TELEPHONE AND EMAIL ETIQUETTE BASICS

Please note: these suggestions apply to all situations in which you’re communicating with people who are not in your immediate family or group of friends—employers, faculty, agency personnel, and so forth.

- **Know your audience** and choose an appropriate tone. It is always best to err on the side of formality until you’re sure you are on more familiar terms. Address individuals in a respectful manner (Professor Jones, Ms. Smith); do not use first names until given permission. Do not shorten first names without permission (use Daniel, rather than Dan, for example.)

- **Identify yourself,** on the phone and in email, by your **first and last names.** It’s likely that your contact knows more than one name person with your first name

- **Use proper grammar and standard English,** orally and in writing

- **Remember your manners** – always say “please” and “thank-you”

**On the phone:**

- **Listen to your voicemail greeting.** Is the content of your message appropriate for all callers? Do you identify yourself clearly? Does your voice convey an acceptable image of yourself to prospective employers or to faculty members?

- **When leaving a message** for others on voicemail, **enunciate and speak slowly.** If the recipient has to play your message several times to understand your name or to copy down your number, you’ve made an immediate bad impression. **Cellphone signals can be unpredictable.** If you have left a message for someone, and your call is not returned, call again. Do not assume that the recipient was able to hear your message clearly

- **Check messages often** and **return all phone calls promptly**

- **Remember**, your interview starts the moment you pick up the phone. Many employers pre-screen applicants on the phone before interviewing them in person. Be professional and courteous

**When writing email:**

- **Use your NEU email address or another conservative email address.** Reserve clever or personal email addresses for friends and family

- **Make sure the subject line** relates to the content of your email

- **Exercise caution and discretion when using “cc”, “bcc” and “Reply to all”**

- **Begin the email with a polite salutation,** such as Dear Professor Jones, or Hello Ms. Smith

- **Make requests or ask questions politely;** do not make commands

- **Use standard punctuation and capitalization.** **Spell-check every message**

- **Avoid profanity and slang**

- **Re-read every message before sending,** checking for appropriate tone and for clarity. If you have written mail in a state of duress, delay sending the email until you are calm and can review tone and content objectively

- **Sign your name with a respectful closing,** such as ”Thanks” or ”Sincerely”

- **Remember that company email** belongs to the company and is **not necessarily private.** Do not write anything that you would be ashamed to speak out loud

- **Use work email for business purposes only**

- **Save professional emails for future reference and documentation**

Adapted from document by Pamela Goodale, Cooperative Education Faculty Coordinator 5/09