

Internal Communications Policy

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Overview

1. This policy sets out the expectations of how staff, students and alumni (“University members”) use communication channels at Northeastern University London (the University). The policy safeguards the interests of University members and the reputation of the University, both of which are potentially affected by improper use of these communications channels. The policy also informs our approach to taking appropriate action where these expectations are not met.
2. The policy covers:
 - 2.1. Principles of communication
 - 2.2. Communication channels
 - 2.3. Approval process for group communications
3. Benefits of coordinated communication include:
 - 3.1. Reducing numbers of communications, meaning that University members are more likely to engage with individual pieces of communication.
 - 3.2. Building trust and respect through transparent communication.
 - 3.3. Ensuring appropriately focused, delivered, coordinated, consistent, and relevant communication to build upon the staff and student experience.
4. This policy is applicable to all alumni, students and staff of the University when they are communicating with members of the University in respect of University activities.
5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), [Acceptable Use Policy for Students \(IT\)](#), [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#), and the [Personal Relationships Between Staff and Students Policy](#).
6. The University may address continuous or serious breaches of this policy, with reference to:
 - 6.1. [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#)
 - 6.2. Disciplinary Procedure for Staff

Principles Of Communication

7. The University is committed to:

- 7.1. Providing the channels to facilitate communication within its community to enable learning, research, effective operation, wellbeing support and community engagement.
 - 7.2. Using channels appropriately and professionally to provide relevant and necessary messages to its respective audiences.
 - 7.3. Preventing inappropriate or spam content being directed to individual or group student and staff email addresses.
 - 7.4. Preserving the credibility of those communications channels that are designated predominantly for official communications.
8. In all communications, University members are reminded of their responsibility to the University, their colleagues and peers to ensure appropriate content at all times. University members are required to communicate in a way that is appropriate, respectful, courteous, and inclusive and accessible to all.
 9. University members are reminded that all communications carried out on University platforms remain the property of the University and are retrievable. They may be accessed as evidence for complaints, grievances, conduct and disciplinaries, GDPR (including Subject Access Requests), and legal matters. Informal communications, such as Google Hangouts etc. are retrievable and disclosable in specific cases.

Communication Channels

10. This policy covers the use of University platforms. Some of these channels can be accessed by any University member, while others are managed by specific roles and/or departments:
 - 10.1. Email - individual and group email addresses
 - 10.2. Centralised texting services
 - 10.3. Newsletters
 - 10.4. University created sites on social media and networking platforms to communicate about University events (where the University does not own the platform but uses it to communicate with a University audience)

Email

11. Individual University email addresses of all members are accessible to the University community, using the email directory. This means that anyone using an individual email address (e.g. jane.smith@nulondon.ac.uk) can email any other individual email address.

12. Emails should be University-related, appropriately directed, purposeful, clear and concise.
13. Email addresses of staff are also published on the University website and may be provided to external callers (unless suspected to be phishing calls).
14. Students are provided with an individual email address when they join the University and all email correspondence relating to the University should be sent via this email address. Student email addresses are only available internally, they are not published on the University website and will not be provided to external callers.
15. Students holding Student Union Officer roles and society roles are provided with officer email addresses and those addresses are published on the University's website.
16. Alumni will continue to receive select communications to their University email addresses, as lifelong members of the University. The Careers department manages the Alumni email group and personal email addresses are provided where students opt in.
17. The University also uses group email addresses (see below).

Email Group Definitions

18. The University creates email groups to facilitate communication. There are some email addresses that can be emailed by everyone:
 - 18.1. External Facing email addresses are accessible to all email users internally and externally. These include:
 - 18.1.1. Info@nulondon.ac.uk
 - 18.1.2. Press@nulondon.ac.uk
 - 18.2. Student facing professional staff group emails are accessible to all students and staff. These groups include:
 - 18.2.1. Registry
 - 18.2.2. Student Support & Development
19. The ability to send email communication to group email addresses is restricted to support the principles of communication set out above and these groups can be emailed by specific individuals whose role or position requires them to email these groups.
20. The [Canvas](#) virtual learning environment also enables staff to send group emails to students enrolled on their specific course pages.
21. The table below sets out the categories of email groups and who can email these groups; where new groups are created that do not fit into

these categories or where a special approach is needed, this permission will be decided by ExCo.

