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Email and calendar management

- Consider whether e-mailing is really necessary. Sometimes in person, or over the phone is a better way to communicate.
- Do not auto-forward from your university email address to external addresses. Information sent over university email is secure, whereas forwarding to other email addresses, particularly those hosted outside of the EU, risks a GDPR breach.
- Staff are *strongly* encouraged to use (or to synchronise to) Outlook/Exchange for their calendars. Only this method is used when sending invitations to meetings. If your calendar is not visible to administrative colleagues they will not be expected to arrange meetings for you, since it would often involve wasting huge amounts of their and others' time iterating over email.

Content

- We expect all communication in the School, including email, to observe normal standards of politeness and respect.
- Try to keep your message short and to the point.
- Try to avoid using all uppercase letters as this looks like SHOUTING. Asterisks around a word are an *easy* way to add emphasis, if needed.
- Once drafted, it's a good idea to re-read your email before you press 'send', especially if you have written it in a hurry or when upset. Remember, you cannot retract an email once it is sent. As a rule of thumb, if you would not be happy for your email to be in the public domain, then don't send it.
- Address your messages to a named person (just the first name is fine) and sign them with your name. When students write to staff, it also helps if they identify themselves by course, module and seminar group.
- Consider carefully when forwarding an email, or copying in new recipients. Was the content written confidential, or meant just for you?

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- The expectation is that emails are being sent "to" people who must take some sort of action. The "CC" is for people who need to know about this. Anyone else shouldn't be included.
- Try to reduce the number of CC'd recipients. If someone has already been CC'd in to a conversation, let them know before you cut them out, they may continue to work on the issue unaware that it has progressed without their being included.
- In general, avoid using BCC to copy people surreptitiously into email. However, if you are sending an email to multiple parties and it is not appropriate to reveal their email addresses to each other, protect their identity by putting email addresses in BCC. For instance when emailing students or a mailing list.
- If you are emailing a large number of persons at once and use BCC or mailing lists to save time, consider including information on who you have emailed at the top of the email so colleagues know if they need to forward this information or not. For instance

Sent to all UG, PGT and PGR students

Or

Sent to all MPS teaching staff

Response times

- If you need to send e-mails outside of usual working hours, please only do so to individuals and do not expect a response until the next working day at the earliest. Emails sent to mailing lists such as MPS All should only be sent 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday. If staff are working in a different time zone it is accepted that they may send emails outside of UK working hours. It is good practice to note this in your email signature: *Please do not feel the need to reply to this e-mail outside normal working hours.*
- Emails to mailing lists should be monitored on a daily basis, unless you are unwell or on annual leave. In which case an out of office should alert others to your absence (see below)
- Time sensitive or urgent emails should be responded to as quickly as possible. Less urgent emails should be appropriately prioritised and responded to in a timely fashion. It is recommended we try to reply to emails within 2 working days. If you cannot reply in a timely fashion, you may want to send a quick note to say that there will be a delay, giving some indication of timescale for a meaningful response.
- Staff and students will reply to emails as soon as they can, but everyone has competing commitments, so please allow for the fact that an immediate response is often not practicable. If there is no response within two working days, it is reasonable to send a *gentle* reminder.

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Email Signatures

- It is good practice to have a signature that contains your contact details and other relevant information.

Signature Example:

NAME

Job Title
School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Room and Building
University of Sussex
Falmer
Brighton
BN1 9QH

+44(0)1273 6XXXXX

Email@sussex.ac.uk

My usual working days are : xxx (for staff who are part time only)

Please do not feel the need to reply to this e-mail outside normal working hours



Out of office replies

- If you are out of the office or unable to check emails for an entire day or more, unwell or on annual leave, you should set an out-of-office reply. This ensures students and colleagues know you have not seen the email, and are able to send their query to others if necessary. Note: it is simple in principle to set up autoreply from your webmail.sussex.ac.uk account via the “options” button, but this does not always work with all browsers.

Out of Office Example:

Thank you for your email. I am now away from my desk with no/limited access to my emails, returning on DAY AND DATE.

In my absence please contact NAME on (email address) or (telephone), who will be able to assist. Alternatively, I will respond to you on my return.

At Christmas / Easter only : Please note, the university is closed for the Christmas break from the evening of DD/MM, reopening on DD/MM – emails will not be dealt with during this time.

Many thanks,

NAME

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- If you work part time you should also consider setting up an out of office reply for when you are not working. This can be simple for instance:
 - Please not I do not work Mondays
 - Please note I work Tuesday – Friday and will not be checking emails outside of these days

Further Resources

For further ideas about good email etiquette and management, please see:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/communications/internal/communications/channels/email/bestpractice#managing>

<http://emailcharter.org/>

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