

Email and Electronic Messaging Policy 2025

Sample image only





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About this document

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Part 1 Purpose and application

1.1 Purpose

- (1) This Policy:
 - (a) explains what information we can send through bulk electronic messages;
 - (b) describes how we create, approve and send these messages;
 - (c) supports legislative compliance; and
 - (d) makes it easier to access and use information by limiting bulk messaging.

1.2 Start date

- (1) This Policy commences on [commencement date]

1.3 Application

- (1) This Policy applies to any user of University email or electronic messaging systems.
 - (a) This includes staff, affiliates and students.
- (2) This Policy does not apply to comments made on Viva Engage.
 - (a) The Viva Engage Terms of Use apply to that platform.



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Part 2 Broadcast emails and messages

2.1 Using broadcast emails

- (1) Clauses in this Part relating to broadcast emails also apply to broadcast messages.
- (2) We use broadcast emails:
 - (a) to share information with University community members and others;
 - (b) for teaching, learning, research, community engagement and administrative purposes.
- (3) Our broadcast email channels may only be used for University purposes.
- (4) Emails should directly relate to and support University activities.
- (5) Only authorised staff can send broadcast emails.
- (6) The Internal Communications team manages all-staff and all-student broadcast email.

Note: Other types of broadcast emails are generally managed at a local level (e.g. within a portfolio, faculty, etc).
- (7) ~~Staff and students~~University community members:
 - (a) should read broadcast emails;
 - (b) must regularly check their official (UniKey) University email accounts; and
 - (c) cannot opt out of receiving broadcast emails.

2.2 Types of broadcast emails

- (1) We use the following types of broadcast email.

Types	Purpose
(a) Staff News	Used to share information for all staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • news • operational information • events • announcements and invitations • staff achievements • senior staff appointments <u>or departures</u>
(b) All-staff emails	Used for high-priority leadership messages and time-sensitive messages.



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Types	Purpose
(c) Emergency staff or student emails	Used for messages containing critical or emergency notifications. Note: See the University's emergency procedures website .
(d) Emails to broad groups or targeted staff	Used for University messages that are only relevant to a particular group of staff e.g. staff in a specific faculty, users of a specific hardware or software.
(e) Managers' News	A monthly newsletter sent to all staff who have at least one direct report.
(f) Student News	Used to share information with all students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • news • operational information • events • announcements and invitations
(g) All-student emails	Used to share information relevant to all students, with approval from Internal Communications and one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Vice-Chancellor; • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education); or • Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
(h) HDR News	A regular newsletter for higher degree by research students.
(i) Emails to broad groups of students e.g. all postgraduate students, all Pharmacy students, all third-year students.	Used for messages related to normal University business or formal information from the student unions, with approval of one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education); • Academic Registrar; • Dean; • Head of School; • Faculty General Manager; or • a person authorised by one of the above to do so.



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2.3 Creating and managing emails

- (1) Content owners must:
 - (a) create the content for broadcast emails;
 - (b) ensure the content is accurate;
 - (c) obtain approval; and
 - (d) provide approved drafts to Internal Communications.
- (2) The Internal Communications team will review proposed content for:
 - (a) appropriateness;
 - (b) relevance;
 - (c) readability;
 - (d) accessibility;
 - (e) grammar; and
 - (f) presentation.
- (3) The Internal Communications team may:
 - (a) change the content of any emails submitted; or
 - (i) If significant changes are required, they must consult with the content owner before sending the email.
 - (b) decide not to send emails that they consider:
 - (i) to be inappropriate; or
 - (ii) to contain information that would be better communicated in a different way.
- (4) We will not permit broadcast emails for:
 - (a) non-University-related activities;
 - (b) personal use; or
 - (c) distributing restricted material.

Note: See the [Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy](#) for information about restricted material.
- (5) Content owners will manage responses to broadcast emails.
 - (a) They should provide the Internal Communications team with details of contact methods for queries, to be included in relevant emails.
- (6) Except in exceptional circumstances, no more than one all-staff email and one all-student email may be sent per day.



