

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY INTERNSHIP GUIDE

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Professional etiquette is an unwritten code of conduct for interactions in a work environment. As a representative of the Office of Sustainability we expect interns to present themselves in a professional manner. This document is intended as a guide. We are always happy to discuss specific concerns in more detail.

Communication

As a part of your internship at the Office of Sustainability you will likely communicate with diverse groups, depending upon your specific project. Communication includes overt language, both written and spoken, and implicit messages such as tone, eye contact and wording. Effective communication conveys the intended message in a clear, professional way.

Communication tips

For all types of communication, first consider the author, audience, and purpose.

Author: Everyone has their own style (personal, informal, humorous). However, professional communication may require you to adjust your style to different situations throughout your internship and career.

Audience: The recipients of your message will determine the level of formality and intimacy. Consider your vocabulary, tone and point of view. Be careful about gender neutrality. Use singular pronouns (she/he) or plural pronouns to avoid gender bias. Also be careful with titles. If someone has a PhD, use the title doctor (Dr.). If unsure, err on the side of using this title in an academic environment. If you are addressing a woman who does not have a PhD, the correct title is Ms. (even if you know she is married) unless she has signed a previous communication as Mrs.

Purpose: Your motive will frame the vocabulary, language, and tone you use to communicate.

Bias: Be aware of your own biases and assumptions about the people you communicate with, understanding that your own experiences may be very different from those around you. Avoid generalizations and speak from the “I” perspective and show respect even if you disagree.

Types of Communication

Which form of communication you use depends upon time frame, importance, formality, detail, and if you need a response. If you need something quickly, make a phone call. If you have more time, type an e-mail. If you need documentation of your communication or more formality, write a letter or formal e-mail. Text, Twitter and Facebook may be appropriate for students and for event communication.

If you are using social media to promote your project, please schedule a meeting with OoS Staff before creating a new group or account. There may be a group already created in a previous semester that could be re-worked! If you are posting, there are likely several campus organizations that you can leverage to assist with getting your word out. In most semesters, the Office of sustainability has an intern dedicated to social media postings and communication for the office. It will make your life easier, your project better, and our communications more organized if you will work with that intern (and with office staff) to plan for good communications with your project.

E-mail

Not surprisingly, professional e-mails should be written differently from those to friends or family.

E-mail tips:

- Be mindful of the address(es) in the To: field, especially when replying. Avoid the embarrassment of sending a confidential email to a listserv or a list of Reply All recipients.
- Use an e-mail address that sounds professional. Be aware of what image your e-mail address conveys to others. Using your first and last name, or initials and last name, etc. are safe bets.
- Include a descriptive subject for your message.
- Say “please” and “thank you” in the appropriate places throughout your e-mail.
- Greet the recipient appropriately. Use a title and last name unless the recipient has asked you to use their first name.
- Use an appropriate tone. Try for friendly and approachable but not informal. Try to avoid emotions, abbreviations and fancy formatting. Don’t use all capital words, emoticons, or abbreviations.
- Organize your thoughts and communicate them clearly and concisely.
- Get to the point early. Ask for what you want within the first two sentences. If elaboration is required, do that in the next paragraph.
- Be concise.
- Use proper English, grammar, and spelling. Always proofread before sending.
- Write your full name and title at the bottom of the e-mail.
- Reply promptly, ideally within 24 hours. If you will be unable to respond quickly, send a brief message acknowledging receipt and that you plan to respond soon.
- Only include relevant attachments. If you have the option, include a URL to the file instead of using a file attachment.
- Be careful with confidential information. E-mail can be retrieved and reviewed.

Drafting your e-mail:

1. Include a descriptive subject in the subject line
2. Address the receiver and follow with a sentence on why you are writing.
3. Create a short to-the-point message.
4. Check tone, spelling, grammar.
5. Sign off (sincerely, regards, thank you). Include your name and title and/or affiliation.
6. Proofread
7. CC the appropriate Office of Sustainability Staff member. This allows us to keep track of contacts for future communication.

Phone calls

If you need an immediate response, have multiple points to cover, or want extensive feedback, phone calls can be effective.