Categories of recipients	Specific email / text groups	Ability to email (includes members of groups below as individuals)
Staff	Staff - all current	Internal comms, Human Resources (HR), Facilities, Finance, ExCo
	Staff - all faculty or subgroups	Internal comms, HR, Facilities, ExCo, Head of Faculty
	Staff - professional staff or subgroups	Internal comms, HR, Facilities, ExCo, SMT
Students	Students (save apprentices) - all current	Internal Comms, Registry, SS&D, SU and ExCo
	Students (save apprentices) by year group	Internal Comms, Registry, SS&D, SU and ExCo, Careers
	Students (save apprentices) by major & year	Faculty teaching, Internal Comms, Registry, SS&D, SU, Head of Faculty and ExCo
	Students (save apprentices) by minor & year	Faculty teaching, Internal Comms, Registry, SS&D, SU, Head of Faculty and ExCo
	Students (save apprentices) by programme	Faculty teaching, Internal Comms, Careers, Registry, SS&D, SU, Head of Faculty, Programme Directors and ExCo,
	Students by society or committee	Chair, Secretary of the society/committee, SU, Internal Comms, ExCo
	Apprentices - all current	EDGE, Registry, SS&D, SU, ExCo
	Apprentices - by programme and year	EDGE, Registry, SS&D, SU, ExCo

Categories of recipients	Specific email / text groups	Ability to email (includes members of groups below as individuals)
Committees	Northeastern London Board	Chair, Secretary of the committee, Northeastern London Board, ExCo
	ExCo	Chair, Secretary of the committee, Northeastern London Board, ExCo
	Academic Board	Chair, Secretary of the committee, Northeastern London Board, ExCo
	Other committees	Chair, Secretary of the committee, Chair, Secretary of the committee to which the committee reports, ExCo
Alumni	Alumni - all or by year	Internal Comms, Careers, ExCo

22. The University's senior management will generally send formal communications from the 'Internal Communications' email address, and may send to any combination of email groups. Formal communications typically cover University-wide announcements including updates on teaching and learning, staff changes, health and safety, business changes, major events, formal staff and student surveys, consultations etc.
23. All emails from the Internal Communications email address are approved by at least one member of ExCo, and the frequency is as and when required, and are topic and stakeholder specific.
24. There may be instances where urgent matters such as disruption to building or facilities, health and safety, important timetable changes, or anything that relates to the students' experience and working environment is deemed time sensitive, important and necessary to communicate in short order. These communications from the Internal Communications email address are sent by appropriate role holders (with the express permission of their manager), and the frequency is as and when required, and are typically topic specific.

Events

25. All student organised events (e.g. SU, society, clubs, etc.) are communicated via a weekly email by the elected Student Union communications rep. Submissions for the weekly email are made using [this](#) form.

26. Where a student audience is included the Student Life team is responsible for communicating events (organised by staff or if the event is related to an Academic Programme of study). They are also responsible for communicating events for the Global Mobility Programme.
27. The frequency is no more than once a week, and they will be included in either The Bridge newsletter or the Global Mobility Programme newsletters.
28. Events are only to be communicated once approved (where required) in accordance with the [Prevent Policy](#), [Managing External Speakers Policy](#) and [Events Policy and Booking Procedure](#).
29. Events are added to the central Canvas events calendar (or any superseding system), which is accessible to all University members and is managed by the Student Life team. These can include but are not limited to:
 - 29.1. Formal University events (e.g. graduation, prize giving)
 - 29.2. Career events
 - 29.3. Wellness events
 - 29.4. Prevent and quality training
 - 29.5. Events throughout the year such as Black History Month
 - 29.6. Professorial lectures

Student Union, Societies and Year Group Rep Communications

30. Student Union Officers, Society representatives, and Year Group Representatives may appropriately communicate with the student groups only. The frequency is as and when required, and is typically topic specific and communicating events.

Staff-Only Events

31. Events under this category are likely to be training and workshops, all staff meetings, consultations etc. These events will be communicated to the relevant staff email groups by the appropriate role holder. The frequency is as and when required and is typically topic specific. Calendar invites to these events are issued by the HR or Quality team using the University Calendar and/or Quality Calendar.

