University of East Anglia mass email policy

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Approving body: Executive Team	**Date of approval:** 28/10/13
Review date: 28/10/15	**Version number:** 1.0

Contents

1. Description

This policy outlines the acceptable uses of mass email addresses at the University of East Anglia, defines the ownership and authorisation process, and provides best practice guidelines for those drafting mass emails.

It has been created in response to concerns highlighted in the Internal Communications Review 2012/13 that staff and students feel emails are overused and poorly targeted, and that important messages can be missed in the 'noise'.

The aims of this policy are to ensure that mass emails at UEA are appropriately selective, that best practice is consistently applied, and that the circumstances in which a mass email can and should be sent are clear.

2. Definition of mass email

For the purposes of this policy, a mass email is defined as an email communication sent to a high number of recipients. Examples of this include:
- All staff
- All students
- All staff within a department
- All staff or students within a school or faculty

3. All-staff and all-student emails

3.1 Definition of an all-staff and all-student email
The all-staff and all-student email distribution lists are produced and maintained by the Information Services Directorate (ISD) and contain the email addresses of all university staff members and students respectively. An all-staff or all-student email is defined as an email communication sent to one of these two lists. This policy covers ad hoc messages sent to these lists rather than pre-scheduled or regular communications such as summary e-bulletins or the Vice-Chancellor's monthly email to staff.

3.2 Ownership of all-staff and all-student email lists
The all-staff email list is owned by the Human Resources Division, which can give permission to others to send to this list. The all-student email list is owned by the Dean of Students, who can give permission to others to send to this list.

3.3 Criteria for sending an ad hoc all-staff and all-student email
An all-staff or all-student email should only be sent in a 'business critical' or 'urgent' situation which will impact on and/or require action by the majority of recipients. Examples include:
- Severe weather issues
- Security and safety warnings
- Urgent facilities issues
- IT/communication problems
- Emergencies, crises or major incidents
- Key corporate messages of widespread importance to the university as a whole

3.4 Authorisation process for an all-staff or all-student email
3.4.1. Those planning an all-staff or all-student email are first asked to consider the alternative communications channels available (see 5.). It may be that one of these routes is

a better medium for disseminating the information. The Communications Office can offer advice.

3.4.2. Every all-staff and all-student email must be authorised by the UEA Communications Office. The Internal Communications Officer (Fiona Billings) and the Assistant Head of Communications (Simon Dunford) are the designated first contacts. In their absence, approval can also be given by the Media Relations Managers (Cat Bartman/Lisa Horton), the Head of Marketing and Communications (Giles Whattam) and the Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing (Angelina Bingley). Contact press@uea.ac.uk or (01603 59)2226.

3.4.3. All-staff and all-student messages must meet the criteria set out in 3.3, must be sent using the standard template (see appendix 1), and must use appropriate language and style. Guidance for writing for internal audiences at UEA is available at: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/mac/comm/internal/new+internal+guide.

3.4.4. The Communications Office will amend the message as required, send it to the appropriate email group(s) at the appropriate time, and offer advice on additional communications channels to be considered.

3.4.5. If the message does not meet the criteria set out in 3.3, the Communications Office will offer advice on alternative communication channels.

3.4.6. The following are also designated senders and can authorise all-staff and all-student emails jointly with the Communications Office. Messages should be reviewed in advance by the Communications Office and the final decision as to whether to send the message, or whether there is a more suitable internal communications channel available, made jointly by the Communications Office and the designated sender or their representative.

Vice-Chancellor

Registrar & Secretary

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Engagement)

Dean of Students

Director of Human Resources

4. **Best practice for drafting mass emails**

   Those sending messages to any mass email list are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

   - Do not put the distribution list or list of names in the 'To' or 'CC' fields.
     Instead, include them in the 'BCC' field. This method ensures the list of recipients will not be displayed when the email is sent out, and prevents recipients accidently sending their reply to the whole list. This process can considerably cut down on unnecessary email traffic.

- Make the subject line clear and concise. This will allow personal filtering by subject easier for recipients. (Research shows that many people choose whether to open an email based on the subject line alone.)

- Do not send mass emails with large attachment as this slows the university's email network and blocks individual in-boxes. Try to contain the information within the body of the email or in a web link.

- Make the text of the email as clear and unambiguous, ensuring that the text has been thoroughly checked for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Keep emails as brief as possible. The more concise the message, the more likely it will have the desired impact and be read by a large number of people.

- Include contact details for those who have questions or require further information.

5. Other communications channels available

5.1 Weekly all-staff and all-student e-bulletins
The Communications Office produces a weekly summary e-bulletin for all staff every week throughout the year. A student version is sent during term time. Messages providing day-to-day news and information should be disseminated via these e-bulletins. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion is Monday at 1pm and the bulletins are issued at Tuesday lunchtime. Information should be emailed to info@uea.ac.uk, specifying whether the message is for staff, students or both. Style guidelines for writing for the e-bulletins is available at: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/mac/comm/internal/new+internal+guide.

5.2 Campus News
The Campus News section of the UEA Portal contains up to nine internal stories. This is controlled by the Communications Office and submissions for this section should be emailed to: info@uea.ac.uk. The majority of the stories featured in Campus News are also included in the e-bulletin.

5.3 Digital screens
The Communications Office controls a network of digital screens in buildings across campus. These are positioned in high-footfall areas to reach the largest possible number of staff, students and visitors. Guidance and templates are available at: https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/mac/comm/internal/signageguidelines.

6. Further information

Members of the Communications Office are available to assist and advise on the most appropriate and efficient way of distributing information across the university. Contact Internal Communications Officer Fiona Billings on (01603 59)2226 or f.billings@uea.ac.uk.