Phone call Tips:

- Prepare ahead of time. Know what you want to say and receive from the conversation.
- Pay attention to the timing of your call. If they were not expecting your call, ask if it is a good time or if you should call back.
- Be polite (please and thank you).
- Clearly identify yourself and your affiliation. For example, “My name is _____ and I am an intern at the UGA Office of Sustainability working on _____.”
- State your purpose for calling.
- Be careful not to interrupt.
- Take notes while you talk.
- Thank the person for their time and assistance.

- Leave a message if the person is not available. On the message, clearly state your name, phone number, time, date, purpose of the call and if you will try again.
- Be mindful of the volume and speed of your speech.
- Ask permission before placing someone on speaker phone or hold.
- If you are calling from a cell phone be aware of background noise and reception quality.

Letters

Letters are a more formal means of professional communication. They are especially important when you need a paper trail. Some examples include letters requesting donations from a business, letters of support for projects, and cover letters for job applications. Letters written as a part of your work at OoS should be printed on letterhead which is available digitally.

Letter Tips:

- Include the recipient's complete title and address at the top left of the page. Your name and contact information should go on the right or bottom below your signature.
- Use a formal greeting, such as "Dear" or "To whom it may concern."
- Organize the information, and be clear and concise.
- Include a formal closing, such as "Sincerely" and sign and print your name.

Meetings

Many of your projects require in-person meetings between multiple parties. As OoS ambassadors, it's important that you present yourselves professionally when representing the office.

Meeting Tips:

- If you are scheduling the meeting, communicate with all parties and offer multiple days and times using a program such as Meeting Wizard or Doodle.
- If you are attending, confirm your attendance as soon as possible.
- Dress appropriately for the situation. It is better to be slightly over dressed than under. (Avoid hats, flip flops, anything too snug or low cut).
- Show up on time. This shows you respect the time of all in attendance. If you are leading the meeting, arrive early to check the room.
- Introduce yourself to others with your first and last name and maintain eye contact.
- Give a firm hand shake (web of fingers should touch, firm grip, about 3 seconds, 3 up down).
- Be prepared. Do your homework and bring any materials you need.
- If something comes up and you can't attend, inform the meeting organizer immediately.
- Turn your cell phone to silent and do not check your phone or messages during the meeting.
- Participate. Ask questions and share ideas. Avoid slang.
- Pay attention to your body language and avoid fidgeting, slumping, leaning or looking away.
- Give the speaker your full attention.
- Thank others for the opportunity, or include a closing such as "it was nice to meet you."

Presentations

During your internship you may have the opportunity to give both formal and impromptu presentations on your project.

Presentation tips

- Know your audience so you can focus your presentation based on interest and experience level.
- Dress appropriately. Avoid anything too distracting or unusual. In general, dress in a way that connects you to your audience.
- Organize carefully. For PowerPoint, include an introduction and a conclusions slide. Slides should flow in a logical order beginning with basic information and getting more detailed.

- Practice, practice, practice. Practice.
- Know and respect your time limit.
- Call for questions (It's OK if you don't know the answer. You can always offer to do some research and get back to them, or simply say: "That's a really good question, and I don't know the answer.")
- Speak enthusiastically.
- Be mindful of Murphy's Law. Be prepared to present without your PowerPoint if technology fails.
- When using Powerpoint, use fewer words and more pictures. Your audience can read faster than you can talk, so do not read the slides to them. Rather, use the slides to enhance what you are saying. Follow the guidance of "Death by PowerPoint" and "How Many Words do you Put on Each Slide?" referenced below.

Written Reports

Some of your projects will require written reports. We will go over expectations for these products with you but in general they should include an introduction, methods and materials, results, discussion, conclusion and a bibliography.

References

HANDBOOK FOR EFFECTIVE, PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION Faculty of Forest and Natural Resources Management Undergraduate Education Committee Fall 2008

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE Shepherd University Career Development Center Gardiner Hall – Ground Floor 304-876-5122
www.shepherd.edu/jobweb (3/12/15)

DEATH BY POWERPOINT <http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint>

HOW MANY WORDS DO YOU PUT ON EACH SLIDE? <https://remotepossibilities.wordpress.com/2013/06/22/how-many-words-do-you-put-on-each-slide/>