Alumni Communications

32. Graduates are transferred to their Alumni Year Group by the start of the next academic year. The Careers department are responsible for collating alumni's personal email addresses to include in the Alumni Year Group (along with their University email that they retain access to), and likewise

are responsible for actioning any removal requests with the Facilities department.

33. Communications to Alumni groups are restricted to the Careers department, Academic Services, Internal Communications, and Student Life team (where appropriate). The frequency is as and when required, and is typically topic specific.
34. When communicating with the Alumni group and to protect personal email addresses from being widely visible, only BCC should be used. In calendar events, the guest list should not be visible.

Global Mobility Communications

35. Communications for Global Mobility Programmes in London will follow the same guiding principles as the University.

Centralised Texting Services

36. The University may use the central text messaging service to communicate with University members. It allows the University to spread important and time critical information, such as urgent changes to timetabling, to avoid unnecessary travel, to reach members not reached through other channels (email, calls), to gather quick responses to health & safety matters. These communications are sent from the Resourcing department and are approved by a senior member of professional staff. The frequency is as and when required, but not to be used as a regular form of communication with University members.

Newsletters

37. The University newsletters share regular coordinated content with the Community. Sent communications are archived on Canvas under monthly communications for everyone to access. The newsletters are broken down into the following:
 38. The Quay
 - 38.1. The Quay is a newsletter that is distributed by email to all staff weekly on Mondays (Tuesday where there is a bank holiday).
 39. HR Bulletin
 - 39.1. The HR Bulletin is distributed by email to all staff weekly on Fridays.
 40. The Bridge Community Newsletter

40.1. The Bridge is a University newsletter for sharing information and updates from staff and student communities.

40.2. The Bridge is distributed by email to all staff and students weekly on Wednesdays.

41. Bridge Bites Newsletter

41.1. Bridge Bites is used to share key information about, for example, student wellbeing events, study tips, where to access support, student surveys, and weekly events organised by Staff.

41.2. Bridge Bites is sent by email to all registered students weekly on Wednesdays.

Student Newsletter

42. A weekly [student newsletter](#) sent every Monday. The newsletter is a way in which students can communicate key information with all student cohorts, this will include student led events. Content needs to be submitted via [this](#) form and approved.

Partnership Newsletters

43. Partnership newsletters - Northeastern University will communicate to the University community at least twice a week. The content comes from Northeastern to update on activities that are happening across all partner sites. The University has no control over the content and timing of these communications.

University Sites on Social Media and Networking Platforms

44. The University supports and uses social media and other online communication tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok as well as University provided tools such as Canvas, Google hangouts and Zoom.

45. Conduct on social media, and any interaction with University accounts is treated the same as any other conduct; staff and students must adhere to the University's policies and procedures.

46. When using social media sites linked to the University you must be responsible for what and how you communicate. Consider the language and comments used on photographs and videos.
47. Make sure you are factually correct in what you write and that you have the appropriate permissions when writing about another organisation.
48. Protect yourself, your privacy and the University's confidential information by being careful about what you share and the security settings that you use.
49. The University does not monitor staff and student private social media accounts but it does monitor mentions of Northeastern University London so it can answer directly to those raising questions and concerns about the University.
50. If the University receives complaints relating to the use of University accounts or private accounts that relate to University matters or to individuals as a result of being a member of University, such as bullying, defamatory material, harassment etc or identifies activity that may breach the University standards as detailed in the Academic Handbook, it may investigate and take action.
51. Staff are prohibited from direct messaging students on personal and/or social platforms, such as (but not limited to) texting, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook etc. save where an explicit permission has been granted by a member of ExCo (an example being the student ambassador scheme).

Version History

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24.2.2	May 2024	May 2024		
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2.1	January 2023	January 2023	Director of Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Visa Compliance	September 2024
2.0	March 2022	March 2022	Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing	September 2024
1.0	September 2021	September 2021	Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing	September 2023
Referenced documents	Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy ; Acceptable Use Policy for Students (IT) ; Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech Policy ; Personal Relationships Between Staff and Students Policy			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access			