

STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 CQUniversity recognises that ineffective communications are detrimental to the student experience, and as such, ensures that communications to students are issued in a coordinated, consistent and effective manner that appropriately reflects the CQUniversity brand, reputation and values.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure outlines the University's expectations and responsibilities in regards to student communications. It establishes controls to minimise the occurrence of ineffective communications and provides a central authority for coordinating communications within scope.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all University broadcast (one-to-many) communications from CQUniversity employees to students including:
- official communications such as those related to admission, enrolment, awards and graduation, and
 - official communications such as those related to sites, systems, policy and procedures, promotion of university courses, services, support and facilities, promotion of University or third-party activities, opportunities, initiatives and events, promotion of University or third-party surveys or other feedback collectors, and general updates, news and announcements.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure does not apply to:
- communications to students from the Vice-Chancellor and President
 - communications to international students regarding admission, enrolment and visa compliance
 - communications from the Schools for learning and teaching purposes

- communications to prospective students and alumni, and
- crisis and emergency communications to students.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The University uses both electronic and hard-copy methods of broadcast communication to inform students about a diverse range of topics, with varying levels of importance and priority. These topics include information about particular requirements or entitlements, about particular actions that must be taken by students, or about important events in the University calendar such as enrolments and graduations. Topics also include more general announcements to students about University activities and events, promotions, initiatives and news.
- 3.2 The official method of communication between the University and students is by email to student email accounts. All other methods of communication must be considered support communications, supplementing the official method, as the University cannot ensure the validity of a nominated point of contact, nor has the University established the requirement for students to read communications, other than those sent to student email accounts as established in the [Student Email Account Policy and Procedure](#).
- 3.3 Other methods by which the University communicates to students are via email to a nominated personal account, electronically via the Student Portal, University website, official blog, social media, mobile application or digital noticeboards, hard-copy communications to a nominated mailing address, or instant messaging (SMS) notifications to a nominated mobile phone number.

Communication standards

- 3.4 University communications should enhance the student experience. They must be accurate, relevant and timely, and accessible through appropriate communication channels.
- 3.5 Communications should have a tone of voice that is appealing to students and enable the successful transmission of information through clear and concise messaging in plain English.
- 3.6 Communications should avoid unnecessary communications and duplication of messaging, and work to decrease the volume of communications (particularly emails) being sent to students.
- 3.7 Communications to personal email, push notifications and SMS should be used sparingly, in order to preserve student engagement with these channels.
- 3.8 Communications should be scheduled effectively, considering the academic calendar relevant to the audience as well as any deadlines or other key dates relevant to that message. If action is required, students should be given adequate time to respond.
- 3.9 Communications should enable students to manage their communications preferences through the use of opt-in and opt-out features or digest options.
- 3.10 Communications should be evaluated through measures like analytics and feedback. The University is dedicated to the continued improvement of student communications through measurement and review.
- 3.11 Communications should be distributed through collaboration with Student Communications regardless of access to student contact details or channels available to employees.

Communication channels

- 3.12 The University's official communication channel and method for communicating with students is email sent to student email accounts. The [Student Email Account Policy and Procedure](#) establishes the requirement that students check this student email account at least once per week.
- 3.13 The University will send communications to personal email accounts only in the following circumstances:
- when introducing new students to student email, administrative systems, policies and processes
 - in crisis situations where a student's safety is deemed to be at risk

