# Email Etiquette

Email was originally used as an informal means of communication. However it has now become an essential business communication tool used within the HSE. Because of this, it is important that we use the same business etiquette in our email correspondences as we would with all others. Please ensure that you use the e-mail system for business only, e-mail protocols can be found under the ICT section of the HSE intranet. When you are away from your computer it is good practice to turn on the **'out of office'** tool providing a work colleagues email address/contact details as an alternative or a contact number if you are working out of the office.

The following outlines a number of simple tips for better email etiquette:

1. **Properly address your email messages**

There are two main addresses fields, these are the To and Cc. The To field is used for people you are directly addressing and the Cc field is used for people you are indirectly addressing. It's important that you only copy those people that need to be copied.
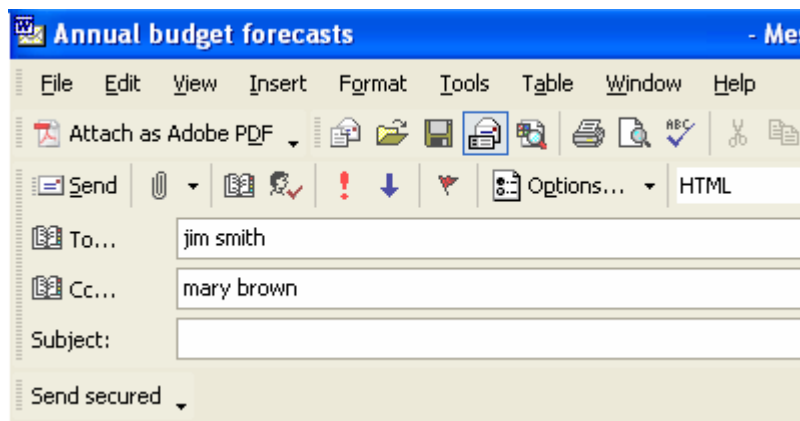
2. **Always include a meaningful subject line in your message**

This will give the recipient some indication regarding the contents of the email
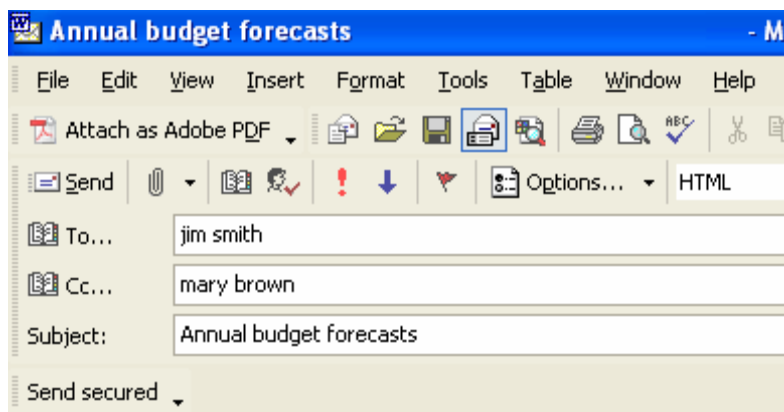
3. Keep messages brief and to the point

There is nothing worse than scrolling through long replies. Where possible always summarise your points. Outline them in small and precise paragraphs that can be easily read and understood by the intended recipient.

The best email sentences are short, and the best paragraphs are short. They're quick for the receiver to read and easy on the eyes. Double space between paragraphs and don't indent. Since people read email messages quickly, create lists. These can be read at a glance, and readers aren't as likely to miss something important. Use numbers or bullets to highlight each point.

4. Style and Tone - English & Grammar

An email is slightly more casual in tone than a typed letter. Yet, there is a fine line between being too casual and too formal. The tone you want is professional, yet conversational. To achieve this tone, try using contractions (I'll, we'll, he's, she's).

As you compose the message, consider the person who will be reading it. Know your audience. If you are replying to a message, use a tone similar to that of the sender. If you are initiating the contact, pay attention to the person at the receiving end. For example, your tone would be different to a corporate senior manager than it would be if you were e-mailing a colleague.

Some people receive literally hundreds of messages daily. There is no room for fluff. Be concise - by keeping your message short, there's a better chance it will be read. As an added benefit, being concise is a good editing tool. When you're forced to keep it brief, your writing sounds better.

Use proper English and do not use all capitals, as it may look like you're shouting. To emphasise important points use asterisks or bold formatting. Make sure you always perform a spelling and grammar check on your message before you send it.

