The following document contains an example of communicating boundaries (as well as resources and information) to a student via email. I have also provided other examples of similar situations, which you can use to practice boundary setting in your written communication, in the other document found in this folder.

**Scenario:** A summary of the student email.

A previous student who graduated from our human services diploma program a few years ago contracted me via email. The student explained that they were experiencing barriers in having all of their course credits accepted by the university they were applying to. From my understanding, the challenge primarily stemmed from the student wanting to switch fields of study when moving into their degree – they had graduated our program with a diploma in child and youth care but were applying for a bachelor’s in social work. In the email the student expressed confusion about the process, frustration directed at both institutions (and the system in general) and a small amount of blame at the lack of clarity they felt they received while attending our program. In the final line of the email the student asked me to advocate on their behalf to the university they were applying to in hopes their credits would be accepted as a result.

**Response:** Track changes identify the various information and resources I provided to the student and the intention of my message.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I am very sorry to hear about these challenges you are experiencing in your application process at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ University. I can understand how frustrating it must be to feel that the work you put into your education is not being valued in the way you hoped it would be.

In my experience, articulation agreements (how post-secondary institutions accept comparable courses) can be tricky, especially when transferring between different schools of study. I’m not an expert on how and why some courses are accepted and some are not, but I would like to help by providing you with some resources that may be useful.

This is a link to the [BC Transfer Guide](https://www.bctransferguide.ca/), an easy-to-use website that provides information on how course credits transfer (or articulate) between different post-secondary institutions within the province.

I’m also going to suggest that you follow up with our program chair, whom I have cc’d in this email. They may have additional information that I am not aware of regarding transferability. In your email you mentioned that you found the transfer information provided during your diploma program unclear. This is a very valid comment and one that our team will take into consideration when reviewing our orientation process for future students.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to advocate directly on your behalf to the University. While I would love to see you get into the degree program of your choosing, making a case for individual exceptions to articulation agreements is not within my role as a teaching faculty.

I hope you understand the limits of my influence in this situation and that the options and resources I have provided are supportive and informative.

Best,   
Matty

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**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**

For your consideration, I have provided a few additional scenarios that I have experienced personally or supported faculty to navigate include. If you would like to compose an email to response to any of the scenarios below, or one of your own, I would be happy to provide you with feedback.

* 1. A student who consistently asks for extensions beyond the number allowed by the program policy. The student often has very complex excuses and leaves lengthy emails pleading for extensions or rewrites.
  2. A student who discloses a significant amount of personal information regarding their partner’s or their own mental health and how it has been impacting their academic performance.
  3. A student who asks to be excused from a group work assignment because they do not get along with the members of the group they were assigned to.
  4. A student who you know is trying hard to access scholarships for further education, asks for their assignments to be regraded because they desperately need a high GPA and ‘they are getting A’s from all their other instructors’.

When responding to cases like the one’s above I strive to balance a tone of **empathy and validation** while **acknowledging the responsibilities** of each party (student and instructor). It’s important to **provide options**, including mental health and other institutional resources, as necessary. Students may need to be reminded of **program policies and course expectations** and more importantly, the reasons and intentions behind them. Finally, providing an addition avenue for the student to express themselves, such as a **department chair, student advocate** or other resource, may help the student feel heard.