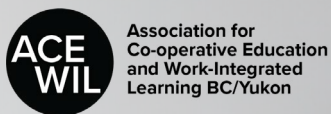


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Tips for Managing Digital Communication At Your Student Placement

For most student placements, regularly checking your email at your new job is an important everyday task. Most students are well acquainted with operating their personal or school email accounts, however, maintaining a work inbox can be an entirely different matter.

While email is intended to facilitate workplace communication, students may struggle prioritizing and responding to a higher volume of messages than they are used to receiving. Furthermore, many offices use some form of inter-office messaging system such as Slack, which can add to the number of incoming messages. It is not uncommon for students to initially spend more time in their inbox than doing proper work!

Ultimately, how you manage your work inbox will largely be context specific—it will depend on where you work and what your position is—some jobs require you to be more accessible via email than others. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for staying on top of digital communication in the workplace. There are, however, a few tips to keep in mind as you figure out what works for you!

Get to know your program features — especially your calendar.

Most business email providers (Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, and ProtonMail are common) include a calendar feature which helps you keep track of meetings and important deadlines. Learning how to schedule appointments with colleagues and clients through your calendar will be an essential skill at your work placement. It's also important to RSVP when you're invited to events through your calendar and to review the content of those invites in case there is something you need to prepare for that meeting.

Create a routine.

Whether you decide to check your email twice a day or once every hour, it can be useful to schedule designated time blocks purely for email checking. Some find it useful to set a time limit (15 minutes is often sufficient) for responding to emails.

Prioritize emails from your supervisor.

These emails may contain important information that requires immediate action, impacting how you schedule your workday.

Deal with each email by determining its purpose.

Email generally falls into the following categories:

- ◇ *Emails that provide information:* These messages may include details about a project you're working on, background context for an upcoming meeting, or updates from colleagues and clients. You must do something with the information in the email. Depending on what it is, you might add it to your calendar, turn it into a reminder, archive it for reference, etc.
- ◇ *Emails that solicit information:* These messages are asking you a question and may require a response. If you can answer it simply, you should do so before moving on to another email. If you don't know the answer, you may send a message that indicates that you are looking for the answer and will follow up shortly.
- ◇ *Emails that require action:* These messages contain action items that are things you must do. There are two options for dealing with action-based emails: Do the action right now if possible; or make a plan to do it at a time that makes sense. Make a note if you can't do the action right at the moment so that you remember to return to the email later.

* A note about instant-messaging (IM): Email is a vital form of workplace communication, but many organizations use IM for quick inter-office communication with members of your team. It is important to determine which platform works best in different situations. IM is typically used in quick interactions with a more casual tone. Choose IM over email in instances such as urgent messages, real-time collaboration, and team bonding.



Best Free and Low-cost Trainings for Managing Your Inbox

There are a variety of resources available for students that tackle the challenge of getting a better handle on their work inboxes. Whether it is learning new Outlook tricks and shortcuts, creating optimal email filing systems, or establishing better task management practices through email, there are plenty of online trainings to look to. Below are four great free and low-cost options to help get you started.

1

[Email Management for Better Productivity via YouTube \(Free\)](#)

Easy to follow webinar that offers 22 tips and ideas for managing work email more effectively. Includes how-tos for creating templates and organizing and archiving emails in Microsoft Outlook.

2

[Outlook: Efficient Email Management via LinkedIn Learning \(Free with Membership\)](#)

Video instruction takes students through the features of Outlook that can make email workflow easier and more efficient. Students learn to create email conversations and set up organizational features that may increase productivity with Outlook.

3

[Master Microsoft Outlook: Outlook from Beginner to Advanced via Udemy \(\\$27.99\)](#)

Video-based modules help learners master the most popular Outlook tools and develop the foundational skills with a sureness to complete many daily Outlook tasks with efficiency and ease.

4

[Online Email Management Training via Officiency \(\\$25.00/module\)](#)

An interactive and self-paced e-learning format offers instruction on how to manage, sort, file, track, and organize email. The following modules are offered:

- ◇ Three Strategies to Email Management
- ◇ Managing Incoming Email: Processing Strategies
- ◇ Managing Incoming Email: Using Email Functions
- ◇ How to Identify Action-Related Email
- ◇ How to Organize and File Emails
- ◇ Creating Effective Email Communications