# Create and Manage your Junk Email Inbox Rule

Overview

Email messages received *from outside of the University* are scanned by a program called SpamAssassin. SpamAssassin adds a score to an email's *header*, which is a behind-the-scenes element that you normally don't see. The more asterisks or "stars" an email is awarded by SpamAssassin, the more likely that email is junk. A message with zero or one stars * is probably OK, while a message with twenty stars ******************** almost definitely is junk.

You can filter your messages using *Inbox Rules*.   For example, you can create an Inbox Rule that says "move all messages received from amazon.com to a folder called Amazon", or "flag all messages received from my boss". The steps below detail how to create an Inbox Rule to automatically move messages with two or more SpamAssassin stars into your Junk-mail folder. The steps use Outlook Web Application (OWA), because that's how students and many staff access their email. Creating the rule in OWA will work even if you normally use Outlook on your computer or a phone app to read your email. (You can instead create the same Inbox Rule using Outlook on your Windows or Mac computer if you prefer- look for the "Rules" icon in the menu.)
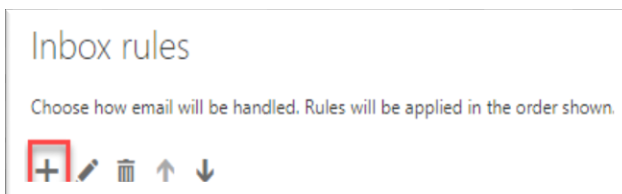
Create your SPAM Inbox Rule

Login to the Outlook Web Application (OWA) by visiting: https://owa.wne.edu After logging in, click the Settings "Gear" icon in the upper right corner, and select **Options** from the drop-down menu
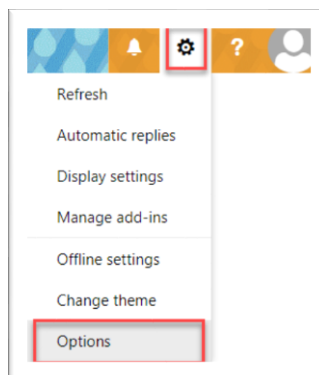
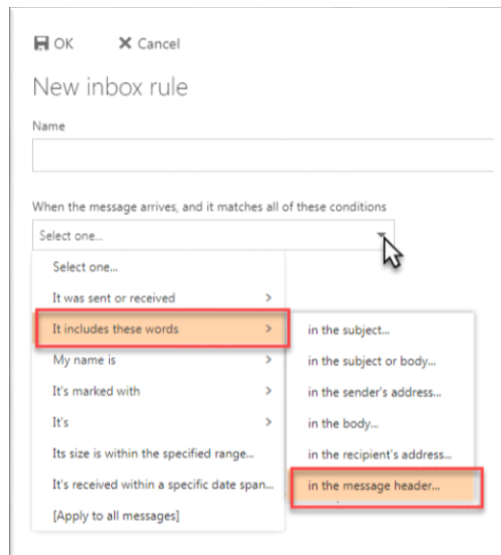Then click "Inbox and sweep rules" from the vertical list on the left.
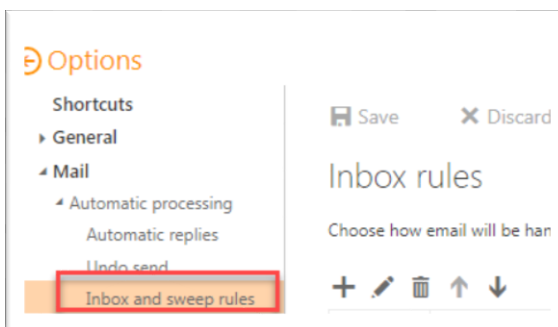
Your (possibly empty) list of Inbox Rules will appear. Click the Plus + icon.

A "New inbox rule" window opens.

Click on the selection list below the prompt "When a message arrives…" .

Select "**It includes these words**" and then "**in the message header...**".