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- (7) All broadcast emails must comply with:
 - (a) applicable laws and regulations:
 - (i) including those relating to intellectual property; and
 - (b) applicable [University policies and procedures](#).

2.4 Approvals

- (1) All-staff and all-student broadcast emails must be:
 - (a) endorsed by Internal Communications; and
 - (b) approved by:
 - (i) the Vice-Chancellor; or
 - (ii) a person authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to do so.
- (2) Items for Staff, Student, Managers' and HDR News must be approved by Internal Communications.

2.5 Recordkeeping

- (1) Content owners must keep records of all broadcast emails distributed on their behalf, consistently with the [Recordkeeping Policy](#).



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Part 3 Bulk emails and messages

3.1 Using bulk emails

(1) ~~Cl~~auses in this Part relating to bulk emails also apply to bulk messages.

(2) ~~This clause does not apply to communications about University activities sent by or on behalf of the University or one of its constituent units.~~

~~(1)~~(3) Bulk emails should be minimised, particularly if they are unsolicited.

~~(2)~~(4) When sending bulk emails, University community members should:

- (a) send only to a relevant audience;
- (b) clearly explain to the recipient why they are receiving the message; and
- ~~(c)~~ only embed web links from the University and other reputable and recognisable locations (e.g. state and federal government).

~~(d)~~(c) ~~focus on high priority topics.~~

~~(3)~~(5) Bulk emails must comply with the Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy.

- (a) They must not be used for:
 - (i) junk mail;
 - (ii) for-profit messages;
 - (iii) unauthorised financial or commercial purposes;
 - (iv) chain mail; or
 - (v) material that contravenes the Spam Act 2003.

~~(4)~~(6) University community members may send unsolicited bulk emails if:

- (a) they relate to the sender's position at the University and the sender has a relevant work relationship with the recipients;
 - (i) For example, Heads of School emailing their staff, academics emailing their classes, financial administrators emailing all those with financial delegations;
- (b) they directly relate to University activities;
- (c) the recipients can be identified as very likely to have a particular interest in the subject matter;
 - (i) for example, they have subscribed to a particular distribution list;

(d) they are sent by union office holders and delegates to University community members about their industrial interests; or

~~(d)~~(e) they meet the requirements for personal use specified in clause 4.2 of the Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy.



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~~(5)~~(7) University community members should not use bulk emails to send:

- (a) personal communications unrelated to the sender's capacity as University staff or student; or
- (b) communications about a special interest topic to recipients who have not expressed interest in receiving communications on that topic.
 - (i) This includes political, social or recreational information.

~~(6)~~(8) University community members must not send bulk emails in ways that bully ~~or~~ harass, sexually harass, abuse or intimidate other users.

~~(7)~~(9) If a recipient indicates that they do not wish to receive further messages on a topic, or from a particular sender or group, further messages may only be sent if they relate to University activities.

~~(8)~~(10) Communications which do not directly relate to University activities (e.g. about a special interest topic) should provide an option to opt in to, or out of, future communications at will.

(a) Opt in and opt out mechanisms should be accessible for users with disabilities.

Note: Automated processes do not always work with accessibility software. In such cases an accessible alternative, such as an email option to request to be unsubscribed, should be included. Further information is available from the [Accessibility intranet page](#).

~~(9)~~(11) When sending any bulk emails, University community members must:

- (a) take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of others.
 - (i) This includes avoiding material that may be distressing e.g. details of violence, sexual assault and self-harm;
- (b) uphold our values of excellence, trust, and accountability;
- (c) act consistently with our ethical framework and the [Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#); and
- (d) comply with relevant laws, University policies, procedures and guidelines.
 - (i) These include requirements relating to health and safety, copyright, privacy, defamation, harassment, and discrimination.

3.2 Distribution lists

(1) We provide lists of email addresses for use in relation to University activities.

