

Guidelines for the Use of Email: Good Practice

These guidelines are designed to help us all adopt email good practice. Remember the all-staff mailing list is only for messages that are important, urgent and time critical – please speak to Internal Communications to discuss your requirements for communicating university-wide messages that do not meet these criteria.

1. Manage your email

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| Regularly: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your email and prioritise/categorise your messages to help keep your Inbox organised.• Delete spam, out of office automatic responses and emails you no longer need. |
| Always: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep file sizes as small as you can when sending attachments.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ When sharing large files use university shared areas or Microsoft Teams when possible.◦ If a Teams or a shared area isn't available, use the Mimecast Large File Send facility.◦ Let recipients know what to expect. People are rightly wary about opening attachments or clicking on links.• Use an out of office reply when you are going to be away (do this in File – Automatic Replies).• Delete emails that you no longer need, and remember emails are deleted automatically from the Deleted folder after 30 days.• Move emails with important business information into your team's shared environment so it is accessible to colleagues as appropriate. This includes saving attachments you receive and those you send. |
| Consider: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is email really the best way to communicate? Some messages – especially those that are time critical, may be better suited to a phone call or instant message.• Setting your Calendars to view and clearly label where you are (do this in Home – Calendar icon at bottom left of screen – then Share Calendar icon).• Deleting emails (from Inbox, Sent and Folders) which are older than two years, unless of business importance (see above).• Turning off email alerts so you are not disturbed when emails arrive.• Setting up rules, for example to divert emails to particular.• creating template replies to common queries to save retyping information. |
| Avoid: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using Read Receipts unless it is critical – no one likes to feel they're being checked up on. |

2. Tips for composing/sending effective emails

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| Always: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose a subject line that is short and informative, include any deadline for action or response. Never leave it blank.• Keep messages clear and concise and make your point at the beginning of your message.• Start your emails by acknowledging the recipients using Dear or Hi if your email is less formal, and close with 'Best wishes' or 'Regards' or 'Yours sincerely' – professionalism in emails is still important.• Keep paragraphs and emails short, making use of bold text, headers and bulleted or numbered lists to make your content easier to read. Use clear, unambiguous |
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| | <p>language to help ensure that your email is received in the way you intended. Use plain text for your formatting and standard web-safe fonts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a link to a document in preference to attaching a document to an email. • Use the 'BCC' function (blind copy) rather than including many people in the 'To' field, particularly if there are personal email addresses amongst those you are writing to. (If BCC doesn't come up automatically, if you click on 'To' it will come up in the box below.) • Use an email signature with your full name, job title, department and contact details. • Review your emails before sending them, including checking your formatting, spelling (including names) and grammar and that your email is addressed to its intended recipient(s). Remember 'Autocomplete' will fill in an email address of someone you have emailed before, when you start typing in an address. You are only warned when sending emails outside the university, not when sending to staff or students. |
| Consider: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the subject line if you are changing the topic of conversation in a message you are replying to. • If you need to use the 'reply all' option - it's easy to do this by mistake, and not everyone may need to receive your reply. • Using the subject line of messages for short or one word messages suffixed with (eom) so that recipients know they don't need to open the message. • If you really need to send emails with a high priority, or if another way of communicating this message will be more effective. • Sharing and discussing documents within Microsoft Teams rather than through email. |
| Avoid: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using over-familiar language, text speak, slang or abbreviations, smileys and emoticons in formal communication; email is a business tool and should be used accordingly. • Using block capitals - they give the impression you are shouting. • Covering several topics in a single email. • Over-cluttering your email signature; avoid quotations, multiple fonts and colours and multiple images/logos. |

3. Think security and stay legal

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| Always: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of Information Security and Personal Data Protection at all times, both your own and others. • Assess your certainty about the authenticity of the email before opening an attachment or following a link. |
| Avoid: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosing passwords in response to an email message. • Copying students into emails about third parties, whether these are other students or members of staff. • Passing on excessive personal information or inaccurate personal information, or unsubstantiated personal opinion. Email should never be used for frivolous, abusive or defamatory purposes. |

Refer to our [Policy for acceptable use of email internet and cloud facilities](#) for information on acceptable use of university email.