A "Specify Words or Phrases" dialog box appears - click the text "Type words or phrases here" and carefully enter:
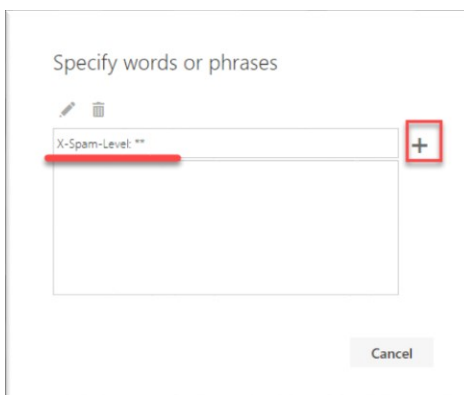**X-Spam-Level: ****

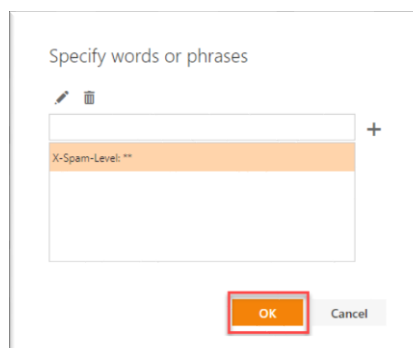and then click the + plus symbol to add the words to the list.
*Accuracy counts! The phrase you need to type is:*
> *X-Spam-Level: ***

The letters X, S and L must be in UPPERCASE, and there's exactly one space between the colon : and the two asterisks **.

After the phrase has been added, click OK to save this step.

Now specify what should be done with the messages that meet the criterion you just set. Click on the selection list immediately below the prompt "Do all of the following:" and select "Move, copy, or delete" and then "Move the message to folder…".
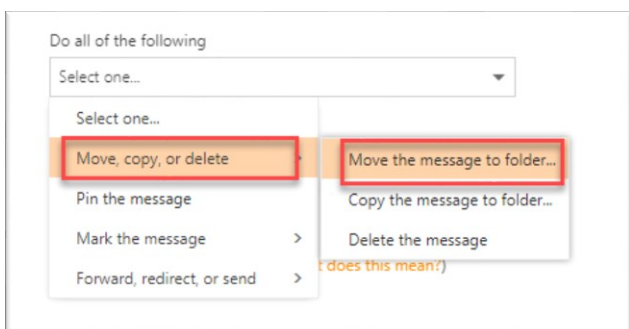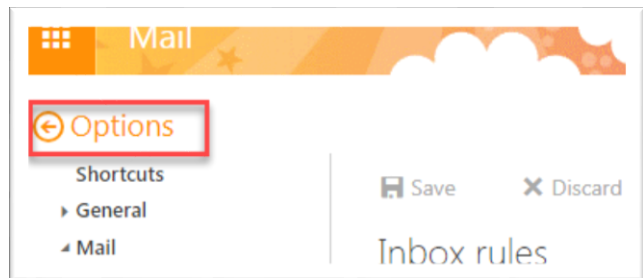
A "Select Folder" dialog appears. Click on your "Junk E-Mail" folder, and then click OK.
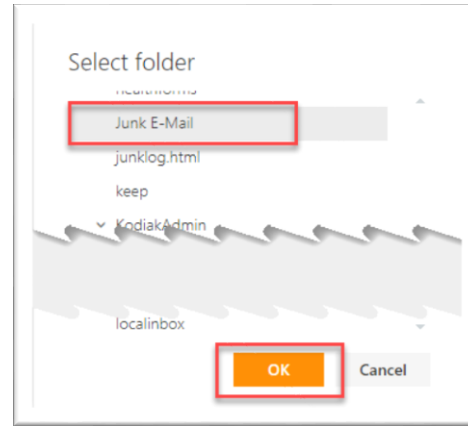
Finally, make sure the "Stop processing more rules" option checked, and click the OK button at top of page.
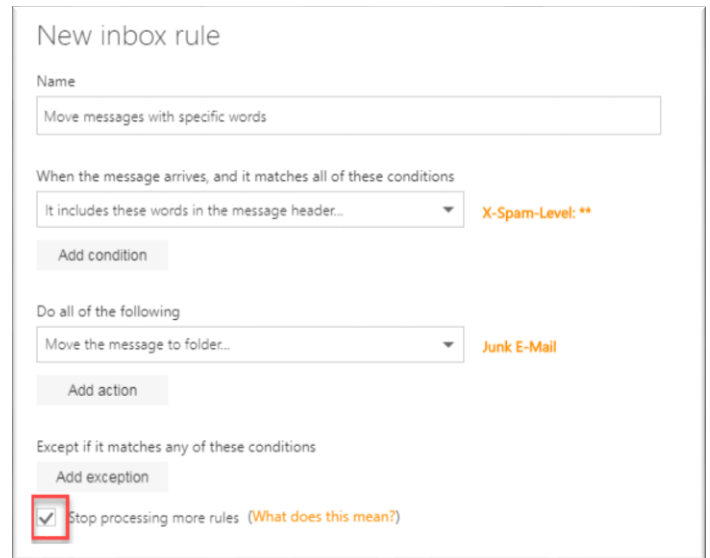
You can then click **Options** on upper left side of page to return to reading your email.