(2) University community members must not:

- (a) give external organisations or individuals copies of email lists greater than what is available on the internet; or
- (b) assist external organisations or individuals to use University email lists to send unauthorised financial or commercial emails.

Note: See [Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy](#), [Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#) and the [Outside Earnings of Academic Staff Policy](#).



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- (3) University community members may create distribution lists to communicate with particular groups.
 - (a) Each such list must:
 - (i) have a title which clearly conveys the purpose of the distribution list;
 - (ii) not use a title which could imply that the sender represents all or part of the University; and

Note: The University's name may be used if it is clear from the context that the communication is not an official communication from the University. For example, a student club including the University's name in their distribution list title.
 - (iii) not use a title which could imply that the distribution list is limited to University community members if that is not the case.
- (4) The Internal Communications team may direct an account holder or sender to amend the title of a distribution list if they consider the title to be inappropriate.
 - (a) They may also amend the title itself if they consider this to be necessary.

Note: See the [Social Media and Public Comment](#) Policy.
- (5) Special interest groups may communicate with interested University community members using distribution lists.
 - (a) These groups must issue invitations to join the distribution list and may only include groups or individuals who accept the invitation.
 - (b)** The distribution list must provide an option to opt in to, or out of, future communications at will.
 - (c)** Opt in and opt out mechanisms should be accessible for users with disabilities.

Note: Automated processes do not always work with accessibility software. In such cases an accessible alternative, such as an email option to request to be unsubscribed, should be included. Further information is available from the [Accessibility intranet page](#).
- (6) Distribution lists must not include external email addresses unless:
 - (a) reasonably necessary for an educational or institutional purpose; and
 - (b) approved by the Vice-Chancellor or other relevant member of the University Executive.

3.3 Limits on access or use

- (1) The [Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy](#) applies to bulk emails and messages.
- (2) In addition to any steps available under that policy, the Vice-Chancellor or other relevant member of the University Executive may direct that:
 - (a) a conversation conducted by bulk email be moved to another platform e.g. Viva Engage; or
 - (b) the distribution list for further emails or messages be changed.



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Part 4 Breaches of this Policy

4.1 What is a breach

- (1) A breach of this Policy may constitute:
 - (a) a breach of the:
 - (i) [Student Charter](#);
 - (ii) [Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#);
 - (iii) [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy](#); or
 - (iv) [Work Health and Safety Policy](#).
 - (b) misconduct under the:
 - (i) [University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2023 – 2026](#); or
 - (ii) [University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule](#).
- (2) A person will have acted in breach of this Policy if they have:
 - (a) personally breached the Policy;
 - (b) materially assisted or encouraged another person to breach the Policy; or
 - (c) ~~publicised~~ promoted conduct in breach of this Policy on social media or elsewhere.

Note: [News reports or social media posts that refer to a breach having occurred without endorsing the unauthorised conduct will not breach this requirement.](#)

4.2 Breach outcomes

- (1) The consequences of a breach of this Policy will depend on its type and severity.
- (2) Breaches may result in any of:
 - (a) access to ICT resources being limited or discontinued;
 - (b) disciplinary action by the University; and
 - (c) in the case of serious breaches, civil or criminal proceedings.



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Part 5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 University community members

- (1) send bulk emails and messages:
 - (a) under certain circumstances;
 - (b) using carefully managed distribution lists; and
 - (c) consistently with [Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy](#) and this Policy.
- (2) monitor and read emails to their University email account.

5.2 Content owners

- (1) generate, and ensure the accuracy of, broadcast email and message content;
- (2) respond to any queries and replies; and
- (3) keep records of their broadcast emails and messages.

5.3 Internal Communications

- (1) manage all-staff and all-student broadcast emails and messages.

5.4 Vice-Chancellor

(1) approves all-staff and all-student emails and messages.

~~(1)~~(2) [when appropriate, authorises another person to approve all-staff and all-student emails.](#)



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Part 6 Definitions

(1) In this Policy a reference to ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ means the University.

broadcast email

an official email sent by the University to broad groups of University community members.

