International Students: What employers want (and how to meet their expectations)

This session will begin at 2pm

How to apply for jobs in the UK – Etiquette and Professionalism expected by UK employers

Jim Reali - Career Consultant (UWE)
Jess Morgan - Social Sustainability Manager (BAM)

Session plan

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Define **etiquette** and **professionalism**.

- Identify some of the main ways in which employers expect people to conduct themselves professionally.

- Conduct yourself professionally through effective communication.

- Use effective reflective techniques to assess your own conduct.

- Access materials to further develop your understanding of and ability to act professionally, as well as resources to help you deal with the transition into the workplace.

- Hear from an employer who is keen to recruit UWE international students.

What UK Employers are looking for?

- Good communication
- Resilience and adaptability
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills
- Commercial awareness
- Planning and research skills
- Effective leadership and management

What skills do employers want? | Prospects.ac.uk

What Skills Do Employers Look For? | UCAS

What are etiquette and professionalism?

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries

Etiquette:

"The formal rules of correct or polite behaviour in society, among members of a particular profession or in a particular area of activity."

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/etiquette

Professionalism:

"The high standard that you expect from a person who is well trained in a particular job."

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/professionalism?q=professionalism

Concerns expressed by UWE academics regarding students' interactions with them and other stakeholders, include:

- **Proactive and regular communications** – lack of consistency in student communications with them and with employers who support the curriculum.

- **Time keeping** – failure to arrive on-time to meetings and not being on time for video calls etc.

- **Professional identity** – students failing to position themselves with professional confidence with clients: showing a lack of respect and failing to develop mutually collaborative relationships.

![UWE Bristol | University of the West of England]

So, how might the "ideal" UWE student demonstrate professionalism?

- Communicating courteously and in a timely manner (face-to-face; over the phone; email, etc)
- Being punctual for lectures, meetings, etc
- Showing respect to others, being inclusive
- Not talking during lectures etc
- Not looking at / using your mobile phone during lectures and meetings
- Managing expectations of others (e.g. cancelling bookings if unable to attend)
- Taking personal responsibility
- Being positive and showing commitment
- Appropriate dressing/hygiene
- Taking responsibility

What else can you think of?

Those "ideal" behaviours might be seen to align with and embody UWE's core values…

- **Ambitious** - We're not afraid to shape, challenge and tackle the big issues, to take the initiative and pave the way.

- **Inclusive** - We make UWE Bristol a supportive and inspiring place to learn and work – somewhere where diversity of experience and perspective is encouraged, and learning and research is shared and accessible.

- **Innovative** - We create new opportunities for the people who work and study with us. We embrace different ideas and pioneer new and sustainable ways of doing things.

- **Collaborative** - We have strong connections locally and globally. We help people and organisations be the best they can, building trust throughout our university community and beyond.

- **Enterprising** - We instil a thirst for new knowledge, its creation and application, empowering our students and staff to demonstrate a creative questioning approach, a 'can-do' confidence, and ability to navigate uncertainty.

Remember...

- Employers who want to engage UWE students expect to see evidence that you adhere to these values.

- Failure to exhibit these values and professionalism will put off employers **immediately**.

- You only get one opportunity to make a great first impression...


Make it count!

Also…

- The "ideal" candidate for any employer will be someone who demonstrates that they share the same values as the organisation.

- You might tell them that you are virtuous and act in a professional manner.

- However, your digital footprint might suggest something quite different!

- Try to "Google" yourself and see what comes back.

- Consider how an employer might view it.

- Then, take action to ensure that any social media accounts you have are private.

- Find out more at https://www.goguardian.com/blog/understanding-the-digital-footprint and note that, "**a 2017 CareerBuilder Survey found that 70 percent of employers use social media to screen candidates during their hiring process. The same study found that 51 percent of employers had found information on social media that caused them to turn down an otherwise suitable candidate for a job.**"