You've just created an Inbox Rule that says "put all messages SpamAssassin has flagged with two or more stars directly into my Junk E-mail folder".

Monitor and Adjust

No SPAM detection software is perfect and it's important to check your Junk E-Mail folder periodically to make sure mail has not been incorrectly classified as junk. This is especially true in the days immediately after you've created or changed your SPAM inbox rule.

If you find isolated messages in your Junk E-mail folder that are not junk…

First, move the message back to your Inbox folder. **Right-click** on the message's subject, select "Move" from the pop-up menu, and then select "Inbox".

More importantly, if the wrongly classified email messages are from a company or person you expect to communicate with regularly, you should adjust your Inbox Rule to stop moving their emails to your Junk folder in the future even though SpamAssassin might give them two or more stars. You do this by adding an *exception* to your SPAM Inbox Rule as described next.
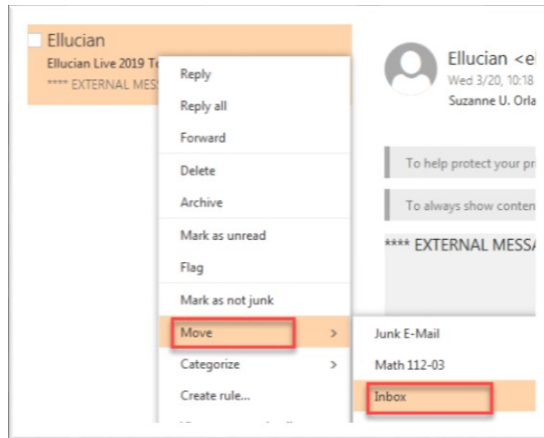
Go back to where you created your SPAM Inbox rule by clicking the Gear icon (in the upper right), then "Options", then "Inbox and sweep rules".
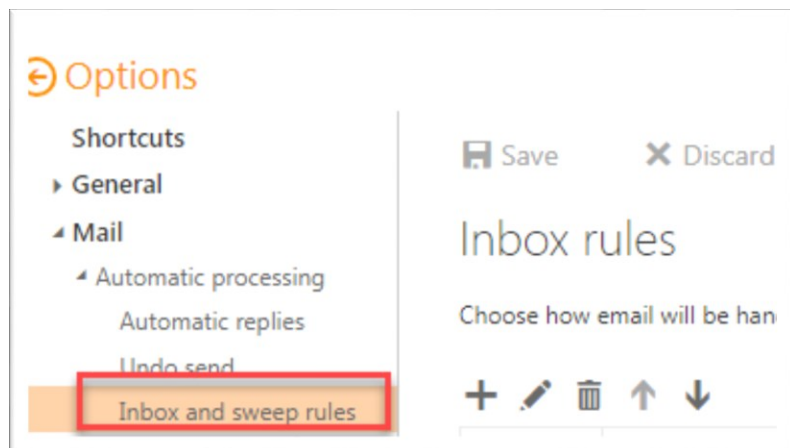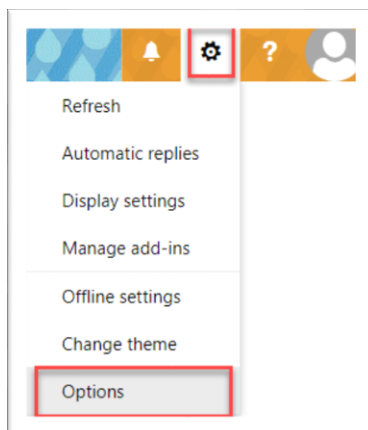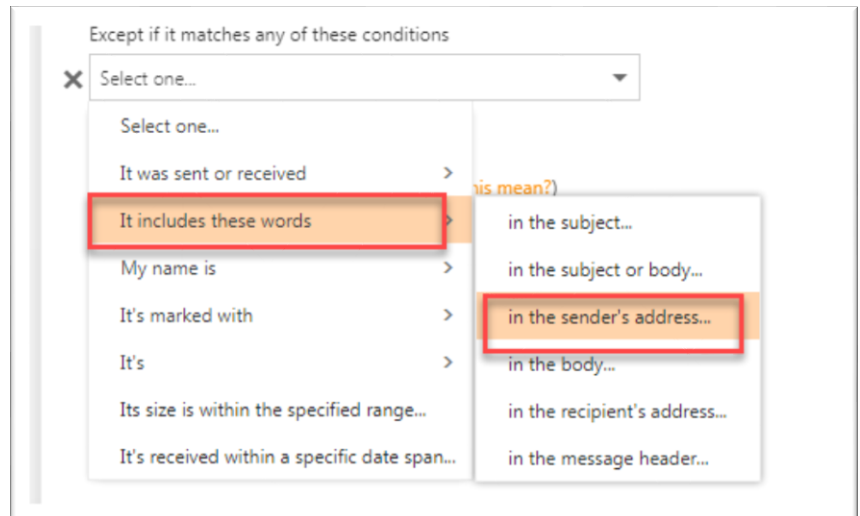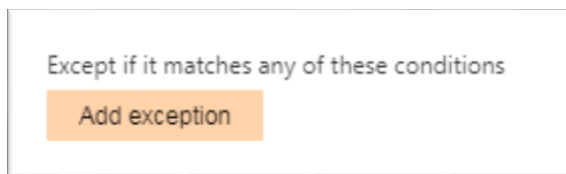
Then click on the rule to select it, and click the Pencil icon to edit the rule:
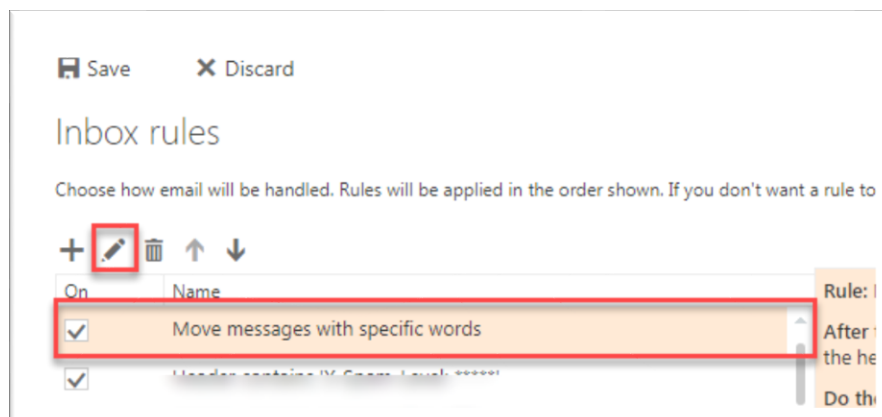
Then click on the **Add exception** button. Use the menus to make your exception read:

