

GUIDE TO COMMUNICATIONS FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

As you adjust to working and learning away from AB, you should also consider how you'll communicate with your faculty and University staff. As we all adjust to virtual delivery of classes and support services, below are some tips to help you communicate effectively. Faculty, staff, and your peers are all adjusting to recent events and the transition to virtual learning. Having patience will be critical; you will get the information you need, even if not as immediately as one would like.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- While many staff and faculty are relying on virtual communication, they remain available to support students. We do encourage you to communicate your needs while you are away from campus. This could include questions you have about class, health issues, non-academic challenges, and so on. Both faculty and staff anticipate hearing from you.
- Student resources are still available during this time! Offices are preparing to offer their services while students are away from campus, and communicating digitally will now be essential to access many University services. Resources such as the Picket Library, Academic Center for Educational Success, Career Services, and Counseling Services are continuing to offer support via email, phone, chat, skype, facetime, and other digital means.
- Check your email often (at least twice per day), as it will continue to be the University's primary means of communication.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

We can safely anticipate that the volume of emails will increase over the next days and weeks. To assist others in being able to provide a timely and appropriate response to your messages, try to utilize the following tips.

Each email should include:

- A subject line with a descriptive and brief reference to your course or issue. (For example: POLS 101 – Assignment 3)
- Introductions (e.g., Good morning Dr. Johnson, ; Dear Prof. Nguyen, according to the addressee's preferred level of formality)
- Appropriate punctuation (e.g., avoid run-on sentences)
- Avoid using "text talk" and shorthand
- Make clear, concise, respectful requests
- Sign offs. At the end of your message, include a sign off such as, "Best", "Take care", or something similar to signal the end of your email.
- Effective emails should not be longer than a paragraph or so and should quickly get to the point. If you are having trouble keeping your email brief, it may be better to arrange a phone or video call.
- All emails should be sent using your official AB email. Emails sent from other accounts are likely to get sent to the recipient's spam folder.
- Allow at least 48 business hours for a response to your email. Please refrain from sending follow-up emails within this time-frame. If you must send a follow-up email, do so as a reply that includes the original email. This is not rude; it will help the addressee avoid answering you with the same information twice.
 - If your email contains urgent information, try to call or send a direct message instead.