This includes:

- all-faculty and all-portfolio emails; and
- newsletters approved by a member of the University Executive.

broadcast message

an official electronic message sent by the University to broad groups of University community members.

This includes messages sent using:

- text messaging services; or
- online applications such as the Student Portal, Canvas, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

bulk email

an email sent by a user to multiple recipients at once, using a distribution list.

It does not include broadcast emails.

bulk message

an electronic message sent by a user to multiple recipients at once.

This includes messages sent using:

- text messaging services; or
- online applications such as the Student Portal, Canvas, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

It does not include broadcast messages.

commercial email

as set out in the [Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy](#):
an email offering, promoting, or marketing a good or service.

distribution list

a collection of email addresses or mobile telephone numbers used to send multiple copies of an email or message.

This includes:

- official staff directory email lists (e.g. faculty email lists); and
 - email distribution lists created by University community members.
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ethical framework

the requirements and expectations established in, and through the interaction of:

- the [Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#);
- the [Student Charter](#);
- the [Research Code of Conduct](#);
- the [Academic Integrity Policy](#); and
- the [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy](#).

personal communications

communications which:

- are of a personal nature; or
- do not relate to the user’s capacity as University staff, affiliate or student.

Residential College

any of:

- Mandelbaum House;
- Sancta Sophia College;
- St Andrew’s College;
- St John’s College;
- St Paul’s College;
- Wesley College;
- Women’s College.

special interest topic

a topic which:

- does not relate to University activities;
- may be of optional interest to some members of the University community, e.g. political, social or recreational information.

staff

includes all University employees and affiliates.

student

as set out in the [University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule](#):

A person who is:

- currently admitted to candidature in an award course at the University; or
- a non-award student, exchange student or study abroad student.



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University activities

the operations and activities of the University or one of its constituent units (e.g. a faculty). Examples include authorised events such as Welcome Fest or NAIDOC week celebrations.

University community

University staff, affiliates and students.

University email

any email with the @sydney.edu.au domain.

University Executive

as set out in the University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority) Rule:
the senior management committee of that name convened by the Vice-Chancellor.

University-related conduct

means any conduct that is connected to the University. This includes conduct that:

- refers or relates to the University or its activities;
- refers or relates to individuals in their capacities as University staff, affiliates or students;
- occurs on, or in connection with, University lands or other property owned by the University;
- occurs at, or in connection with, a Residential College;
- occurs at, or in connection with, University owned or affiliated student accommodation;
- uses, or is facilitated by, University ICT resources or other University equipment;
- occurs during, or relates to, the performance of duties for the University;
- occurs during, or in connection to, any University-related function or event (whether or not approved or organised by the University);
- occurs when representing the University in any capacity;
- occurs during, or in connection to, any event run by or affiliated with student representative organisations, student clubs or student societies (whether or not approved or organised by the University);
- occurs during, or in connection to, a clinical, practicum, internship or work experience placement; or
- occurs while a student is participating in an overseas exchange, study abroad or other approved program.



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user

a person or entity that uses the University's ICT resources.



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Part 7 Notes

Revisions and replacements

This document replaces the following, which are rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document:

- (1) *University Staff and Student Broadcast Email Policy*, which commenced in May 2009.

Email and Electronic Messaging Policy 2025

Date adopted [date]

Date commenced [date]

Date amended [date]

Approver: Vice-Chancellor and President

Owner: Vice-President (Operations)

Review date: [date]

Rescinded documents *University Staff and Student Broadcast Email Policy*

Related documents

[*Spam Act 2003 \(Cth\)*](#)

[*University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule*](#)

[*University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule*](#)

[*Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct*](#)

[*Student Charter*](#)

[*Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy*](#)

[*Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy*](#)

[*Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*](#)

[*Privacy Policy*](#)

[*Recordkeeping Policy*](#)

[*Social Media and Public Comment Policy*](#)

[*Cyber Security Policy*](#)

[*Work Health and Safety Policy*](#)



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Register Version	Approved by	Clause	Amendment	Commenced