



## **Best Practice Guide - Email**

Email is widely used throughout the University College as a rapid and easy way of communicating to students and staff. It is a fundamental method of communicating news and information that is important, engaging and essential. However, it is often considered to be overused and inappropriate.

Staff are reminded that general email communication remains the subject of the University College Email Policy, Computer Use Regulations and the Code of Conduct, which provide details of appropriate use, email management, security and confidentiality.

Weekly all-staff email bulletins are distributed on a Friday and are collated by Marketing. All-staff emails at all other times can be sent by selected individuals within the executive, senior management group and marketing team and will be sent as necessary for timely information that is considered important to all staff.

## **Guidelines**

These guidelines apply to all staff using University College email as a form of communication.

The below policies and guidelines are of particular importance and can be accessed on the Staff Information Portal.

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Appendix 34 Communications Policy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Marketing and Communications Strategy
- Email Policy
- Computer Use Regulations

Staff should...	Staff should not...
<p>Have a call to action/objective. This doesn't have to be literal, but emails work best when they have a clear and defined purpose.</p>	<p>Send emails which are unclear or ill-defined. Communicate your point/s as clearly as possible.</p>
<p>Define who your email is for. Only add relevant staff members. If appropriate, and where possible, email team emails, rather than individuals with requests. For example: Marketing@ / Registry@</p>	<p>Be discerning about your use of To: vs. Cc. Sometimes requests are confused because no one knows who has the action. 'Cc' is simply for your information – with no expectation that they will take action on the email. 'To' is for those who have the action</p>
<p>Ensure your email footer is in line with AECC University College branding. Templates are provided in the Brand folder on the S:Drive.</p>	<p>Do not alter or change the AECC University College email footer. Avoid changing colours, or altering the logo or font style.</p>
<p>Use 'Reply-All' sparingly. Consider whether everyone in the email needs to receive your reply. It's easier to reply-all, but not necessarily productive.</p>	<p>Avoid sending HTML emails unless absolutely necessary, as our email does not currently support HTML formatting. If you require HTML design, please contact the Marketing team.</p>
<p>Use Arial, font size 10/11, in standard automatic black colour. Forwarded messages may be in a different colour, such as purple or pink. You can set this in Outlook settings.</p>	<p>Avoid using various fonts, size and colours (other than stated). Consistency in email style emphasises our professionalism.</p>
<p>Keep your emails a short and simple as possible. Be ruthless when identifying what is relevant.</p>	<p>Avoid 'all-staff/student emails unless the information is necessary and relevant to all in the email group. Make use of the defined email groups that already exist in the email address book.</p>
<p>Important information should be first. Include key pieces of information at the top of emails to make sure vital communication is not missed.</p>	<p>Avoid clip-art images and images with large file sizes. Some email providers won't support the large files, and some even block your email from sending.</p>
<p>Make it 'scannable' where possible. Most people don't have the time to read lengthy prose, so helpful bullet points, sub-headings and short paragraphs and sentences help.</p>	<p>Try to approach your email in another way to reduce the volume of emails sent daily. Recognise that email is not always the best method of communicating. Pick up the phone, or visit your colleague and speak face-to-face.</p>

<p>Shorten any URLs. Using websites like bitly.com mean your links look neat, with the bonus of being able to track engagement through 'clicks'.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can hyperlink your text to link to websites.</p>	<p>Don't use multiple methods of highlighting text. Use bold where necessary – avoid using colour or underscores as these are generally used for web-links and may lead to confusion.</p>
<p>Use engaging, concise and relevant subject lines.</p>	<p>Send emails without first proofreading and editing.</p>
<p>Respond in a timely manner. Try to acknowledge receipt of the email within two business working days to all internal communications. Perhaps your team requires longer than this, so make other staff aware that you need longer to respond during a specific period of time.</p>	<p>Don't send the same email multiple times. Please check with your colleagues and other departments before sending out your email to avoid emails coming from multiple sources and irritating mailing lists/contacts.</p>
<p>Use your 'Out of Office' effectively. Be explicit about the days you are uncontactable and offer an alternative method of contact.</p>	

## Best Practice Advice

### A positive example:

**Subject line:** Applied for student finance yet? Deadline 28 July

Dear student,

If you are returning to a full-time course at the University College and haven't applied for your student yet, you can apply now here: [bitly.com/studentfinance](https://bitly.com/studentfinance)

The deadline for Student Finance applications is 28 July 2018.

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