

Office of the Registrar

Mass Email Policies and Procedures

These policies apply to the use of the Office of the Registrar's Mass Email System for sending and distributing mass email communications. They comply with [Western's Email Policies and Guidelines](#).

The University of Western Ontario (hereinafter the "University") provides electronic mail services for use by students, faculty, staff and other persons affiliated with the University. The University email system is a vital service provided to support necessary communication in conducting and administering the business of the University, including research and scholarly activities.

This document aims to outline the purpose, policies, best practices, and processes for the effective use of mass email service at the University, specifically from the Office of the Registrar. These guidelines attempt to strike a balance between the need for administrative communication and the impact of unsolicited email messages on members of the community.

These guidelines have been developed in the interest of fairness, respect for personal time, and effective use of University resources.

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Definition

"Mass email" refers to unsolicited email sent in bulk from the University, or from a unit, department, or faculty within the University, to the whole or a specific subset of the University student community.

There are several categories of mass emails; this Policy applies to emails that are mandatory for students, as well as those that students may opt-out of. This Policy does not apply to individual, discussion group, or mailing list email communications.

Purpose

Mass emails are to be utilized only for conveying important, time-sensitive information that has widespread impact on the University student community. Messages must relate to academic, administrative, or student financial matters, and come from an official University department/unit.

Authorization

All mass email requests must be authorized by a University authority (see chart below). The mass email requestor must obtain authorization before the mass email request is submitted. Prior to the communication being sent, the Office of the Registrar may contact the University authority to verify approval has been obtained.

Emails from student groups must be sponsored and endorsed by a University department/unit. That department/unit is responsible for submitting their content in the mass email system, provided the message fits the policies outlined.

Request Source	University Authority
Faculty Member	Dean of Faculty
Unit	Unit Head
Other University Organizations	Unit Head

****Note:** An authorized 'Approver's Email Address' is a required field within the Office of the Registrar's Mass Email Request System.

Categories

Mass emails must fit within the following categories:

1. Emergency email:
 - Information relating to matters that affect the immediate health, safety, or security of students.
 - Issues of an urgent or extraordinary nature that require immediate action relative to Academics or Administration.
2. Official University email:
 - Information relating to University governance that requires communication to all students.
3. Research emails:
 - Participant recruitment for research studies that have obtained Western University Research Ethics Board Approval. ("Mass Email Recruitments" and surveys (i.e. NSSE))
4. Informational email:

- Information relating to registration, tuition owing, financial aid, graduation, and other services offered by The Office of the Registrar and Faculty Academic Counselling Offices.
- Optional Western University services and supports available to the student population. Students can opt-out of these emails.

Mass Email Policies

These policies and best practices ensure that mass email communication remains reliable and effective.

1. The mass email text must comply with the [University's general email policy](#).
2. Mass emails will only be sent to currently registered students. A Mass Email for recruitment purposes that has been endorsed by Western is an exception.
3. Except in urgent or emergency situations, as described above, three (3) business days' notice is the minimum requirement for mass emails to be sent. Seven (7) business days is the preferred lead-time.
4. Most mass emails will only be sent outside normal business hours, i.e. before 8:30 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m. Urgent and emergency emails exempted.
5. A sender's name (often the University department name) and 'reply to' email must be provided. It is the requester's responsibility to review and support replies.
 - e.g. Office of the Registrar <contact@uwo.ca>
6. As official University correspondence, every email must contain contact information to allow for verification of the legitimacy of the message.
 - e.g. plain text emails may have a signature line:
Student Financial Services
Office of the Registrar
Western University
7. Attachments in mass emails are prohibited. The use of a link (hyperlink) to a website is recommended.
8. Mass email messages will only be sent to University-assigned email addresses.
9. There is currently no charge for sending out mass emails, The Office of the Registrar reserves the right to begin charging for mass emails at any time and without notice.
10. All emails that are non-academic in nature (optional Western University services and supports) that are sent through the mass email request system must have a Department Opt-Out option at the bottom.
11. Recipients will be required to Opt Out of each Department's Email Communication each active Term.
12. Western University students completing research who have obtained approval for research participant recruitment through Western University's Research Ethics Board are eligible to send a "Mass email recruitment" inviting students to participate in data collection. *Please refer to "Mass Email Recruitments".*

Mass Email Best Practices

Students receive many emails from Western every day.