Unfortunately…

…a lack of professionalism will destroy all of this positivity immediately…

Make your applications look professional, with Career Toolkit
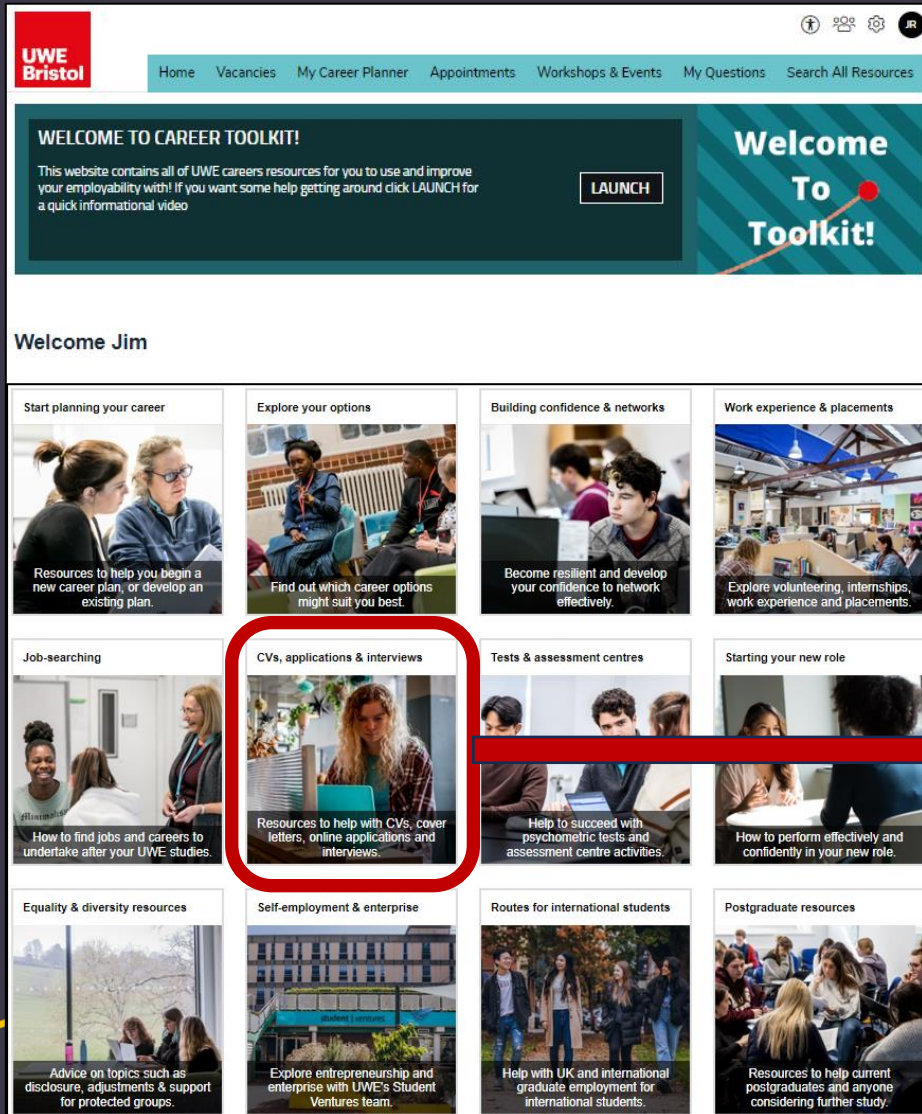
Professionalism is crucial in your email communications, as well as letters:

- **This email etiquette guide** provides helpful guidance

- This guide from Indeed explains how to write a **formal email**

- However, if you require a little more help, why not ask...

