# **Online Communication With Students**Icon Description automatically generated with low confidence



*Coordinators electronically communicate with students over a semester. Common discussions and decisions include, but aren’t limited to: general meetings, due date flexibility, changes to accommodations, multiple absences, options for education pathways and careers, program transfers, academic references and so forth.*

*The challenge for Coordinators often is responding in a timely and consistent manner given the volume and type of student demands. Even for the most seasoned Coordinators, there can be an increase in stress level when anticipating a negative reaction by a student to academic information you’ve provided or decisions made. To assist with efficiency, time management, and confidence, here are some tips to include in your communiqués with students as well as written examples that can be adapted for common issues.*

## Recommended Considerations when Responding to Students

Use your Fleming email account for record-keeping purposes to electronically communicate with students.

While adhering to confidentiality policies, include other people that will support the resolution (Faculty, Counselling Services, Accessible Education Services, etc.) and explain the reason they are copied in the email.

Use a strengths-based writing style. This helps set a positive tone for the email and any future exchanges with students while highlighting their assets rather than their deficits. Consider incorporating the following:

* Thank the student for emailing you as this sends a message that you expect and reward professionalism.
* When possible, identify at least two genuinely positive things about the student. These could include evidence of; resiliency, self-advocacy skills, courage to obtain additional supports or motivation to obtain additional information, a good attendance record, interactions with peers/faculty/community, quality academic work, acts of professionalism, etc. These may in fact be used to assist the student and yourself with resolutions.
* Include throughout the response, language that focuses on student strengths. For example, replacing the word “problem” with “challenge” or “obstacle”.

Write briefly about your understanding of the situation. If you are accurate, the student upon receiving it will feel understood, and if you are missing something, the student will have an opportunity to correct you in their follow-up response.

Provide a summary of the challenges and strengths you’ve observed with supporting evidence (ie. D2L records for attendance, grades, due dates; letters of accommodations, observed online or in-person communication and conduct).

Provide a list of recommendations for resolution including tasks that include who is responsible and deadlines for completion.

Include your availability to meet with the student if follow-up is required.

## Example 1: Response to a Student (Request for Flexibility related to Unexpected Absences)

Dear [Student Name]:

Thank-you for letting me know about your reasons for your absences. I have included (name of counsellor) in my response since they were copied on your original email and I wanted them to be aware of the information I provide below.

I am happy that you have accessed supports available at Fleming and hope you also have outside support that you can access as needed so that you can return to your classes. I am glad you have emailed the faculty of the courses you are taking this semester to see what you can do to meet the learning outcomes.

Because this is the first time you’ve communicated with me, I want to provide some information that may be helpful to you moving forward in this semester. There are some concerns about your ongoing academic success in the majority of your courses this semester because according to your faculty, you've attended one class since Week 1 which means you've missed five weeks of classes (Week 1 was a holiday) and each week as per many of the course outlines, application of knowledge and skills in class prepares students for the field as well as their assignments and tests.

Therefore, please consider the following recommendations to help you return and be successful this semester:

1. Meet with your faculty to discuss expectations and accommodations around completing the work and deadlines in each course. Please consider the volume of information and work you’ve missed when organizing a plan.
2. Connect with any partners or groups immediately about your responsibilities and deadlines and use your faculty to facilitate any challenges.
3. Read over the notes and exercises from the weeks missed and talk to your peers. For most courses, the notes, assignments, the course outlines, schedules and other helpful items are posted on D2L - you can access them anytime and download them for your own records.
4. Begin attending your classes regularly. Although you can read over the material, it doesn't make as much sense as it does when you have opportunities to apply it in-class. Also, in order to evaluate you, faculty need to see you applying the skills in the moment. Many of the courses are very practical and students are doing much of the work in-class with guidance from the faculty and each other.
5. As needed, contact me about things that are going well for you in the program and things you might require assistance as they occur. My role is to advise students on processes, resources, and options for supporting your academic success in this program at Fleming College.
6. If there are specific issues with a particular course, please meet with your faculty first.
7. Continue to seek out meaningful services like (counsellor’s name) and others in your life for ongoing support.

I hope this information is helpful to you and feel free contact me directly if there is anything you need clarified. I'll look forward to your return to your classes.

## Example 2: Response to a Student (Academic Concerns about a Course after the Withdrawal Date and after Discussion with the Faculty)

Hi [Student Name]:

Thank-you for getting in touch with me. I appreciate that you are concerned about your success in this course and have already met with (faculty name). I have copied them so they are aware of the information I provide below.

As indicated by your faculty and in the course outline, there are no make-up assignments for this course and my understanding is that you did not submit the assignment on the due date, connect with the faculty prior to the deadline, nor provide documentation for the reasons for missing the deadline. If you are unsuccessful in the course, it is offered again in (Semester and year) as well as a [course code] equivalent is offered through OntarioLearn in (Semester and year).

Given the above information I’ve provided, if you would still like to meet to discuss options available to you, my office hours are posted or I am available (give dates and times). I will look forward to hearing from you shortly.

## Example 3: Response to a Student (Documentation by a Discipline/Subject Coordinator of a Course Plan)

Hi [Student Name]:

Thank-you for meeting with me yesterday to work on the plan for completing your (Semester and year) assessments for (course code and title). I appreciate your desire to be academically successful in this course and your chosen program. I have copied your faculty for this course and your Program Coordinator on this email so they are aware of the information I’ve provided below and your plan.

I have attached a draft of the agreed plan below.  The listed dates for completion of assignments and quizzes are approximate.  If final test dates need to be modified at least one-week advance notice will be required. Please review the proposed plan and inform your faculty and I if you see any immediate modifications that need to be made.

