

Netiquette in online education

The rules for online learning and classroom learning are virtually the same: You must study, take notes, attend lecture, and participate in discussions. In the classroom/lecture hall, your words, gestures, posture, and facial expressions communicate your thoughts and observations to your classmates and educator. But how do you express yourself online, where the written word is all, they see?

During your online learning, you will frequently be asked to participate in online discussions. Here are 7 rules of netiquette that will help you successfully communicate as you learn online.

1. **Make sure identification is clear in all communications.** Begin with a salutation “Good morning, Dr Mona” and end with your name “Mohamed Fahmy, level 2”. When you ask about/for something use the word “please” and end the statement with “thank you”.
2. **Review what you wrote and try to interpret it objectively.** When we speak face to face and are misunderstood, we have an on-the-spot opportunity to rephrase our words. In writing, we must strive twice as hard to be understood, as we do not have the benefit of modifying or elaborating in real time. All caps (“I’M SHOUTING”) and exclamation points (“Give me a break!!!”) can be misinterpreted as intense anger or humor without the appropriate context.
3. **If you wouldn’t say it face to face, don’t say it online.** When you’re working online, you’re safe behind a screen, but that’s no excuse to be ill-mannered or say things you would never say in public.
4. **Don’t spam.** Please don’t take advantage of your connection with the other students in your online classroom to forward emails and links regarding your beliefs or to sell any services.
5. **Respect others’ privacy.** Don’t give out another student’s personal email address without permission.
6. **Follow the rules.** Just as your course director posts guidelines related to core values (honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, transparency, accountability) online forums also have rules of conduct. Make a point to read them every time, as they can vary from class to class.
7. **Forgive and forget.** If you’re offended by something another student says online, keep in mind that you may have misunderstood their intentions. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

Online students are responsible for adhering to the above standards in all academic activity and refraining from all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes committing (or attempting to commit) the following:

- Plagiarism: Taking credit for work that is not your own (e.g., copying and pasting from the internet, failing to cite sources of information, failing to attribute direct quotes to their original author, or submitting your work from another course without prior permission).
- Cheating: This includes copying another student's work during an exam; using notes, books, or electronic devices during an exam without prior permission; taking an exam for another student; and communicating with or helping another student during an exam.
- Collusion: Any collaboration with another student without the permission of the instructor.

Students alleged to be engaged in academic dishonesty will be reported to the Vice Dean of student's affairs who will investigate to determine if the student should be held responsible. Possible sanctions include a failing grade, and /or suspension from the university.