



Soft Skills Overview

- Communication
- Networking
- Professionalism

Soft Skill One: Communication

“Communication is not what I thought you heard. Communication is what you thought I said.”

- Be aware of the ways we communicate.
 - Verbal (sounds, language, tone of voice)
 - Aural (passive/active listening and hearing)
 - Nonverbal (facial expression, body language, posture)
 - Written (emails, texts, chats, blogs, journals)
 - Visual (signs, symbols, pictures)

Exercise One: Trouble-shooting. See page 21 of this link:

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/Communication.pdf>

Emails, Texts, and other electronic correspondence

- Functions of the email:
 - Request
 - Invite someone to an event
 - Call a meeting with a peer, advisor, mentor
 - Ask for an extension on an assignment or project
 - Collaborate
 - Share information and resources with peers
 - Discuss developments on group projects
 - Introduce
 - Use a message to introduce yourself to a potential mentor, peer, or client
- Qualities of the email:
 - Coherent as opposed to incomprehensible
 - Just like resumes and cover letters, the email should be easy to understand
 - Concise as opposed to bulky and convoluted
 - Ask yourself, is all of the information I included essential?
 - Complete as opposed to lacking sufficient detail
 - Be careful not to work so hard at being concise that you cut off meaningful information



Exercise Two: Requesting an extension...

Scenario: Terry is in a college course, and the deadline for a lengthy research paper is quickly approaching. Suddenly, Terry finds new information that forces them to reconsider the stance their thesis takes and modify it in light of the new discovery. This requires a huge overhaul of the work Terry has done thus far, which is both time consuming and stressful. Additionally, Terry has recently been charged with caring for a relative who has fallen ill. For these reasons, Terry would like to request an extension of the paper's deadline.

Extension Request Example:

Hi Prof. Sandman,

The final paper due date is coming up very soon. This assignment is turning out to be way harder than I thought it would be when you first assigned the research paper I knew it would be a challenge, but it is just a bit more than I really expected, and the due date is coming up very fast. The thesis I started out with seemed very good, but the more I research the more I start to see where it needs to be amended to craft a stronger argument. Honestly, I think this rushed due date is unrealistic for this course and a bit too challenging. There is no way you can expect us to finish these papers by this due date.

Terry

Review Terry's email and critique its effectiveness.

Is it Coherent? Concise? Complete?

What does the email communicate?

Granted your understanding of the scenario, how would you revise Terry's extension request?



LEAP COLLEGE LIFESAVERS



A Revision of the Sample Request:

Dear Prof. Sandman,

I hope your week is going well. I am writing to request an extension on the deadline for the research paper. I know this is a huge ask and I do not want to disrupt your workflow, but recent happenings in my research and personal life have made this exercise a tremendous burden. I'm concerned about the quality of paper I would be forced to submit under the current deadline.

Very recently, my research has produced new source material that forces me to re-think the stance my thesis takes. In light of this new information I have to re-think and re-write the bulk of my argument and paper.

Additionally, I have recently been charged with caring for my uncle who recently fell ill. The increased responsibilities at home have changed how much time I have available to engage with my research materials and draft my paper.

Is it possible for you to grant me an extension on the deadline? Are there any additional steps I should take to secure an extension?

Kind Regards,
Terry



Professionalism

Professional behaviors enable people from diverse backgrounds to foster environments and relationships where they can work together. Professional conduct serves to minimize conflicts that may arise due to the interaction of diverse groups, as well as work through the challenges that arise during the course of work. For more information and additional exercises, follow this link: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/Professionalism.pdf>.

What are examples of diversity we may encounter in the workplace:

- Generational
- Differences in education
- Upbringing
- Culture (Social Norms)
- Gender

What do you think the older generation thinks about the younger generation?

What do you think the younger generation thinks about the older generation?

Do you think these ideas are always true, sometimes true, or never true?

What is a stereotype? How can we avoid the bias that comes with believing bad stereotypes?

What are steps we can take to maintain a professional work setting?

- To grapple with stereotypes
- To find common ground
- To learn from each other
- To listen to each other
- To acknowledge and appreciate differences