ChatGPT

Visit **https://openai.com/chatgpt**

I entered the following question:
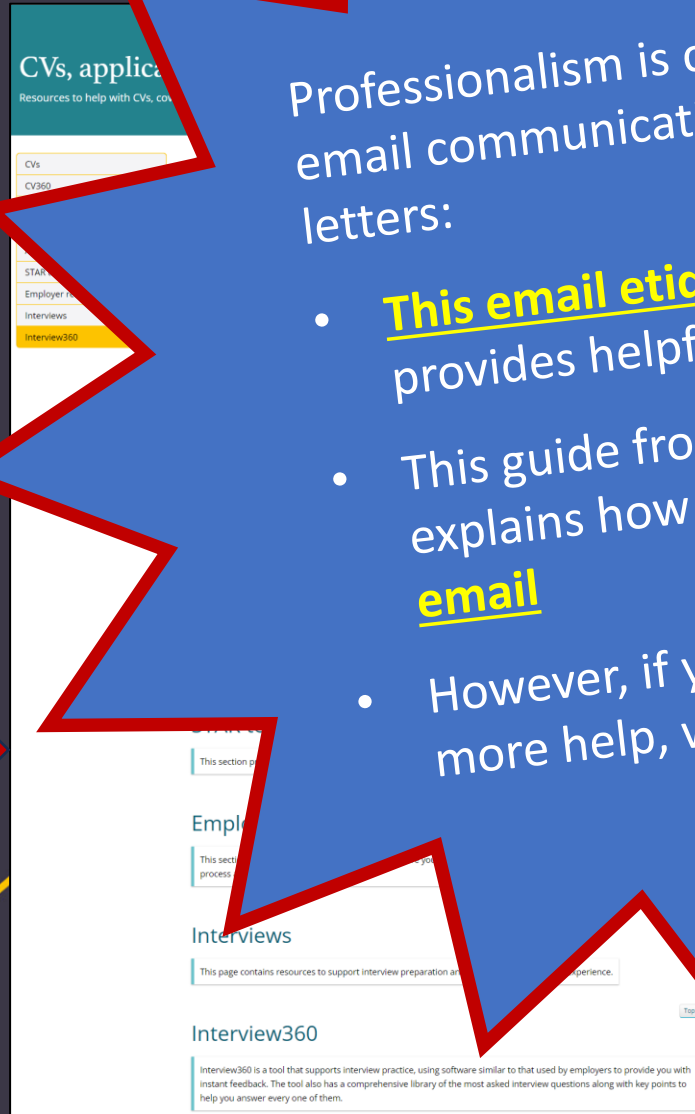
"I a... ...ng MSc Buildi...
of t... ...I would li...
...to employ...
o... ...durin...

It g... ...plate...

Why don't you experiment with ChatGPT? You can copy and edit the text, to include more specific information, before emailing.

Subject: Inquiry: Exploring Project Opportunities as an MSc Building Information Modelling Student

Dear [Employer's Name or Hiring Manager],

I trust this message finds you well. I am writing to introduce myself and express my interest in potential project opportunities within your organization. My name is [Your Name], and I am currently pursuing an MSc in Building Information Modelling (BIM) at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

My academic journey has equipped me with a strong foundation in BIM principles, advanced software proficiency, and a keen understanding of industry best practices. As I embark on this exciting phase of my education, I am eager to complement my studies with practical experience and contribute to innovative projects.

I have attached my CV to provide you with a comprehensive overview of my academic background and skills. If there are any project-based roles, internships, or opportunities within your organization that align with my field of study, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss how I can add value to your team.

I am open to arranging a conversation at your convenience to explore potential collaboration further. You can reach me at [Your Email Address] or [Your Phone Number]. Your consideration of my inquiry is sincerely appreciated, and I look forward to the possibility of contributing to your team's success.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Warm regards,

[Your Full Name]
MSc Building Information Modelling Student
University of the West of England (Bristol)
[Your Contact Information]

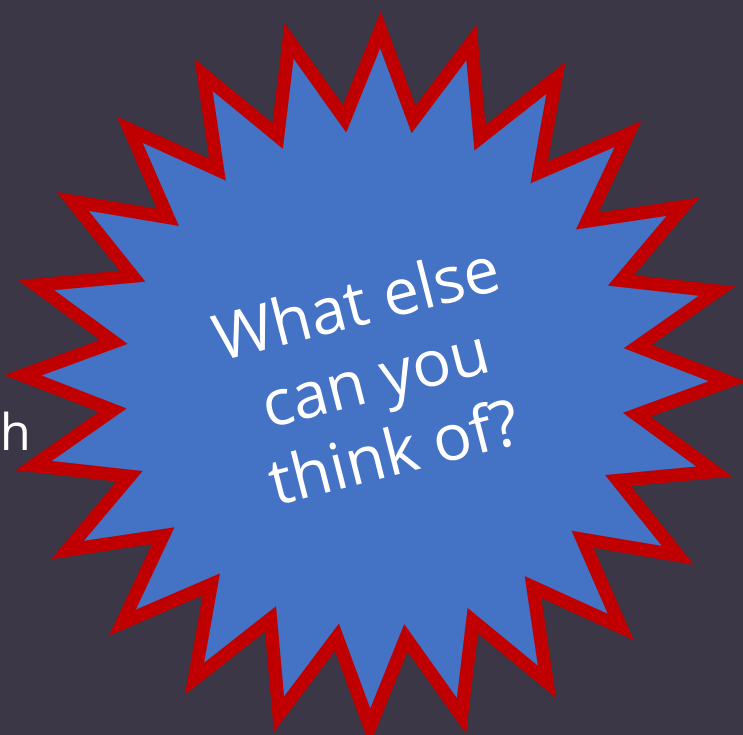[CV Attachment: YourLastName_CV.pdf]

Tips for conducting yourself professionally whilst video conferencing

- Sit in a space with good light and minimal background noise
- Test your tech beforehand to make sure everything works
- Ensure you won't be disturbed
- Dress professionally
- Look straight at the camera and smile
- Never attempt to multitask during a video call
- Never talk over the other person

How might employers expect you to demonstrate professionalism at work?

