

Punctuate Business-Letter Salutations with Colon?

Chat, it has been a recommendation to US people not to show their photo on their resumes. I'm wondering if that has changed. Can you research? -- David

Here's what the latest guidance says:



Traditional Rule Still Stands in Formal U.S. Letters

- U.S. business-letter style guides, like **Purdue OWL** and the **University of Sussex**, continue to recommend ending the salutation with a **colon**.
 - Purdue: "Use a colon (:) after the salutation (never a comma) and a comma (,) after the closing." (owl.purdue.edu)
 - Sussex: "In American usage...a business letter takes a colon: Dear Mr. Jackson:" (sussex.ac.uk)
 - **Wikipedia** concurs: in the U.S., colons are used in formal business correspondence, whereas the comma is reserved for less formal communication .
 - Punctuation references also point out:
 - "in the US, [colons are used] for salutations in business letters and other formal letters" (en.wikipedia.org).
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Emails & Less Formal Contexts

- Most modern sources (Indeed, Grammarly, LinkedIn writing guides) suggest you **can** use a comma if the tone is relaxed or if you're emailing someone you know.
 - Indeed: colon for business letters, comma for less formal; both are acceptable (english.stackexchange.com)
 - LinkedIn/Grammarly: colon = most formal; comma = fine for informal or email salutations
 - More generally, "colon or comma is acceptable...however, the colon is considered more formal" (english.stackexchange.com).
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Summary Table

Correspondence Type	Traditional Ending	Modern Guidance
Formal business letter	Colon (:)	Still recommended
Business email (formal)	Colon or comma	Colon preferred
Business email (informal)	Comma (,)	Widely accepted
Less formal letters/emails	Comma	Okay for casual tone



Final Takeaway

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- In **formal U.S. business letters**, stick with a **colon** after the salutation.
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- In **emails or less formal letters**, a **comma** is acceptable—and sometimes preferred for tone.
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- If aiming for maximum professionalism (e.g., cover letters, external documents), default to the **colon**.
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