



POLICY

Policy Title: Email Policy

Policy Owner: Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre

Keywords: 1) email 2) communications

Policy Code: PL239 [ad082]

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1. INTENT

Like all communication, emails should be clear and professional. This policy outlines the responsibilities of ECU staff when using email. The policy also assists staff to be aware of some of the policy and legal issues which apply to emails.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

All ECU staff.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
"Email" includes	any communication by email from an ECU staff member to ECU staff, students, stakeholders or anyone in the general community.

4. POLICY CONTENT

- 4.1 All forms of written communication (which includes Emails) will reflect the University values, and the professional standards of the University.
- 4.2 All staff will comply with the Email Guidelines attached to this policy.
- 4.3 Emails are subject to all University policies, including, but not limited to, the Records Management Policy, the Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy and the Information Technology Policy.
- 4.4. Email communications are University records. There are a number of legislative requirements which may oblige ECU to disclose information contained in Emails.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

Managers/Line Supervisors

Managers and line supervisors are expected to provide feedback and training as required to support the use of professional Email communications in accordance with this policy.

All staff

Staff are expected to monitor their own Email communications to maintain compliance with the Email Guidelines.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

The policy is supported by the following Policies/Documents:

- Email Guidelines
- Records Management Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Information Technology Policy

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre
All Enquiries Contact:	Director, Marketing and Communications Services Centre
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Policy Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor
Date Policy First Approved:	07 June 2012
Date last modified:	20 May 2015
Revision History:	07/06/2012; 20/05/2015
Next Revision Due:	20 May 2018
TRIM File Reference	SUB/37702

Email Guidelines

Linked to Email Policy

Format of email

- Email messages should be formatted as plain black text on a white background using a standard font such as Arial.
- Avoid the use of background colours, images, creative fonts and text colour since this is often distracting, causes difficulties for people with disabilities and can be incorrectly displayed in different email applications.
- Always insert a signature block that identifies your name and affiliation at the end of every email you send. It is good practice to include your details on every email, showing your name, position, postal address, phone and mobile numbers, and email address. The signature block should also be in a standard font such as Arial.
- Do not attach a logo or image to an email signature because it can result in the email being displayed to the receiver as having an attachment and it may also be blocked by organisations that consider email content containing images to be spam.

Professional use of email

- Consider whether a phone call or face-to-face meeting is a better alternative (particularly for staff in close proximity to you).
- Do not use email for dealing with conflict, sensitive, difficult, complex or emotional issues.
- Take care when forwarding email. Trails (copies of previous email communications) can be very long and can contain comments that were not intended for widespread viewing.
- Never send an email when angry – the tone of the message often reflects the sender's moods – even unintentionally. It is a good idea to wait 24 hours in these cases – this allows time to cool-off and respond appropriately.
- Setting unrealistic timelines or using inappropriate language in an email may be considered bullying.
- Writing words in UPPERCASE (!) is considered shouting in email and should not be used.
- Circulate copies of emails ("cc's") only when necessary and appropriate. If in doubt, don't.
- It is good practice when sending emails to more than one person, to ensure that everyone knows to whom the email has been sent – avoid the use of blind copy ('bc').

Legal aspects of emails

- Be aware that emails are subject to legislation such as the *Freedom of Information Act (1992)* and may be provided to applicants under that Act – or may be provided to external agencies, tribunals, courts or external lawyers. Keep the content of your email professional at all times.
- Email is not secure. Give consideration to how confidential information is transferred.
- Exercise caution when sending email with third party information (e.g. email addresses and personal details). This could be a breach of privacy if there is no consent to share the information.
- The content of email should be treated with the same care as letters printed on letterhead as they are a record of written correspondence. Be aware that email may be accessed, even after you have deleted them from your computer, and copies may need to be provided as part of legal disclosure processes.
- Email messages are University documents and should be managed in accordance with ECU's Records Management Policy and Record Keeping Manual.
- Email messages can be considered contractual agreements when a staff member sends an email and it indicates that they are representing the organisation. Be clear as to your intention and if you are not authorised to agree to something, then make sure this is made clear in the email.

ECU Global email

Staff wishing to send a global staff email must have the content of the email approved by their relevant senior executive. For a list of global email approvers and information about content that warrants a global email, please refer to the ITSC policy (it043).

A global email to be sent under the Vice-Chancellor's name must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor.

J Turner
29 May 2012