

University of San Diego Netiquette

What is netiquette? The concept of netiquette covers proper communication online. As an institution focused on academic excellence and innovative online learning, we want to be sure to foster an environment of supportive, productive conversation whether it occurs via email, Blackboard discussion boards, social media, etc.

Discussion Board Posting Guidelines

- Consistency
 - Be sure to check in to the discussion boards and respond to comments and questions from your colleagues throughout the posting period rather than posting all at once. Strive to keep the conversation going to continue learning from each other. If someone takes the time to ask you something, take the time to respond!
- Post Length
 - Postings should be one to two paragraphs in length. You want to give colleagues enough to work with, but not too much as they may not finish reading. Look to add value while staying concise.
- Respond Fully
 - Go beyond merely stating that you agree or appreciate another's post. Add insight and commentary to share why you may agree or disagree. Comments and responses should build on each other to create a conversation where the class is learning together.
- Cite Course Resources and Personal/Professional Experiences
 - Share your knowledge to strengthen the conversation. Support your thoughts with educational resources and/or your lived experiences.
- Care for Colleagues
 - We are all in this together! Prioritize a safe learning environment by getting to know who your colleagues are and checking in. Know where to find resources if needed such as mental health offices, [accessibility information](#), etc.
- Allow Response Time:
 - The beauty of an online classroom is that you have the flexibility to post 24/7! However, do not expect your colleagues to respond right away. Checking in and posting consistently will help you have productive conversations and not feel rushed to get posts in at the last minute.

General Netiquette Guidelines

- Be Polite and Constructive:

- Provide kind, constructive feedback to your peers! Think about whether or not a comment might be misconstrued or taken in a negative way prior to posting. A great rule of thumb is to think of your grandparents. If you would not say something to or in front of them, leave it out of the conversation.
- Real People Reminder:
 - We're all human! Sometimes comments on the internet and behind a screen seem less harmful than they are in reality. Choose your words and times to comment online the same way you would in person.
 - No one wants to have a troll (an internet aggressor) in their learning environment. If you see one, do not engage and report them to your professor.
- Craft Posts with Care
 - Be safe: Consider if your comments would put anyone in a physically or emotionally unsafe situation.
 - Emojis: Emojis and emoticons can be a fun way to express commentary but they can be overused. Discern whether or not they help or hinder your level of professionalism.
 - Caps lock is not necessary and can make you seem like you are yelling.
 - Proofread before you post!
- Diversity and Inclusion
 - We all have vastly different life experiences. Keep an open mind and be respectful of differing beliefs and viewpoints.
- Stick to the Topic
 - Any given discussion board may help new ideas and questions arise. Try to keep the discussion on the given topic and make a new thread if needed.
- Freedom of Speech
 - Not everything goes in this setting. The facilitators reserve the right to remove content that violates [institutional guidelines](#). Reach out to your facilitator with questions or concerns.
- Go For It!
 - Cultivate the courage to post your thoughts and questions. The more you put into your learning experience, the more you will get out of it. The group benefits from increased conversation and group learning.
- Private vs Public Messages
 - Honor those who wish to ask questions or share a thought outside of the main group. Support colleagues by responding to public comments publicly.
- Ask for Help
 - When in doubt, reach out to your facilitator! They are here to guide you throughout the learning experience.