How to respond: Part 1

To respond to a meeting request, all you need to do is click one of the buttons in the request. When you do this, a meeting response is created and sent to the meeting organizer. These are your main choices for responses:

Accept

Accept a meeting that you know you'll be able to attend. When you accept a meeting, the meeting is scheduled in your Calendar and you receive updates if the meeting organizer changes the details of the meeting. If others view your free/busy time, the time appears as Busy by default.

Decline

Decline a meeting if you can't go. Declining a meeting deletes the item from your Calendar (freeing that block of time), but it does not sever your ties with the meeting: You'll still get updates if the meeting organizer makes them and you'll have the opportunity to respond to the update. (If you truly want to opt out of a meeting, you may want to ask the organizer to remove your name from the attendee list.)

Tentative

Use this option if you're interested in the meeting, but aren't sure whether you'll be able to make it. The meeting is scheduled in your Calendar and that block of time is displayed to others as tentatively unavailable.

Propose New Time

When you do choose this and propose a new time, the meeting organizer receives your request... but as with all things about the meeting, the organizer gets to make the final decision about the new meeting time.

How to respond: Part 2

After you click one of the buttons to respond to a meeting request, you are given three options for your response:

Edit the response before sending

Use this option if you want to include a message with your response. Do you need to let the meeting organizer know that you might be late? Maybe you need to verify if lunch will be provided at a lunchtime meeting or whether you need to bring anything to a client presentation. When you respond to a message, you can send a personal note to the organizer.

Send the response now

The meeting response is sent back to the organizer's Inbox and the meeting entry is updated in the Calendar.

Don't send a response

The meeting is added to your Calendar, but the meeting organizer won't know your plans.