



Email Etiquette Policy

1 Policy Statement and Scope

1.1 This policy and the guidance within are for all members of staff who use a York St John University email account in employment with the York St John Students' Union to communicate whether infrequently or on a regular basis.

2 Using Your Email Account

1.2 When using e-mail, always think before you send. Please adopt these simple points of good practice and etiquette. Some points to consider:

- **Keep it simple and brief** – for factual information, but not for matters that require tact or diplomacy;
- **Take care over content, factual accuracy and presentation** – check through before sending;
- **Make the 'Subject' of your message meaningful;**
- **Clearly identify yourself** – use a signature at the end of your e-mail automatically;
- **Be polite and show common courtesy** – adhere to the same standards as you would when writing a letter;
- **Create a good impression** – your e-mail may be seen by persons who don't know you or the University;
- **Use humour and sarcasm with care** – messages can be easily misinterpreted
- Make your e-mails easy to read – avoid backgrounds and keep the text plain and straightforward;
- **Create mailing lists** – this avoids long lists of recipients at the top of each message;
- **Ensure e-mails target the correct audience** – use the "Reply to All" option sparingly; avoid copying or forwarding e-mails to colleagues when it is unnecessary;
- **When replying or forwarding an e-mail with comments, include some of the original message for context** – but be selective; don't send the entire original e-mail if it is long;
- **Reply promptly to e-mails** – if you cannot reply within a reasonable time (e.g. 48 hours) send a brief response to say the e-mail is being dealt with;
- **Respect the privacy of others** – do not disclose private e-mail addresses or contact details. Consider using the bcc function when emailing groups;
- **Do not send attachments unless you need to** – use hyperlinks to documents (on internet or U:Drive) or set up the ELF (E-mail Large File) application;
- **Clear out your mailbox regularly** – Staff should regularly review all emails, posts and messages, and delete those that have no continuing value. Save messages or attachments you want to keep into your Documents folder or onto the U:Drive. Advice on email archiving is available on the [ILS webpages](#);
- **Use Out of Office messages** – this helps to manage expectations in relation to your response.

3 Remember that:

- **The laws** relating to written communication apply equally to e-mail, including defamation, copyright, obscenity, fraud, freedom of information and discrimination;
- **All employees** are required to act professionally and honestly, with integrity and respect for others;
- **Subject Access requests** - Individuals (staff or students) have the right, under GDPR legislation, to request access to all information held about them (subject to certain exemptions). Similar to FOI requests, this includes e-mails, even if marked as confidential;
- **The Internet is an open world** - e-mail messages sent outside the University should not be regarded as private or secure;
- **E-mails sent bearing your University e-mail address** are equivalent to sending letter-headed Students' Union / University correspondence. They reflect on the reputation of the Students' Union and University;
- **E-mail messages, when forwarded, can be invisibly edited** - unlike a letter or memorandum;
- **E-mail should not be used as a substitute for other forms of communication** - face-to-face or phone may be more appropriate.

4 Don't:

- **'Flame'** - Flames are messages or replies that express anger or might anger the reader. Neither post nor respond to incendiary mail;
- **Send anonymous mail or 'spoof' your address** - in 99% of cases, your e-mail can be traced back to its source; disciplinary action may then follow;
- **'Spam'** - i.e. don't send electronic garbage, newsgroups, list servers or to anyone you don't know as this is considered 'spamming';
- **Reply to chain-letters** - these are an absolute 'no-no' on all networks;
- **Use your e-mail account regularly for personal expression** - the Students' Union permits incidental use of email for personal use. Our policy is that personal use is a privilege and not a right. For further information see Section 8 of the [University's IT Acceptable Use Policy](#) which you agree to in agreeing to this policy.

5 Email Signatures

5.1. You should use the email signature found within SUMS for your role.

6 Acceptance of the Policy

6.1. A copy of this policy should be given to any member of staff who have a York St John University email account in employment with the York St John Students' Union. The individual shall also be asked to sign a copy of this policy to confirm they have understood it and agree to abide by it.

I (insert name) _____ confirm that I have York St John University email account and agree to abide by the terms of this policy.

Signed _____ Date _____