

# SOP: Guidelines for Written Communication (Emails, Notes)

This SOP defines **guidelines for written communication**, including email etiquette, note-taking standards, clarity and conciseness principles, tone and professionalism, proper formatting and structure, confidentiality considerations, response time expectations, and documentation practices. The goal is to ensure clear, effective, and professional written exchanges within the organization, enhancing understanding and collaboration among all team members.

## 1. Scope

These guidelines apply to all employees, contractors, and stakeholders engaged in written communication related to company operations, including internal and external emails, meeting notes, memos, and official documentation.

## 2. Email Etiquette

- Use professional salutations and sign-offs (e.g., "Hello [Name]," "Best regards, [Your Name]").
- Write clear, concise subject lines reflecting the email content.
- Address the intended recipient(s) appropriately; use "CC" and "BCC" fields judiciously.
- Keep emails focused on one subject or actionable item whenever possible.
- Proofread for spelling and grammar before sending.
- Attach relevant documents and reference them in the body of the email.
- Avoid using all caps or excessive exclamation points.

## 3. Note-Taking Standards

- Record meeting notes during or immediately after meetings.
- Clearly label each note with the meeting title, date, and attendee list.
- Organize notes into sections: objectives, discussion points, decisions made, and action items.
- Use bullet points for readability.
- Distribute finalized notes to all relevant parties within 24 hours of the meeting.

## 4. Clarity and Conciseness

- Use simple, direct language, avoiding jargon whenever possible.
- Break long paragraphs into shorter ones for clarity.
- Highlight key points using bullet points or numbered lists.
- Be specific and avoid ambiguity.
- Include only necessary information, omitting irrelevant details.

## 5. Tone and Professionalism

- Maintain a respectful and courteous tone at all times.
- Avoid sarcasm, slang, or informal language in official communications.
- Be mindful of cultural and organizational sensitivities.
- Ensure criticism is constructive and focuses on issues, not individuals.

## 6. Proper Formatting and Structure

- Use consistent fonts, sizes, and colors (preferably organizational defaults).
- Structure documents logically: introduction, main body, conclusion/action items.
- Use headers and subheaders to organize content.
- Numbered or bulleted lists improve readability.
- Insert tables or charts as needed to present data clearly.

## 7. Confidentiality and Security

- Mark sensitive information as “Confidential” in headers or subject lines.
- Do not share confidential information with unauthorized persons.
- Follow company data protection and privacy policies at all times.
- Delete or archive sensitive communications as outlined in company policy.

## 8. Response Time Expectations

Communication Type	Expected Response Time
Internal emails	Within 1 business day
External/client emails	Within 1 business day (immediately acknowledge receipt if longer time is needed)
Meeting notes distribution	Within 24 hours after meeting
Urgent communications	As soon as possible, preferably within 2 hours

## 9. Documentation and Record-Keeping

- Store emails, notes, and official written communications in designated folders or platforms.
- Ensure documents are labeled and version-controlled according to company standards.
- Retain records for the duration specified by organizational policy.
- Archive or delete outdated documents as per retention policy.

## 10. Review and Compliance

- All staff must review these guidelines annually as part of compliance training.
- Managers/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring adherence within their teams.
- Report concerns or breaches of communication guidelines to HR or management.

**Document Owner:** [Insert Department/Owner Name]

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