1 PURPOSE

1.1 It is essential that communications to CQU students are issued in a reliable, timely, and effective manner that appropriately reflects the CQUniversity brand and value of engagement.

1.2 This policy and procedure outlines the University’s expectations and responsibilities in regards to distributing quality student communications.

2 SCOPE

2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all University broadcast (one-to-many) communication from CQUniversity staff to current students including:
- official university communications such as admission, enrolment, student support, awards and graduation announcements
- emergency communications
- activities
- events, and
- general updates.
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 students from the Technology and Services Assistance Centre (TaSAC) regarding information technology (IT) services and system outages
- communications to prospective students and alumni, and
- crisis communications to students.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 CQUniversity uses both electronic and hard copy methods of broadcast communication to inform students about a diverse range of topics, with varying levels of importance. 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.

3.3 Other methods by which the University communicates to students are via email to a nominated personal account, electronically via the Student Portal, social media or digital noticeboards, hard-copy communications to a nominated mailing address, or instant messaging (SMS) notifications to a nominated mobile phone number. These must be considered support communications, as the University cannot ensure the validity of a nominated point of contact, nor can the University ensure that a student will read electronic communications, other than the student email account as outlined in the Student Email Account Policy and Procedure. This is with the exception of new students who are yet to identify with their student email account. When communicating with new students, personal email accounts should be utilised and the University should take necessary measures to ensure all personal contact details are valid.

3.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) has responsibility for ensuring the quality of University communication with current students, and will provide direction on the form of communication to all students, or a particular cohort of students.

Communication channels

3.5 Email communication sent to student email accounts is the official communication channel of the University when communicating with current students.

3.6 The University will only contact personal email accounts 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 Courses and Census date
- where the student has given express consent (for example, as part of a queue management system)
- for password resets and identity verification
- for short course communication
- where required by University policy or external legislation, and
- where deemed business-critical by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).
3.7 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-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

3.8 The University will only use SMS to communicate with students 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 Courses and Census date
   - 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-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

3.9 The University may use other push communication channels to support and deliver communications as follows:
   - email to student mailing lists
   - the official student newsletter (Student Broadcast)
   - unofficial newsletters with an unsubscribe function, and
   - social media, in accordance with the Social Media Policy and recognising that recipients may not all be current students.

3.10 The University may use pull communication channels to support and deliver communications as follows:
   - University website
   - Student Portal
   - 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

3.11 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) must authorise all official communications to students, with the exception of those exclusions outlined in the scope of this document.

3.12 The Student Communications team will manage all official broadcast communications to students, with the exception of those exclusions outlined in the scope of this document.

3.13 The Student Communications team will give consideration to broadcast communications from business units that pertain to the administration of that particular unit and are considered core business. In this instance, the Student Communications team will collaborate with the business unit to deliver positive outcomes. This includes admissions, fees, scholarships, accessibility, Start Uni Now (SUN) and international student support communications.

3.14 Third parties may administer official communications to students, only where authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

3.15 Business units will only send unofficial email communications through the University’s student email distribution lists and each communication must be to the interests of the audience to whom it is sent.

3.16 Business units should access student email distribution lists and guidelines for unofficial email communications in the CQUniversity Student Communications Guide.

3.17 In the instance that a business unit requires a targeted email communication, this must be justified as an official communication and must then be managed by the Student Communications team, as authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).
3.18 All support communications including both push and pull communications will be administered by the Student Communications team as authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

3.19 In the instance that one or more support communications are required, business units will collaborate with the Student Communications team to deliver positive outcomes.

3.20 The Student Communications team will ensure that all hard copy communications and print media conform to the University brand guidelines.

3.21 The Student Communications team will ensure that all posts to social media conform to the Social Media Policy.

**Compliance with the Spam Act**

3.22 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.

3.23 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 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 All official and unofficial email communications to current students, as well as support communications targeted to current students must observe the requirements of this policy and procedure.

**Email communications (official and unofficial)**

4.2 Business units will only send unofficial email communications unless otherwise authorised. Unofficial email communications must be sent through the University’s student mailing lists, unless the communication is deemed official and authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

4.3 The following classifications are deemed as official email communications and should be managed by the Student Communications team:
   - official student newsletter (Student Broadcast)
   - notices pertaining to academic dates
   - notices pertaining to policy and procedures
   - notices pertaining to necessary enrolment changes
   - notices pertaining to awards and graduation
   - promotion of official University support services, and
   - opportunities or initiatives deemed business critical by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).

4.4 In the instance that a business unit requires an official email communication outside of the above classifications, the business unit will collaborate with the Student Communications team to develop a clear communications needs analysis for any proposed broadcast communication to students, including:
   - articulating a clear purpose for the communication
   - identifying who is responsible for the communication
   - identifying the target audience for the communication
   - developing a clear understanding of the target audience and their needs
• determining the appropriate communications channels
• taking into account any resource constraints
• determining appropriate timeframes, and
• ensuring the communication is compliant with this policy and procedure and any other relevant instruments.

Student responses

4.5 All student responses to unofficial email communications must be managed by the sender in a reliable, timely, and effective manner that reflects the University brand and values.

4.6 Business units sending to student mailing lists should consider the ‘from’ address and email signature details included in their communications in order to manage student replies appropriately. Students will use contact details and the ‘from’ address referenced in a communication when seeking more information or assistance.

Student feedback

4.7 For the purpose of monitoring student feedback, all business units issuing unofficial email communications to the student mailing lists must record student feedback and submit to the Student Communications team for centralised reporting and consideration.

Support communications

4.8 All support communications will be administered by the Student Communications team as authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance). This is with the exception of social media accounts which will be managed in accordance with the Social Media Policy.

4.9 Business units will collaborate with the Student Communications team when requiring support communications, including:
• email to personal email accounts
• SMS communications
• hard-copy communications
• inclusion in the official student newsletter (Student Broadcast)
• posts to social media accounts managed by Student Communications
• additions to the web or Student Portal
• inclusion on electronic noticeboards and screensavers located on University premises, and
• noticeboards and other locations on University premises where hard copy material is posted.

Surveys

4.10 All survey communications to current students will be conducted in collaboration with the Office of Learning and Teaching or the Student Communications team. The Office of Learning and Teaching and Student Communications team will collaborate when sending survey communications, to ensure these are appropriately scheduled.

Student contact details

4.11 All business units will strive to collect and maintain accurate contact details for current students. All students can update their contact details within the appropriate student management system. Requests to update contact details on behalf of a student should be forwarded to the Student Communications team at reachstudents@cqu.edu.au.
Administration of student mailing lists

4.12 The Student Communications team must be included in the administration of all student mailing lists for the purpose of centralised reporting and quality control. The Student Communications team should be consulted when considering the creation of a new mailing list, to ensure the target audience is not already catered to within an existing list and the list creation is justified.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

5.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) and Director, Student Experience is responsible for implementing this policy and procedure and delivering further direction on practices relevant to communication to current students.

5.2 The Student Communications Officer is responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Reporting

5.3 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

5.4 The Student Communications team will retain and record information in accordance with the University’s records management policy documents within the constraints of the dynamic nature of communications.

5.5 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

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 email communication: An official email communication is deemed business-critical and is sent by the Student Communications team, as authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance). These communications typically pertain to admission, enrolment, student support, awards and graduation.

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.


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.

Unofficial email communication: An unofficial email is not considered business-critical and can be sent by any business unit to the University’s standard student mailing lists within the parameters of this document. These communications typically pertain to events, activities, opportunities and general announcements.

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 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

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Notes