5. Always properly sign your emails

You should always sign your emails as follows:
Name,
Title,
Department / Section,
HSE Organisation,
Location,
Contact phone number
e-mail address

Most email applications, allow you to automatically sign your emails. Within Microsoft
Outlook, this can be set as follows

1) From the top tool bar select ***Tools*** and ***Options***
2) From the ***Options menu,*** select ***Mail Format***

3) Select the **Signatures** button
4) Enter your **Contact Details** and click **Ok.**
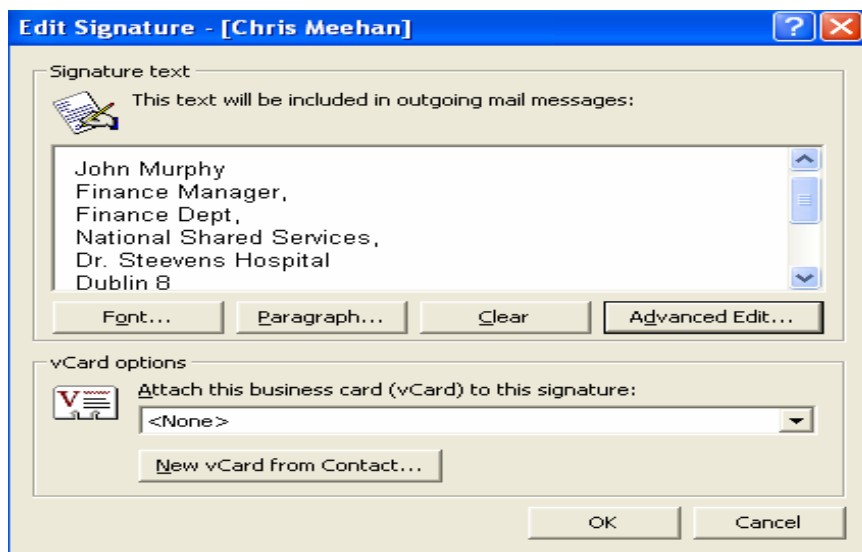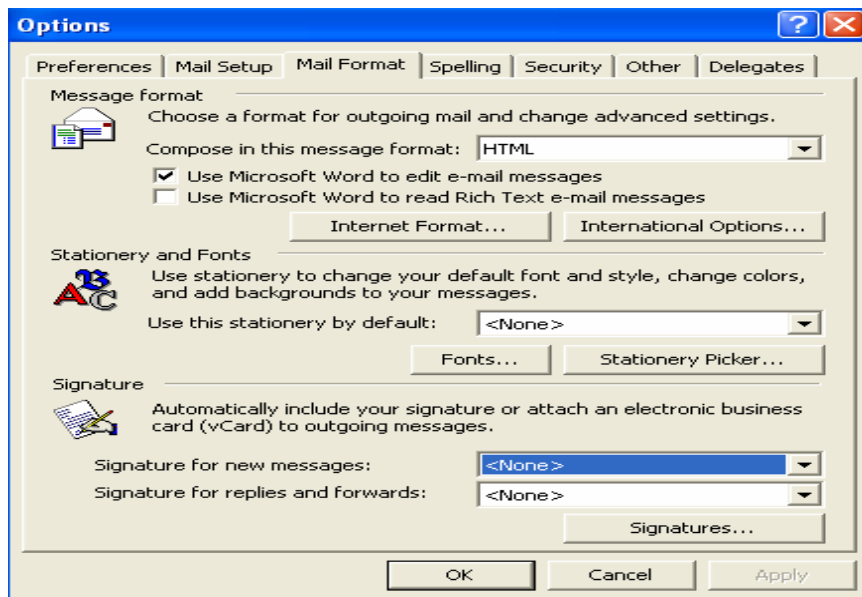
6. Set up Out of Office Reply

If you are out of the office on leave*,* set up an **Out Of Office** reply. This will notify anyone sending you emails that you are on leave and not contactable. Most email applications, allow you to automatically set this up. Within Microsoft Outlook, this can be set as follows.

1) From the top tool bar, select **Tools** and **Out of Office Assistant**
2) Click the Option **"I am currently out of the office"**
3) Type in your message – something along the lines of :

I am out of the office until the 22nd August. If you have any urgent queries please contact my colleague Paul Johnson at 01 123 4567

Thank You
Jim Smith

4) Click ***Ok***

Reply To All
The 'Reply to All' button is a button that can generate tons of unnecessary e-mails. For example, if you send a dozen people an e-mail asking if they are available at a certain time for a meeting you should get a dozen replies. However, if each person hits the "Reply to All 'button there is 144 messages of which 90% are unnecessary. The 'Reply to All' button should be used with care.