# Electronic Messaging Guidelines

**March 2022 – This document is rescinded and has been replaced by the [Records Management Procedure](#).**

# Section 1 - Purpose

(1) These Guidelines set out Charles Sturt University's management principles on the effective use of electronic messaging when communicating with internal and external stakeholders.

## Scope

(2) These Guidelines apply to all staff of Charles Sturt University (the University).

## References

(3) These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

a. [Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009;](#)
b. [State Records Act 1998 (NSW).](#)
c. the University's:
    i. [Academic Communication with Students Policy](#);
    ii. [Communicating without Bias Guidelines](#);
    iii. [Computing and Communications Facilities Use Policy;](#)
    iv. [Guidelines for Distribution List Administration;](#)
    v. [Records Management Policy](#);
    vi. [Social Media Use Policy for Staff](#);
    vii. [Social Media Guidelines](#);
    viii. [Brand Guidelines](#);
    ix. [Corporate Templates](#);
    x. [Style Guide](#); and
    xi. CSU Editorial Style Guide

# Section 2 - Glossary

(4) For the purpose of these Guidelines:

a. Electronic messages - refers to email, instant messaging, short message services (SMS), multimedia message services (MMS) and social media platforms.
b. Email - means an abbreviation of 'electronic mail', a professional means of communication allowing staff to send and receive messages to anyone with an email address. Email is considered the property of the University and can form an official business document (when documenting a business transaction).
c. Social Media Platforms - refer to applications, websites or tools that enable users to socialise online, send

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messages to one another, share interests and information, chat, meet people, and post information, photographs and videos for others to look at.

d. Global Distribution List - means a collection of contacts organised into a public list to allow for easy email sending within an organisation.

# Section 3 - Policy

(5) Nil.

# Section 4 - Procedures

(6) Nil.

# Section 5 - Guidelines

(7) To uphold the professional image of the University, good electronic messaging practices are encouraged through the University's Brand Guidelines, including the appropriate use of items such as:

a. language and tone,

b. branding and logos, and

c. signatures and disclaimers.

(8) Staff are required to treat electronic messages like any other business documents. Speak clearly and do not include subjective or personal comments (refer to the Communicating without Bias Guidelines for further information).

(9) Electronic messages are subject to the same retention and disposal requirements as paper-based records under the State Records Act 1998 (NSW) and the Government Information Public Access (GIPA) Act 2009. University staff are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate information is created and captured using approved systems.

(10) As authorised users of the University's computing and communications facilities, all staff must be aware of their obligations under both the Computing and Communications Facilities Use Policy and the Records Management Policy.

(11) An email for distribution via the 'All Staff' global distribution list may only be sent directly by the Vice-Chancellor (V-C) or nominee. Refer to the Guidelines for Distribution List Administration for further information.

(12) Staff should read and acknowledge receipt of emails sent directly to them by:

a. notifying senders of their intended actions within two business days of receiving an email; and

b. providing a response (where required) within the timeframes requested in an email.

(13) When composing and sending electronic messages, staff should:

a. review prior to sending or posting for:

i. any punctuation, spelling and grammatical errors;

ii. completed subject lines; and

iii. the intended recipient list.

b. aim to reduce the overall volume of individual messages where appropriate by:

i. making a telephone call; and

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ii. utilising forums, webpages or What's New broadcasts.

   c. use discretion when:

      i. forwarding or copying to one or more recipients;

      ii. including the original content when replying to a message; and

      iii. seeking automatic read confirmation (email only).

   d. use the subject field appropriately. Be clear and concise. If there is a deadline for an action or response, include it in the subject heading;

   e. be sparing in the use of the High Importance / Urgent red exclamation mark function. Only use this for genuinely urgent communications (email only);

   f. use short paragraphs that are easy to read;

   g. avoid the excessive use of:

      i. whole words of capital letters as it is considered shouting;

      ii. non standard fonts; and

      iii. text in multiple colours.

   h. limit the use of acronyms where possible. Spell out any acronyms that the reader might not understand;

   i. limit the number of attachments sent. Use hyperlinks to save storage space and assist document control by reducing multiple version creation. Consider if the recipient will have access to open the hyperlink or document based on their permissions;

   j. when attaching documents or providing hyperlinks, include a brief summary of the content in the body of the electronic message;

   k. provide clear instructions about dissemination of electronic message content, indicating:

      i. any action required and purpose at the start of the message;

      ii. confidentiality required; and

      iii. how the recipient is expected to distribute the message.

(14) When using emails, staff should:

   a. limit the use of blind carbon copies (Bcc) as it may be considered a breach of confidentiality to send an email to a third party of whom the other recipients are not aware;

   b. use the carbon copy (Cc) field when you want to make a recipient aware of an email but are not addressing them directly;

   c. use a global distribution list where possible when communicating with a broad range of stakeholders;

   d. include signatures and disclaimers at the end of all emails as they may be forwarded to external parties. Use the University's [Corporate Template](#) to create your signature; and

   e. if absent, use an "Out of Office" alert indicating your expected return date and the best person to contact in your absence.

(15) When communicating with students, refer to the [Academic Communication with Student Policy](#) for further advice.

## Status and Details

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