- Arriving early or on-time

- Networking with and chatting to others (however, this does NOT mean talking when others are speaking in meetings, etc)

- Helping others in the team

- Using professional communications, such as an appropriate email address, not using text speak in emails, not hitting "reply to all" for every email...

- Not gossiping or criticising others

- Being overly emotional in the office

- Not talking back to more senior staff

- Demonstrating an eagerness to participate

- Wearing appropriate attire

- Being inclusive and demonstrating an open-minded approach

- Positivity

What else can you think of?

Seek to understand cultural differences – if you aren't a UK home student, you may not be aware of some of the subtle differences, such as the importance of making eye contact.

The "British Culture and Social Norms" page of the Study In The UK website highlights several, including:

- Punctuality

- Social distancing

- Politeness (please, thank you, sorry)

- Sufficient, but not extended eye contact

Image courtesy of Pixabay: https://pixabay.com/photos/laptop-apple-macbook-computer-2561018/

What can you do? (2) – Reflect...

- Think about a "first day" experience you've had (this can be at work or at university). Have you always shown the professionalism features identified in this workshop?

- Use the Gibbs Reflective Cycle to identify how you might have improved that situation.

- You may also find it helpful to use the cycle to reflect on times when you feel you have shown good levels of professionalism.

What can you do? (3) – Network...

- Watch the "Perfect your elevator pitch and networking" and "Perfect your LinkedIn skills" workshop recordings on the **Pre-recorded career workshops for postgraduate students** Toolkit page.

- Identify people working for some of the organisations you're interested in working for and connect with them using LinkedIn.

- Seek their insights – ask them what expectations their organisations have in terms of etiquette and professional behaviour.

- Create a shortlist of the most common behaviours.

Image courtesy of Pixabay: https://pixabay.com/photos/social-media-facebook-twitter-1795578/

What can you do? (4) – Take action...

- By this stage, you should know what employers and academics expect.

- You will have identified how cultural differences may mean that accepted behaviours elsewhere may be unacceptable in the UK (and vice-versa).

- You have considered examples of times you may not have exhibited professionalism or good etiquette and how you might improve that situation.

- Now it's time to apply what you've learned. Take responsibility for your actions and ensure that your behaviour aligns to what is expected.

Image courtesy of Pixabay: https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2019/10/22/13/43/portrait-4568762_960_720.jpg

The British Council...

The British Council free online course "**<u>Preparing For Work</u>**" also identifies:

- **Do more research:** you will already have researched the company before your interview. However, now is the time to expand upon your existing knowledge. Find out more about the company's vision, values and structure. That way, you'll find first day conversations less stressful.

- **Get ready to build you internal network:** during your job-search, you focused on building a wide professional network. While you need to continue with this, you should also now focus on building strong relationships within your workplace. You will be able to learn a lot from your colleagues, so take a deep breath and prepare to break the ice!

- **Ensure you are rested:** starting a new job can be extremely tiring, as your brain struggles to take in colleagues' names, unfamiliar places and lots of new information. If you have a busy social life outside work, consider down-sizing on your engagements for the first couple of weeks, so that you are at your most energetic and alert.

