggested font size for the body of emails: 12
 - Suggested font color: Black (with the exception of links, which should be underlined and in blue font.)
- **Include alt text for images** to accommodate people using screen readers.
- **Avoid overly complex formatting or bright color schemes.**

Standardize Email Signatures

- Follow [KSU's standard format for email signatures](#).
- **Avoid excessive links, quotes, or images** in your signature.

Avoid Composing Messages That Look Suspicious

- Stick to KSU branding—plain backgrounds, approved fonts, and no flashing GIFs.
- Don't spoof addresses (e.g., using display names like "KSU Payroll Dept" from a personal Gmail).
- Steer clear of alarm-style language ("ACT NOW OR YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE CLOSED!").
- Never request passwords, MFA codes, or personal data by reply.
- Limit exclamation points, emojis, and ALL-CAPS—they're common phishing flags.
- Ensure link text matches the real destination; mismatches look phishy.

Looks Suspicious	Looks Legit
Subject: URGENT—Verify your account immediately!!!	<i>Subject:</i> Action Needed – Two-Factor Setup by May 15
From: "KSU IT Helpdesk john.doe@yahoo.com"	<i>From:</i> UITS Help Desk helpdesk@kennesaw.edu
Body: Click here http://tinyurl.com/abcd to avoid deactivation.	<i>Body:</i> Visit Duo Enrollment to complete the setup (link goes to a kennesaw.edu domain).

Review and Proofread Before Sending

- **Check and double-check the recipient(s) and** avoid using the "Reply All" option unless your message is intended for everyone in the list.
- **Check for grammatical errors, broken links, and tone consistency.**
- **Confirm that all links and/or attachments are correct and appropriate** for the intended audience.