

# Student Communications Policy

## Section 1 - Key Information

<b>Policy Type and Approval Body</b>	Administrative - Vice-Chancellor
<b>Accountable Officer - Policy</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
<b>Responsible Officer - Policy</b>	Senior Manager, Student Communications
<b>Review Date</b>	25 June 2029

## 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 Standards, including but not limited to:

- a. the [Spam Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#)
- b. the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)
- c. the [National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Higher Education and Training to Overseas Students](#) (ESOS National Code)
- d. the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#), and relevant accessibility instruments and guidelines including [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

## Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. current students, being students who:
  - i. have accepted an offer, been admitted to and/or who are enrolled in a course of the University (including in enabling and short courses);
  - ii. are on an approved Leave of Absence or currently suspended from their course;
  - iii. are absent from their course (up to the point where they receive a notification that their status is to be recorded as Absent Without Official Leave [AWOL]);
  - iv. have completed course requirements but have outstanding matters (e.g. refunds, graduation);
  - v. are graduate research students under examination, or whose candidature has lapsed.
- b. all communications with current students, including:
  - i. communications related to student administration, academic progress, student services, events, University operations, safety and critical incidents and any other issues related to the student experience;

- ii. one-to-one enquiries or transactional communications between students and any staff member of the University;
- iii. course-related (curricular) communications between students and teaching staff.

(3) This Policy applies to communications with students enrolled in La Trobe courses through third-party teaching partners. Local arrangements apply for ensuring accessibility and authorisation of broadcast communications originating from the partner organisation.

(4) This Policy does not apply to communication with graduates (alumni), past students, potential students (including applicants for admission).

(5) This Policy does not restrict:

- a. broadcast emails from the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee);
- b. emergency announcements or alerts, on matters concerning:
  - i. critical incidents, local and global emergencies
  - ii. potential health, safety or wellbeing issues
  - iii. IT and building facility outages and service upgrades
- c. correspondence for a mainly commercial or promotional purpose.

## Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions/Responsibilities	Role
Authorise broadcast emails to students of the University	Positions specified in Part B

## Section 5 - Policy Statement

(6) The University aims to ensure:

- a. student communication enhances the student experience and engagement, and supports the University's strategic goals and objectives;
- b. students receive timely, accurate and meaningful information, delivered through the most appropriate channel.

(7) All communications with students are subject to the University's other relevant policies, including but not limited to:

- a. the [Disability Policy](#)
- b. the [Enrolment Policy](#)
- c. the [Information Security Policy](#)
- d. the [IS Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- e. the [Privacy Policy](#)
- f. the [Records Management Policy](#)
- g. the [Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- h. the [SPAM Policy](#)
- i. the [Student Charter](#)
- j. the [Student Support Policy](#).

(8) All student communications must be:

- a. accessible: able to be accessed by students with diverse needs, or be adapted on request;
- b. inclusive: designed in accordance with inclusive design principles to ensure equitable access for students with disabilities, neurodiverse learners, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and student with diverse identities, including gender identity;
- c. culturally safe and respectful: recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may have distinct cultural contexts and ensuring these are considered in the design and delivery of student communications, particularly where communications relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters;
- d. student-centric: focused on student needs, informed by student priorities and co-designed with students where possible and practical;
- e. audience-specific: targeted, tailored and (when possible) personalised;
- f. accurate and timely: correct, reliable up to date and aligned to the student lifecycle;
- g. respectful: polite, courteous, professional and helpful;
- h. in clear, everyday English: easily understood by a diverse audience;
- i. actionable: action-orientated with clear instructions and links to more detailed information;
- j. lawful: all official communications comply with relevant legislation and policies.

(9) Any broadcast communications must, in addition to the above, align with University branding and editorial guides (see Section 8).

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Accessibility

(10) The Student Communications team reviews templates, content and communications under its remit to maximise accessibility through the use of clear everyday English and other accessibility and inclusivity principles outlined in this Policy.

(11) Students who require any additional support to access student communications can contact the [Accessibility Hub](#) to arrange for a Learning Access Plan (LAP). LAPs enable students to access appropriate inclusive resources via the Library and other areas of the University.

(12) The Senior Manager, Student Communications is responsible for:

- a. supporting accessibility audits of student-facing communication platforms and content to ensure compliance with the University's [Website and Intranet Policy](#);
- b. arranging surveys and other feedback mechanisms on the accessibility and effectiveness of the University's communications with students;
- c. documenting audit outcomes and ensuring that any recommendations for improvement are implemented in responsible areas;
- d. consulting with teams including but not limited to Accessibility, Prevention and Inclusion and Digital Services to address identified gaps and ensure inclusive design principles are upheld across all communication channels.