Meet an employer

BAM Construct UK & Ireland

- Develop, Design, Construct & Operate Buildings

- Public & Private Sector

- Operate in over 30 countries

- Over 19,500 employees
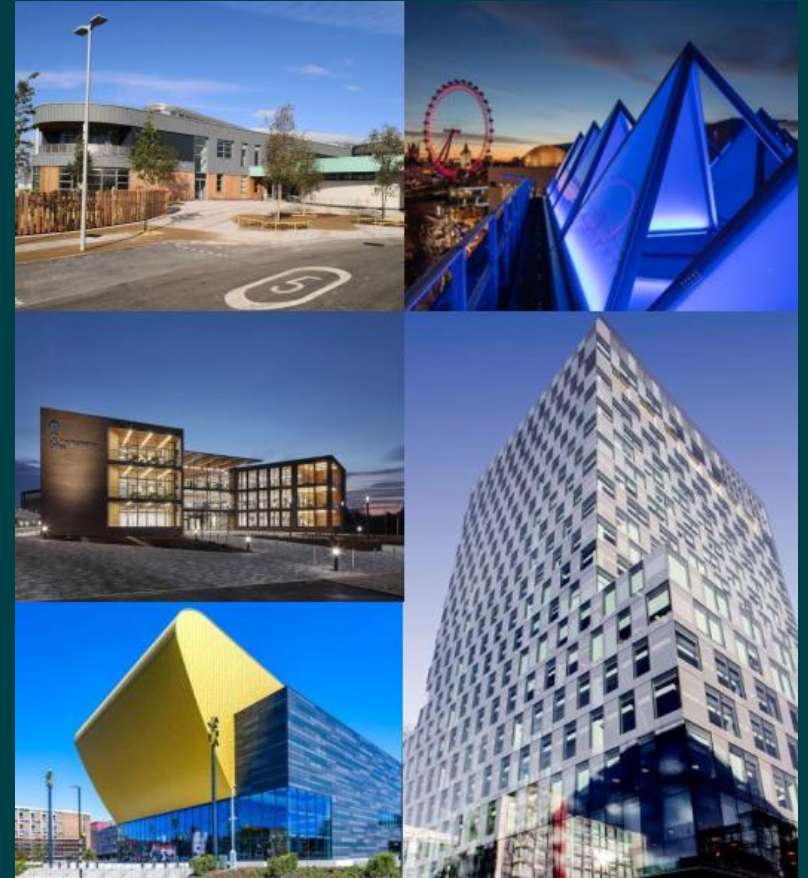
Jess Morgan

Social Sustainability Manager

BAM Graduate Programme

We offer **structured development** in a **professional** workplace environment, leading to the appropriate chartered status. We have well-established relationships with a range of professional institutions and industry partners. This means we can innovate our programmes ahead of the industry and nurture your skills to help you **meet your ambitions**.

Ambitious

We're not afraid to shape, challenge and tackle the big issues, to take the initiative and pave the way.

Inclusive

We make UWE Bristol a supportive and inspiring place to learn and work – somewhere where diversity of experience and perspective is encouraged, and learning and research is shared and accessible.

Innovative

We create new opportunities for the people who work and study with us. We embrace different ideas and pioneer new and sustainable ways of doing things.

Collaborative

We have strong connections locally and globally. We help people and organisations be the best they can, building trust throughout our university community and beyond.

Enterprising

We instil a thirst for new knowledge, its creation and application, empowering our students and staff to demonstrate a creative questioning approach, a 'can-do' confidence, and ability to navigate uncertainty.

Our BAM Values

Sustainable · Collaborative · Inclusive · Ownership · Reliable

UWE Bristol — University of the West of England

Mentoring	Professional Development	Role Reversal
Technical Training	E-Learning	Working Groups
Coaching	Goodhabitz	Reading/Self study

Ownership

Career Potential Model

Top Tips...

- ✓ Know your 'stuff', take time to learn about the company
- ✓ Enthusiasm, what motivates you?
- ✓ What do you care about?
- ✓ Industry landscape, what are the hot topics?
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Build you personal 'network'
- ✓ Personal development is important to you
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Body Language

BAM Early Careers

Add me to your 'network'

Career Toolkit resources

https://go.uwe.ac.uk/toolkit

Review of the session plan

You should now be able to:

- Define **etiquette** and **professionalism**.

- Identify some of the main ways in which employers expect people to conduct themselves professionally.

- Conduct yourself professionally through effective communication.

- Use effective reflective techniques to assess your own conduct.

- Access materials to further develop your understanding of and ability to act professionally, as well as resources to help you deal with the transition into the workplace.

- Hear from an employer who is keen to recruit UWE international students.

@UWECareers

Follow us on Instagram for news and updates

New for 2023 - Career Lounge activities and updates including...

- Careers support
- Employer drop-ins
- Placement activities
- Interactive resources
- Themed events
- Opportunities
- Information on volunteering, global opportunities, internships and more!