

Here is my template for emailing a student to check in. Since the precise language used is really important, I wrote little comments on the side to describe why I chose something or didn't choose something else. My goal is to demonstrate warmth, flexibility, care, and openness in this email, so I think the specific choice of language is important.

There is also [evidence](#) that "nudging" students who perform "poorly" on the first exam can actually promote their success later in the course, even without offering resources. I think the language used in that link is even a bit harsh, as described below. I do agree that emailing students who perform below the average grade, or below some threshold you have set will likely help them succeed.

Hi [student name],

I'm reaching out to check in [and offer support to you]. I am the instructor for [Class] and [I haven't seen you in class for the last few classes.] OR [I noticed that your assignment was submitted late.] OR [I am wondering if you want to discuss your last exam.] I want to make sure that you are doing okay and that there are no barriers to your success in the class. I value your perspective and participation, so I want to do what I can to facilitate your involvement.

I am happy to be flexible and accommodate you. I hope that you will reach back out so that we can find a way to promote your success during the rest of the class. I have linked some resources below in case they are helpful.

Please do not feel like your response to this email needs to be lengthy or must provide me with a deep explanation. Let's simply touch base via email or a [Zoom] meeting and then we can figure out where to go from there. At minimum, I hope that you will at least let me know if you are doing okay.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Warmly,

[Office of Student Care Coordination](#) (Can provide mental health services & funding for physical health bills.) <- Mandatory Reporter

[Office of LGBTQI Life](#) <- Mandatory Reporter

[Office of Student Access Services \(Disability Services\)](#) <- Mandatory Reporter

**Commented [CK1]:** I do not say, "I'm concerned" or "I'm worried." First, this is the first line of the email that will get previewed in the email window. Don't make it imposing. Don't make them too afraid to read the rest of the email. Don't put them on the defensive.

**Commented [CK2]:** You may include the part about support or you may not. If you are planning to say "I'm wondering if you want to discuss your last exam." "Providing support" might seem out of place.

**Commented [CK3]:** I don't like to say, "I want to discuss your low score" or "your poor performance." I like to ask if they want to discuss it. Maybe they are thrilled to get a 66%!

**Commented [CK4]:** This takes the onus off of the student. This is not about the student's failures, but rather the structural barriers.

**Commented [CK5]:** This demonstrates warmth and care for them specifically. I avoid saying things like, "we miss you in class." It may make the student feel guilty or bad for missing class. That can be especially harmful if they are struggling with mental health issues, guilt, internalized prejudices, and more. You want to emphasize what you appreciate about them when they are there, but recognize that they physically may not be able to make it to class, and guilt will not help that.

**Commented [CK6]:** Starting from the place of flexibility will keep them off the defensive.

**Commented [CK7]:** At least in this first email, there should be no deadlines imposed. Using warm language, hope that the student reaches out to you. If they do not respond, then you might gently let them know that by a certain date you will reach out again, but that policy requires you to notify someone after X number of days

**Commented [CK8]:** Action item! You are signaling that you will do something for the student.

**Commented [CK9]:** This covers many bases. The resources are here to cover a wide array of issues. (Please feel free to share more with me if you know of them.)

**Commented [CK10]:** Students often feel like once they've missed class, they can't ever return to the conversation without a really good excuse or a really thorough

**Commented [CK11]:** This leaves open the possibility that they are not doing okay. I would avoid saying, "Let me know that you are doing okay." Then, if they aren't doing okay,

**Commented [CK12]:** This is setting the bar low: "First just reply to this email. Then we can make a plan."

**Commented [CK13]:** I use something that is kinder than your normal emails to signal my sincerity and warmth.

**Commented [CK14]:** I added this information because it is not clear what OSCC does from its name. The other Centers are more obvious, in my opinion.

[Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center](#) <- Mandatory Reporter

[International Student & Scholar Services](#) <- Mandatory Reporter

[University Counseling Center](#) <- Confidential

[Project Safe](#) <- Semi Confidential

[Chaplain and Religious Life](#) <- Semi Confidential

[VUPD](#) <- Mandatory Reporter