- for immediate notification of last-minute class or exam cancellations and room changes
 - where a student's enrolment is at risk of cancellation
 - to inform students of administrative deadlines such as Last Day to Add Units and Census date
 - where the student has given express consent (for example, as part of a queue management system)
 - for password management and identity verification
 - for short course communication
 - where required by University policy or external legislation, and
 - where deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.
- 3.14 The University will send hard-copy communications to students only where required by University policy or external legislation, or where deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.
- 3.15 The University will send SMS to students only in the following circumstances:
- in crisis situations where a student's safety is deemed to be at risk
 - for immediate notification of last-minute class or exam cancellations and room changes
 - where a student's enrolment is at risk of cancellation
 - to inform students of administrative deadlines such as Last Day to Add Units and Census date
 - to inform students of urgent deadlines or information that relates to a work placement engagement
 - where the student has given express consent (for example, as part of a queue management system), and
 - where deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.
- 3.16 The University may use other push communication channels to support and deliver communications as follows:
- email to student mailing lists
 - the official student newsletters (Student Broadcast and TAFE Student Broadcast)
 - unofficial newsletters with an unsubscribe function,
 - push notifications from the University's mobile application, and
 - social media, in accordance with the [Social Media Policy](#).
- 3.17 The University may use pull communication channels to support and deliver communications as follows:
- University website
 - Student Portal
 - CQUniLife blog
 - electronic noticeboards and screensavers located on University premises, and/or
 - noticeboards and other locations on University premises where hard-copy material is posted.

Authorising use of communication channels

- 3.18 Employees who have access to student contact details and a channel that enables the distribution of broadcast communications must not distribute communications within the scope of this policy and procedure without prior authorisation from Student Communications. These channels include but are not limited to Microsoft Outlook, Sugar CRM, Vision 6, Survey Monkey, CQUni Success and SONIA.
- 3.19 An employee wishing to communicate with students in relation to matters within the scope of this policy and procedure must contact Student Communications for authorisation.

- 3.20 An employee may be authorised to use official and social student mailing lists for the purpose of local communications relating to public holidays, activities and events, or campus announcements. Once authorised, the employee may continue to send to these lists and will receive direction from Student Communications through the moderation process.
- 3.21 An employee may be authorised to send through other channels such as SONIA or CQUni Success through collaboration with Student Communications and within the limits of this policy and procedure. Schools or employees must gain approval from Student Communications prior to doing this so that University approved messaging templates can be developed.
- 3.22 Communications from business units that directly pertain to the administration of that particular unit and are considered core business are authorised to be sent via the Customer Relationship Management (SugarCRM) system as this can be audited by Student Communications.
- 3.23 Communications from third parties are not authorised to be distributed to students, unless deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.
- 3.24 Communications pertaining to third-party events, initiatives and activities will only be distributed to students if the University is a named sponsor or partner, is host, or only where deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.

Compliance with the Spam Act

- 3.25 The [Spam Act 2003](#) (Cwlth) regulates the sending of commercial electronic messages in Australia. In compliance with the *Spam Act*, electronic messages which might be deemed to be commercial in nature should only be sent where the recipient has provided consent, the communication has a functional unsubscribe facility, and accurate information about the sender is provided.
- 3.26 The *Spam Act* outlines requirements and responsibilities for institutions regarding sending of unsolicited commercial electronic messages. While communications with current, graduated and former students are exempted from regulation under the *Spam Act*, the University will provide students with the opportunity to opt in or out of communications that are not academic or administrative in nature.

4 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The University's student communications strategy relies on collaboration and forward planning across all areas of the University. An employee wishing to communicate with students in relation to matters within the scope of this policy and procedure must contact Student Communications for authorisation.
- 4.2 Student Communications will then review and authorise the use of communication channels and provide any necessary training and materials, as well as record keeping and centralised reporting, or manage the distribution of communications.
- 4.3 Communications will be reviewed from a student-centred perspective and within the context of both the schedule and volume of competing communications. Student Communications will only authorise use of a communication channel if the communication standards set out in this policy and procedure are met.
- 4.4 An employee may be authorised to use official and social student mailing lists for the purpose of local communications relating to public holidays, campus events or announcements. Once authorised, a sender may continue to send to these lists and will receive direction from Student Communications through the moderation process.
- 4.5 An employee may be authorised to send through channels such as CQUni Success. In this instance, communications must be provided to Student Communications for quality assurance and record keeping purposes. The message content, audience details, date of send and sender details must be provided before the date of send.
- 4.6 In the instance that one or more support communications are required, employees should collaborate with Student Communications to develop a multi-channel campaign and deliver positive outcomes.

