Online communication has been growing for years, and especially of course in the last six

months. So, it is a good time to remind ourselves about the best ways to talk to each other

online.

In general, our department is fairly informal and has easy relationships between staff and

students. However, we do try to be respectful to you and to each other in our work. Similarly, when you are communicating with your lecturers and tutors; it is best if you remember to try to be as clear and polite as possible.

Please call your lecturer by the title they prefer – some lecturers are fine with using their

first name, others prefer their formal title. Typically, they will give you some guidance on

this. If in doubt, please start at the more formal end e.g. “Dear Professor Ó Riain ….”. Then you can follow the lecturer’s lead from there. This isn’t a matter of being formal for its own sake – it’s about politeness and professionalism.

It’s also best to include all the relevant information. Remember that your lecturers have

many students and receive many emails, so it helps if you give all the information that they

might need – even if you just spoke with them after class, for example.

So, if you don’t know the lecturer, you might try starting off with something like this:

*“Dear Professor Ó Riain*

*I am a student in your SO201 class.*

*Could I ask ….*

*Thanks, and best wishes,*

*Zoey (Student ID: 1876534)”*

None of this should stop your personality shining through in the rest of your

communications! But it helps smooth our communications with each other – especially in a time of very many, and often rushed, communications.

Many thanks and, of course, we plan to attempt to write clear, polite emails back to you!

Best wishes,

Professor Mary Murphy, Head of Department