ORGANIZING YOUR EMAIL

Overview
You will receive important information from UW-Whitewater via email. At times, the number of emails you receive may seem overwhelming. Use the tips below to keep your email organized and stay on top of your communications!

Set Aside Time
If you struggle with remembering to check your email, set aside specific blocks of time to respond to your emails. Use a to-do list or planner and make sure to add "Respond to Emails" to your list daily. This will help you get in the habit of checking your email and taking the time to organize or respond to your messages. Once you're in the habit of checking your email, check it often so messages don't pile up and become overwhelming.

The 4 D's and OHIO
When you open an email, take one of these actions immediately. Some call this the OHIO method: **Only Handle It Once.** To do this, take one of the action below the first time you open an email:

1. **Delete it**: If it's not important and no action is needed, there's no need to keep it in your email.
2. **Do it:** If there's an action you need to take, respond to the email or file it for reference.
3. **Delegate it:** If an action needs to be taken by someone else or the information needs to be shared, forward the message on.
4. **Defer it:** If you need to revisit this email, keep it in your inbox but flag it or use a category to help you remember to go back to it at a later date.

Create Folders & Check Them Often
Receiving a high number of emails can clutter up your inbox. You can create folders to help you stay on top of what you need to respond to or work on. Here is an example of how you can structure folders to maximize organization:

- **Inbox**: Only keep emails in your inbox that you should answer immediately. These messages should be urgent or something you can respond to quickly (three minutes or less).
- **To Do**: Move your non-urgent emails or emails that would require more than 3 minutes to respond to into this folder. You can follow up on them later, just remember to check back!
- **Follow Up**: Put emails in this folder that you cannot act on right now or that you've put on hold. Examples of include something that you've delegated to someone, you're waiting on a response, etc.
- **Someday**: If an email doesn't require a response, put it in this folder. These should be items that you would like to read or review when you have some free time.

Unsure how to make a folder? Go to https://support.microsoft.com/ and search "Create a New Folder" to access directions.

Use Outlook's Task List or Get a Planner

Many people keep emails in their inbox as makeshift to-do list. Instead of clogging your inbox with messages, get a planner or use the Outlook Task List.

Mail   Calendar   People   **Tasks**

Here, you can set a due date and set a date/time reminder. You will get a pop up reminder just like you would a meeting reminder. You can also get a quick overview of your task list and organize them by due date.
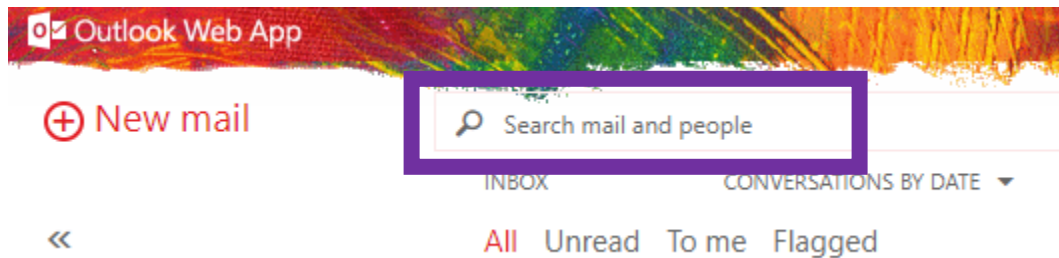
Create Rules in Outlook

Outlook allows you to create rules where certain emails go straight to a designated folder. For example, you can create a rule that moves messages from your instructors directly into your To-Do folder!

Unsure how to create a rule? Go to https://support.microsoft.com/ and search "Create Rules" to access directions.

Use the Search Function

Instead of wasting time looking through all of your emails searching for that one email you need right now, use the search function!

Outlook Web App

⊕ New mail   🔍 Search mail and people

INBOX   CONVERSATIONS BY DATE ▼

«   All   Unread   To me   Flagged

The search function allows you to search based on the following properties:

- **From**
- **To**
- **Subject**
- **Categories**
- **Attachment Contains**
- **Folder**

Using this function will save you time by helping you find items more quickly and efficiently.

For more information and support, contact:

Academic Advising & Exploration Center: 262-472-5220, 2054 Roseman, advising@uww.edu

References: Tara Schmidt, DEVLPED Instructor
https://zapier.com/blog/outlook-tips-and-tricks/
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