### Part B - Official Communications with Students

(13) The University's channels for official correspondence with students are students' La Trobe email accounts and text messages. Communication through text messages is reserved for communications that are considered important, time-sensitive, or require students to take action on a particular matter. Other communication methods with students

include StudentOnLine, web pages, FAQs, Chatbot, the Learning Management System (LMS), campus digital signage, posters, flyers, newsletters and social media.

(14) Students are responsible for checking their La Trobe email regularly and for monitoring their phone for text messages. The University is not responsible for delivery failures due to user or system negligence.

(15) The University deems official correspondence sent by email and text message to have been delivered when the correspondence has been sent to the official La Trobe email account or personal mobile number, and where University systems have not recorded a genuine bounced message or undelivered notice.

## **Approval for Broadcast Communications with Students**

(16) Broadcast emails and text messages may be sent to students only where they have been approved by the relevant approval authority or their nominee. The following roles are authorised to approve broadcast messages to large student groups (e.g. all enrolled students, students enrolled at a particular campus, students enrolled in a particular School and other cohorts such as all international students and all graduate researchers):

- a. the Vice-Chancellor and any member of the University's Senior Executive Group
- b. Pro Vice-Chancellors or nominee(s)
- c. any Head of Division, Director or nominee(s)
- d. Deans or nominee(s)
- e. the Senior Manager, Student Communications or nominee(s)
- f. Incident Commander(s) and Incident Communications representative (Director, Media and Communications)

(17) All other staff members of the University can discuss proposals to send a broadcast email or text message by consulting the Student Communications team.

(18) The Student Communications team is responsible for ensuring broadcast communications under its remit meet branding and editorial guidelines and align with relevant University policies (e.g. those outlined in Section 5 of this Policy).

## **Student Use of Communication Channels**

(19) In accordance with the [IS Acceptable Use Policy](#), when seeking advice about student matters from staff or divisions of the University, coursework students must use their La Trobe student email account. Where graduate research students have an institutional staff account this may be used when corresponding with their supervisors or staff within their school; however they must use their student email account for all official correspondence related to their course.

(20) Students are not permitted to send broadcast emails or use other University email lists without relevant approvals (as outlined above). While students may send appropriate emails to other students in their subject/s or course, unsolicited emailing or SPAM is strictly prohibited. Students must also ensure that they use social media in accordance with relevant University policies (see the [Student Charter](#), the [Student Behaviours Policy](#), the [IS Acceptable Use Policy](#), the [SPAM Policy](#) and [advice on the use of social media](#)).

(21) Students within the scope of this Policy may not opt out of correspondence via their official La Trobe student email account but may opt out of:

- a. promotional or marketing emails;
- b. forum digest communications on the LMS.

## Part C - Other Communications with Students

(22) Staff responsible for other communication channels such as university websites, campus digital signage, posters, flyers, newsletters, and social media must comply with the principles outlined in this Policy and seek approval for the content and design of the communication from their immediate supervisor.

(23) The following communications do not require authorisation:

- a. one-to-one enquiries or transactional communications between students and any staff member of the University;
- b. course-related (curricular) communications between students and teaching staff.

## Part D - Recordkeeping

(24) Records of student communications must be retained in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy and relevant Public Records Office of Victoria Retention and Disposal Authority provisions (see [Quick Reference Guides on the LTU intranet](#)). In accordance with the Student Support Retention and Disposal Authority records of communications that constitute broad advice to students do not need to be retained beyond their period of relevance.

## Part E - Review

(25) Students who are still dissatisfied with the application of any part of this Policy may lodge a complaint under the provisions of the [Student Complaints Management Policy](#).

## Section 7 - Definitions

(26) For the purposes of this Policy:

- a. Official University 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. This may include one-to-one communications and the following:
  - i. automated communications: authorised emails and text messages which are sent to students, including those that are triggered automatically via student systems/platforms;
  - ii. broadcast communications: authorised messages distributed/posted simultaneously to a large cohort or the entire student body using any broad-based channel (including email and text message). These communications can be personalised or non-personalised and serve various purposes including but not limited to administrative, informational/support, promotional or emergency.
- b. Spam: irrelevant or unsolicited digital messaging sent to a large number of students.
- c. student email account: the account issued automatically to every student through which they may send and receive official university correspondence.
- d. student: defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 as:
  - i. a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree or other award;
  - ii. a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.
- e. student cohort: a group of students that have shared characteristics such as (but not limited to) campus, school or course of enrolment, student type (domestic or international) or fee status.
- f. university email system: central messaging systems hosted by Information Services to provide messaging and collaboration services, including email to students of the University.

# Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

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

(28) Associated information includes:

- a. [Brand language and editorial style guides](#) (staff only)
- b. [Student Communications intranet page](#) (staff only)
- c. [Student Communications request form](#) (staff only)
- d. [Universal Design and Inclusion Action Plan](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	1st July 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	25th June 2029
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	1st July 2026
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Manager - Policy</b>	Anna McNaughton Senior Manager, Student Communications
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Sue Bennett Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) <hr/> Student Administration