Student Communications Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative – Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Officer – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Officer – Policy	Senior Manager, Student Communications
Review Date	8 December 2025

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines La Trobe University's expectations regarding communication between the University and students to ensure such communication occurs responsibly, effectively, and in compliance with relevant laws and policies.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

a. All student communication across all campuses, and all programs and courses, including online
b. Communications between the University and students about its educational services and other offerings related to the student experience

(3) This Policy does not apply to:

a. Communication with graduates (alumni) and past students
b. Communication with potential students (including applicants for admission)
c. Correspondence whose purpose is mainly commercial or promotional

(4) This Policy does not restrict:

a. Broadcast emails from the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee)
b. Emergency announcements or alerts, which informs the whole University community, or sections of the University community about:
    i. Matters with potential to affect health, safety, or well-being
    ii. IT and building facility outages and upgrades affective services

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions/Responsibilities	Role
Authorise broadcast emails to students of the University	As per positions specified in the Table below in Part C

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(5) The University recognises that effective communication engages students as partners in their own education, and contributes to a fulfilling student experience and successful progression. The University aims to ensure:

    a. student communication benefits both the student experience, and the University's strategic goals and objectives; and

    b. students receive timely, accurate and meaningful information, delivered through the appropriate channel, without misuse.

(6) All current student communications should comply with University branding and be:

    a. Student-centric: Communications take a student perspective

    b. Audience-specific: Communications are both targeted and tailored to the intended audience. Wherever possible, communications are personalised

    c. Accurate: Information is correct and up to date. Students know that the source of information is authoritative and can depend on it

    d. Respectful: Tone is polite, courteous and professional

    e. Lawful: Communication must comply with the standards required by relevant legislation, including the [Spam Act 2003 (Cth)](#) the [Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021](#) and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Higher Education and Training to Overseas Students ([ESOS National Code](#))

    f. In Plain English: Language aligns with the University Brand and Editorial Style Guide and is easily understood by a diverse audience

    g. Concise: Information is limited to key points and action-oriented. Links are provided to more detailed information and follow-up

    h. Timely and Responsive: Communications are aligned with the student life-cycle and based on immediacy/relevance

    i. Channel appropriate: Information is conveyed in the most appropriate manner and where possible, via the student's preferred channel

    j. Integrated: Information may complement but not duplicate other sources

(7) The University may employ a variety of communication methods, including but not limited to email, web, LMS, SMS and social media. However, email is the University's preferred medium for official correspondence with students (e.g. correspondence which records key information about a student's rights or obligations).

(8) Official University correspondence will be sent to a student's LTU email account through the University Email System. All official correspondence with students by email is subject to the University's equity and diversity, privacy and confidentiality requirements and policies.

(9) Both staff and students are responsible for checking email with appropriate frequency. The University is not responsible for mail delivery failures due to user or system negligence.

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Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Channel Appropriateness and Nature of Communications

(10) The nature of student communications is varied:

    a. Academic (teaching and learning) – including information about subject content, reading lists and assessments. Members of Academic staff have discretion to determine whether or how they will use official email correspondence for instructional purposes in the subjects they teach provided they have communicated their intentions and expectations to all affected students.

    b. Academic (non-teaching) – including organisational and/or administrative information about courses, programs, professional events, academic group events/activities and relevant milestones to current students.

    c. Administrative (academic and general) – including information about enrolment, fees, exams, timetabling, academic standing, academic integrity, graduate and general health and safety, library notices.

    d. Service and support – including developmental opportunities, service changes, updates

    e. Social and general

    f. Marketing and promotional

    g. Surveys and feedback

    h. Emergency, critical incident and security

(11) The University communicates with students using a variety of methods, including new and emerging technologies. It is incumbent on all staff to consider which delivery method is best and fit for purpose and have regard to the principles in this Policy. They primary methods for communicating with students are:

    a. Email

    b. SMS/text messages

    c. LMS

(12) The Director, Student Success and/or Manager (Student Communications) can provide advice to business units so that they can achieve their objectives within the established communication framework outlined in this Policy.

Part B - Delivery of Official Correspondence

(13) The University will deem official correspondence sent by email to have been delivered when the correspondence has been sent to the official LTU recorded email account, and that the University Email System has not generated an undelivered notice.

(14) Official correspondence by email is subject to the University's equality and diversity policies. Students who, on equity or access grounds, believe they are likely to be disadvantaged by the policy may make a case to the University's AccessAbility team for alternative arrangements. The University will consider each case on its merits and negotiate alternative arrangements as appropriate.