- 4.7 Student Communications will ensure that all hard-copy communications and print media conform to the University brand guidelines.
- 4.8 Student Communications will ensure that all posts to social media conform to the [Social Media Policy](#). This is with the exception of social media accounts managed by other teams, as approved by the policy.

Student responses

- 4.9 All student responses must be managed by the sender in a reliable, timely, and effective manner that reflects the University brand, reputation and values.
- 4.10 Sender details must be included in all communications to enable students to respond. Senders should consider the 'from' address and email signature details included in their communications in order to manage student replies appropriately.

Student feedback

- 4.11 For quality assurance and record keeping purposes, all student feedback relating to communications within the scope of this policy and procedure must be referred to Student Communications.

Surveys and feedback collectors

- 4.12 All communications to students related to surveys or other feedback collectors must be authorised by Student Communications.
- 4.13 Communications related to research surveys will only be authorised for distribution through newsletters, social media and pull communications channels, unless deemed business critical by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary.
- 4.14 Communications related to research surveys will only be authorised if ethical clearance is provided for record keeping purposes.

Student contact details

- 4.15 The University will strive to collect and maintain accurate contact details for students. All students can update their contact details within the appropriate student management system or by contacting the University.

Administration of student mailing lists

- 4.16 Student Communications must be assigned as list administrator and moderator of all student mailing lists for the purpose of quality control, record keeping and centralised reporting.
- 4.17 Student Communications must authorise the creation of a new student mailing list or any changes to an existing student mailing list.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.
- 5.2 Student Communications, as authorised by the Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary, will provide direction on communications and promotional campaigns within the scope of this policy and procedure.

Reporting

- 5.3 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 5.4 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.5 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule on the [Queensland State Archives website](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought through the Records Management Office (email records@cqu.edu.au).

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Terms and definitions

Broadcast communication: a communication sent to multiple recipients. Not to be confused with the Student Broadcast email as this refers to the official student newsletter.

Communications channel: A channel used to communicate with current students, including, but not limited to: letter, email, website, SMS (instant messaging), social media, electronic noticeboards, posters and flyers.

Hard-copy communication: Any communication sent in hard-copy form as opposed to electronically, for example letters, flyers or print media.

Official communication: An official communication typically pertains to admission, enrolment, awards and graduation.

Social communication: A social communication typically pertains to the promotion of support services and university facilities, campus or university events and activities and initiatives.

Local communication: A local communication typically pertains to public holidays, campus events or announcements

Pull communication: Pull communication refers to information that can be retrieved by an audience as required and at their leisure, for example information found on our website, Student Portal, Handbook and Ask CQUni.

Push communication: Push communication is delivered by the sender directly to the recipients. While the communication can be confirmed that it was sent, it does not necessarily mean it was received and understood.

SMS communication: A communication sent to a mobile phone. SMS stands for Short Message Service and is also commonly referred to as a "text message".

Social media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking, for example Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Student mailing list: A centrally created CQUniversity mailing list available at <http://mailman.cqu.edu.au>.

Support communication: A support communication refers to any communication sent to a point of contact other than the student email account, for example personal email accounts, SMS, hard-copy, and pull communications.

Unsubscribe function: this is an electronic address that the recipient can use to tell the sender they do not wish to receive messages. Preferably unsubscribe requests are then managed through an email marketing service like MailChimp or Vision 6. Alternatively, unsubscribed can be managed manually via a contact list.

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Spam Act 2003](#) (Cwlth)

[Student Communications Guide](#)

[Student Email Account Policy and Procedure](#)

8 FEEDBACK

8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Delegated Approval Authority	Vice-President (Student and Corporate Services)
Advisory Committee	N/A
Administrator	Deputy Vice-President (Students) and University Secretary
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Notes	