As we discussed yesterday, please connect with your other faculty and your program Coordinator using your Fleming email account as soon as possible to confirm your plans for each course that requires attention.  It is vital that you remain in frequent contactwith all of them over the course of the next few weeks to ensure that you have all of the assistance that you require and that you can receive feedback as you complete work.

### **Sample plan in attachment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Value (%)** | **Expected Date**  **of Completion** | **Notes/D2L Link** |
| **Desmos Lab 1** | 2 | 05/11 | <https://fleming.desire2learn.com/d2l/le/content/63697/viewContent/733650/View> |
| Desmos Lab 2 | 2 | 05/11 | <https://fleming.desire2learn.com/d2l/le/content/63697/viewContent/740426/View> |
| Excel Lab 2 | 1 | 05/11 |  |
| Team Activity 3 | 2 | 05/18 |  |
| Team Activity 4 | 2 | 05/18 |  |
| Excel Lab 4 | 1 | 05/25 |  |
| Team Activity 5 | 2 | 05/25 |  |
| Excel Lab 6 | 1 | 06/01 |  |
| Excel Lab 7 | 1 | 06/01 |  |
| Team Activity 6 | 2 | 06/08 |  |
| Test 3 | 20 | 06/16 | Will be completed in the Testing Centre – [student name] to complete request form and submit to [instructor name] (prior to May 31st) |
| Excel Test | 8 | 06/16 | Will be completed in the Testing Centre – [student name] to complete request form and submit to [instructor name] (prior to May31st) |

## Example 4: Response to Student (Follow-up on an agreed plan)

Hi [Student Name]:

I haven’t heard from you since (date of last meeting) and I hope this means that you are completing the items outlined in the plan and there have been no difficulties or delays. Please contact your faculty using your Fleming email account if any specific course issues arise or myself if you have any further concerns.

Best of luck with the rest of the semester.

## Example 5: Response to Student (Questions/Complaints about Sanctions for a Violation of Academic Integrity)

Dear [Student Name]:

Thank-you for the email. I have copied the faculty related to the course so they are aware of the information I provide below with respect to your request to meet about the Type 3 sanction for Violation of Academic Integrity.

My understanding is that in your chosen program, you have received two Type 1 violations and this is the second Type 2 violation that’s been documented and addressed with you. As a result of this history, and as per the [Integrity Violations (Types and Sanctions)](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/academic-integrity/examples-of-violations/) under Fleming College’s [Academic Integrity](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/academic-integrity/) website, you have been given a grade of 0 in the course. As per my role as a Coordinator, I am obligated to follow Fleming College’s policies and procedures as well as those related to the (name) profession (or field) and recommend that you complete the required workshop or modules as directed by your faculty.

However, if you wish to appeal your final grade for this course, please use the [Academic Appeals](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/academic-appeals/) website to review the grounds and process for appeal, to access the forms, and to know of the deadlines for submission of appeal forms. In addition, if you would still like to meet to review the information I’ve provided, using your Fleming email account, please advise days and times that work for you and I will respond with one that I can attend.

## Example 6: Response to Student (Grades Concern)

Dear [Student Name]:

Thank-you for the email. I appreciate that you are concerned about a particular mark in an assignment/test in course (code and title), however, I am not clear if you have spoken with the faculty about this first. If you have not met with the faculty for (course title), please contact them using your Fleming email account to organize a time to meet and discuss. Make sure to include days and times you are available outside of your scheduled class time.

However, if you have met with the faculty and are still dissatisfied with the decision and your mark, in my role as the Coordinator, I can only advise you on options such as: reviewing your reasons and responsibilities under the [Academic and Student Advisement Resolution](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/asa/ar/) website; speaking with the Chair for the School; speaking with a Counsellor about accommodations and support services; and reviewing how to appeal a final grade in a course under the [Academic Appeals](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/academic-appeals/) website.

If you would still like to meet to review the information I’ve provided above, using your Fleming email account, please advise days and times that work for you that do not conflict with your class schedule, and I will respond with one that I can attend.

## Example 7: Response to Student (Faculty Concern)

Dear [Student Name]:

Thank-you for the email. My understanding is that you are dissatisfied with (faculty name) due to (reasons listed) and I am sorry that this has caused stress. I am also appreciative of your willingness to resolve (issue) in a professional manner. In my role as the Coordinator and because the faculty is a colleague, I can only advise you on options available so please read the information below.

First, I am not clear if you have spoken with the faculty about this first. If you have not met with the faculty, please contact them by Fleming email to organize a time to meet and work towards a resolution. Make sure to include days and times you are available outside of your scheduled class time. In addition, if you are more comfortable having a supportive person present, please request in your email that person be included in the meeting.

However, if you have met with the faculty and (issue) has not been resolved, there are other options you can pursue. These include: reviewing your reasons and responsibilities under the [Academic and Student Advisement Resolution](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/asa/ar/) website and the [Student Rights & Responsibilities](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/srr/) website; speaking with a Counsellor; and speaking with the Chair for the School.

If you would still like to meet to review the information I’ve provided above, using your Fleming email account, please advise days and times that work for you that do not conflict with your class schedule, and I will respond with one that I can attend.

## Example 8: Request to Meet with a Student (Behaviour and Conduct Concerns)

Hi [Student Name]:

As part of my role as the Coordinator, I would like to meet with you by (date) in order to provide some feedback about your behaviour and conduct inside and outside the classroom during this semester. This will be an opportunity for us to review student responsibilities and professionalism as well as organize a plan for how the program can support you in becoming more ready for the (industry) field. In preparation for the meeting, I encourage you to review the [Student Rights & Responsibilities](https://department.flemingcollege.ca/srr/) website for Fleming’s policy.

If you would like to bring a supportive person to this meeting, please let me know using your Fleming email account as well as days and times that work for you that do not conflict with your class schedule. I will look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you soon.