Part C - Procedure for Authorising a Broadcast Email to Students

Lodging a Request for a Broadcast Email

(15) Broadcast emails may be sent to student email accounts only where they have been approved by the relevant approval authority (see below) and where the email provides students with information about University goods and services including:

a. information in relation to curriculum, teaching materials, workload expectations, laboratory involvement, placements, or other resources or requirements directly related to the management or administration of teaching and learning

b. aspects of University life including extracurricular activities, student organisations, and the provision of feedback

c. information about the University's support network, which may include, but is not limited to, health services, recreational facilities, counselling services, learning assistance, child-minding facilities, graduate career planning, housing and accommodation facilities

(16) Broadcast emails should only be used in circumstances where students would reasonably expect to receive the broadcast email (either that specific email, or email addressing similar content).

(17) Students are not permitted to send broadcast emails or use other University email lists. While students may send appropriate emails to other students in their subject or course where they would reasonably expect it, SPAM is strictly prohibited.

(18) Any staff member of the University can request a broadcast email by submitting a request to the approving authority outlined below, together with confirmation that their immediate supervisor has also approved the proposed communication.

(19) The request should include:

a. the purpose of sending the broadcast email

b. the target recipients (e.g., all students, or one or more student cohorts)

c. whether or not a similar broadcast email has been sent previously, to the same recipients or different recipients

d. a meaningful subject line for the message

e. the body of the message (brief, and in plain text)

f. the suggested expiration date for the message (for recipients who do not open the message before a predefined date

g. the contact details of the sender (including reply address if needed)

h. when the message should be sent.

Submitting the Broadcast Email Request to an Approving Authority

(20) The approving authority for a broadcast email depends on the cohort(s) to whom the message is directed. If directed to more than one cohort, the broadcast may need to be approved by more than one authority.

Target Cohort Includes:	Approving Authority
All students of the University (including those identified via the Outlook address book) All students based at the Melbourne (Bundoora) or City Campus	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee
Students enrolled in a particular School	Dean or nominee
Students undertaking study in a particular School	Dean or nominee
Students based at a campus other than Melbourne (Bundoora) or City	Head of Campus or nominee
Other (e.g., international students, higher degree students)	Senior manager in the division or area which has primary responsibility for students in the target cohort, or manager's nominee

(21) To determine whether a broadcast email contains acceptable content that fulfils expectations and responsibilities,

the approving authority will consider:

   a. a level of connection or association between the purpose of the broadcast email and the expectations and responsibilities of both students and the University; and
   b. the degree of likelihood that the prospective recipients would reasonably expect to receive the broadcast email.

(22) The approving authority will assess the request according to the criteria and will notify the requester of the outcome. The notification will be copied to the requester's supervisor required.

(23) If the broadcast email is authorised, the requester will send the authorised message and the proof of authorisation to the appropriate officer to action the broadcast. The 'appropriate officer' will be the IT officer who has the responsibility, access, and resources to send broadcast emails on behalf of that unit. The officer who broadcasts the email must retain a record of the broadcast and the authorisation for audit purposes.

Section 7 - Definitions

(24) For the purpose of this Policy:

   a. Broadcast emails: unsolicited emails which are sent to all students, groups or cohorts of students and emails sent to students which are triggered automatically via student systems/platforms or selected via the Outlook Address Book.
   b. Consent: explicit agreement to a proposed course of action and agreement that can reasonably be inferred from the conduct of the person concerned. It does not include consent which is given subject to conditions unless the conditions are met.
   c. Official Correspondence: correspondence created or received by a staff member or contractor of the University in the conduct of University business relating to the obligations or entitlements of students.
   d. Student/Staff Email Account: the account issued automatically to every student/staff member through which they may send and receive official University correspondence.
   e. Students: all students currently enrolled at La Trobe University, including those enrolled in online courses and through third party teaching partners, at all levels of study:
        i. Undergraduate
        ii. Postgraduate
        iii. Research Higher Degree
        iv. Non-award/Short Course
   f. Student Cohort: a group of students who can be sorted by a field in the Student Information System, such as (but not limited to) campus where based, School or course of enrolment, or fee status.
   g. University Email System: Central messaging system hosted by Information Services to provide messaging and collaboration services, including email to staff and students of the University.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(25) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	13th December 2022
Review Date	7th December 2025
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	8th December 2022
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Anna McNaughton Senior Manager, Student Communications
Enquiries Contact	Sue Bennett Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Student Administration