> Except if…
>> **It includes these words**
>>> **in the sender's address**…

Then use the "Specify words or phrases" dialog to add entire email addresses or just the parts after the @ symbol to the exception list. In this screenshot the SPAM filter will allow emails from *rachel@somecollege.edu* and anyone from *@somecompany.com*. Be sure to click OK. Then click OK again at upper left of page.
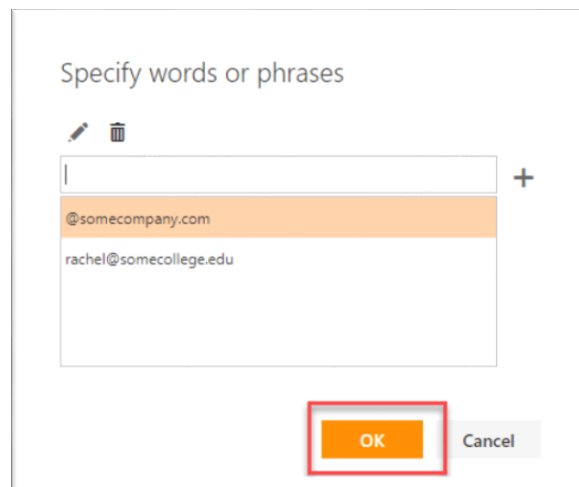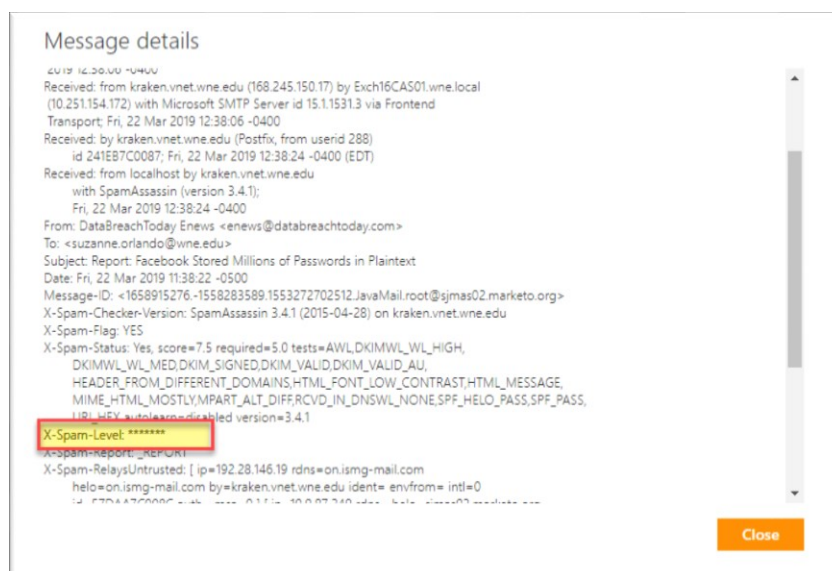
Viewing the 'stars'...

It's possible to see what SpamAssassin is inserting into the headers of your email messages. To see any message's header while working with OWA, right-click the message and choose **View message details**
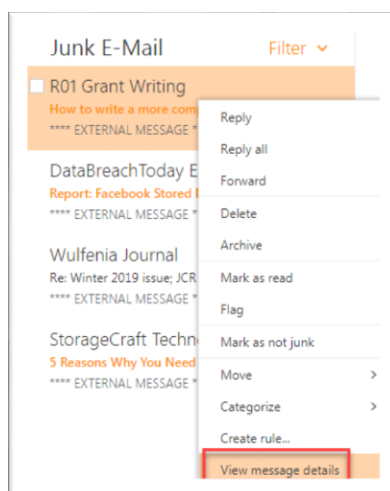
The 'raw' behind-the-scenes text of the email is shown in a resizable window.

In this example, the email received seven stars in X-Spam-Level header.

Notice the header contains other technical information about how it was scored.

How many stars work for you?

If you don't like the way your Inbox Rule is performing, start by viewing the "Message Details" as just described so you know how SpamAssassin has scored the message. Depending on whether your rule is too harsh (many wanted messages are incorrectly being moved to Junk) or too lenient (many junk messages are making it to your Inbox) you can adjust the number of stars threshold in your Inbox Rule upwards or downwards from the suggested two stars. Here's a reminder of how to get back to your Inbox Rules:

1. Login to OWA at https://owa.wne.edu
2. Click on the Gear icon in the upper right corner of the page, then select **Options**, then "**Inbox and sweep rules**".
3. Click on the rule to select it, then click on the pencil icon.
4. Click on the text X-Spam-Level: ** to edit it, then click OK to save your changes.

Need help with this?

For help with setting up your Spam inbox rules, open an OIT Service Desk work ticket or call x2200.