

Email for Official Correspondence with Students Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

- (1) This Policy establishes Electronic Mail (Email) as the University's preferred medium for official correspondence with students.
- (2) This Procedure sets standards for using email responsibly and in compliance with relevant laws and policies.
- (3) For more detail, refer to the [Use of Electronic Mail \(Email\) for Official Correspondence with Students Operating Guidelines](#).

Section 2 - Scope

- (4) Applies to:
 - a. all campuses
 - b. all programs
 - c. all members of the University community.
- (5) This Policy covers transactions between the University and its students that:
 - a. are sent to or from La Trobe University Student Email Accounts; and
 - b. concern the entitlements or obligations of students.
- (6) It does not apply to correspondence whose purpose is mainly commercial or promotional.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

- (7) Email is the University's preferred medium for official correspondence with students.
- (8) Reliance on Email for Official Correspondence requires explicit or implied consent. Activation of a Staff or Student Email Account by the authorised account holder is deemed consent unless alternative arrangements are negotiated with the University on equity and access grounds.
- (9) La Trobe will recognise as official correspondence only email sent through the University Email System in accordance with the University's Internet Code of Practice.
- (10) The University will send significant correspondence by email.
- (11) Both staff and students are responsible for checking email with appropriate frequency.
- (12) The University is not responsible for mail delivery failures due to user negligence.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Legal Framework

(13) This Policy operates within, and must be applied with reference to, relevant State and Federal laws and related University regulations and policies. Where there is any conflict between the Policy and state or federal law or University regulations, the law or regulation will take precedence.

Part B - Purposes Provided by Law

(14) Allowable purposes include, but are not necessarily limited to, giving information in writing, providing a signature, producing a document and retaining or recording information. As provided by law, La Trobe University will not deem any electronic transaction with the University invalid solely on the grounds that it has been transacted electronically.

Part C - Application to Instructional Uses of Email

(15) Members of academic staff have discretion to determine whether and how they will use email in subjects they teach – that is, for instructional purposes – subject to any conditions set by the University, their work unit or their supervisor. Email used for instructional purposes is official correspondence and is covered by this Policy. Staff who plan to use email in their subjects must communicate their intentions and expectations to all affected students.

Part D - Reason for Restricting to University Email

(16) The University is obliged to ensure the authenticity and security of email transactions, which it does through its processes for allocating and managing staff and student email accounts. The University can be responsible only for email transactions that take place within systems it controls.

Part E - Authentication of Email Correspondence

(17) Items of official correspondence sent through staff and student email accounts are deemed to be what they purport to be; to have been created or sent by the individual purported to have created or sent them; and to have been created or sent at the time they purport to have been created or sent.

Part F - Frequency of Checking Email

(18) Many items of official correspondence include notification of time limits. They require specific actions within specific periods of time, sometimes prescribed by laws or Regulations. Both staff and students normally should check email at least twice weekly or as advised otherwise by the University.

Part G - Delivery of Official Correspondence by Email

(19) The University will deem official correspondence sent by email to have been delivered when the correspondence has been sent to the officially recorded staff or student email account and the University Email System has not generated a notice that the message could not be delivered.

Part H - Provisions for Exemption of Equity and Access Grounds

(20) 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 I - Making Email Communications Accessible

(21) When sending official correspondence by email, staff should follow the University's [guidelines](#) for accessible communication. At a minimum, staff should send emails as plain text unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise and normally should not attach large files (i.e. documents of more than one or two pages).

Part J - Assuring Privacy and Confidentiality

(22) All official correspondence with students by email is subject to the University's privacy and confidentiality requirements and policies.

Part K - Managing Email Responsibly

(23) The University will assure the authenticity, reliability, integrity and useability of official correspondence sent or received by email for as long as the University retains the correspondence. Students who may need copies of official correspondence for future personal use are encouraged to keep their own backup copies outside the University Email System.

Part L - University Not Responsible for Non-delivery Due to Negligence of System User

(24) The University Email System has a finite storage capacity. The University advises users when individual mailboxes are nearing capacity. Users are responsible for taking appropriate and timely action to clear space for new messages.

(25) The University will not be responsible for mail delivery failures caused by users' failure to act on warning notices, or by users' setting of filters or rules that prevent the delivery of email covered by this Policy.

Section 5 - Definitions

(26) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. 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.
- b. electronic mail (Email): electronic mail sent to or from a La Trobe University Staff or Student Email Account.
- c. official correspondence: correspondence created or received by a staff member or contractor of La Trobe University in the conduct of University business relating to the obligations or entitlements of Students.
- d. significant correspondence: correspondence
 - i. that the University sends as part of a process directed by law or prescribed under a Statute or Regulation of the University; or
 - ii. to which non-response is likely to have a significant negative impact on the student concerned
- e. staff email account: the computer account that La Trobe University issues automatically to staff members on appointment, through which staff may send and receive official correspondence.
- f. student email account: the computer account that La Trobe University issues automatically to all enrolled Students and through which Students may correspond electronically with the University. It specifically excludes any computer accounts other than accounts issued by La Trobe University, except where a special arrangement is negotiated under section 6.9.1 of this policy.

- g. University Email System: central messaging system hosted by La Trobe University's Information and Communication Technology group to provide messaging and collaboration services, including email, to staff and students of the University.

Status and Details

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Responsible Policy Officer	Rebecca Eaton Director, Student Experience
Author	Rebecca Sawyer
Enquiries Contact	Student Experience