It is important to carefully consider and plan your email request to ensure that it has the intended impact upon the reader.

Writing your email:

- Use a trusted and recognizable "From". This is most often the name of your department at Western.
- The subject line should state the email's purpose clearly and concisely.
- In the email body:
 - The language should be simple and understandable. Focus on the purpose and intended action of the recipient.

- The email should be relatively short; all additional information should be directed to a Western website.
- Avoid spam phrases and formatting
 - For example, words like “free” or “urgent” are common in spam messages, as is formatting such as ALL UPPERCASE or many exclamation points (!!!)
 - A student should be able to verify information related to the email on an official Western communication channel, such as a website, social media account, OWL, etc.

More information about Cyber Security at Western, including where to report Phishing or Spam email messages, can be found at <https://cybersmart.uwo.ca>

Many departments and faculties have [communications staff](#) and may be able to assist in creating and designing mass email content.

The Office of the Registrar Email System

Acceptable Formats

Acceptable mass email formats are plain text and HTML (please include HTML as an attachment in the mass email scheduler). Image files (less than 150KBs) may be inserted.

- Content submitted as Rich Text Format (hyperlinks, bold, colours, etc.) may not be accommodated. Messages of this nature should be converted to an HTML file to ensure formatting is as expected.

Acceptable Timeframe

Multiple email requests from the same department to the same audience within a short time frame will result in a request to condense the content into one email

Acceptable Frequency

If a department has an opt-out list of over 150 students, they may be restricted to sending mass emails on a monthly basis.

- Reasons for a large opt-out list is that students have deemed their messages too frequent, irrelevant, or too promotional in nature. Departments are encouraged to condense and plan their messaging.

“And, because audience members are busy, distracted, time-pressed and cranky, they need a lower (i.e., simpler) reading level than ever before. It's not that people don't know what words mean, or can't comprehend complex sentence construction--it's that they don't want to. They'd love for you to make life easy for them.”

– inc.com

Process to Request a Mass Email

Mass email distribution requests must be made through the online form:

<https://www.extranet.uwo.ca/extranet/massemail/login.cfm>.

The Office of the Registrar reserves the right to deny any mass email request.

Regular Email Requests

- Once a request for a mass email is submitted, it enters the administrator's queue. Administrators have the right to adjust the send dates of your email requests — you can [login](#) to see if your requested date has been altered.
- The requester will receive an automatic email from the system two business days in advance of the 'send date', reminding them that they have an upcoming mass email and asking them to ensure that all required content has been provided:

The Office of the Registrar received a Mass Email Request submission to be sent two business days from now.

Please login to <https://www.extranet.uwo.ca/extranet/massemail/login.cfm> to ensure you have updated your email content to reflect the most recent and accurate information - you may upload attachments to existing requests.

All content for emails must be submitted the day before your email is scheduled, or your message may be delayed. This is to ensure you receive a test draft with enough time for you to review and approve the content.

If you have any questions, please contact us at massemail@uwo.ca

- Test emails are drafted the day before or the day of your scheduled 'send date'. Please ensure that you are available by email on the 'send date' you've requested, as your mass email must be approved by you before it is sent. Requesters will receive two emails: a draft of how the email will look, and 'notification for approval' email from the administrator:
 - "Just sent you a test of your mass email". This email will have the number of students meant to receive your email, and possibly a "tester" student, if you have merge fields in your email.
- It is important you review the test email. If revisions are required, please reach out immediately with the required changes. Once modifications have been made, the requestor will receive another "test" email. Once the content is approved, please use the link to log into the system and "Accept" the mass email.

Mass Email Recruitments

Western University students completing research who have obtained approval for research-participant recruitment through Western University's Research Ethics Board are eligible to send a "mass email recruitment" inviting students to participate in data collection. To do so, please note the following:

1. Ethics Approval Notice must be obtained and approved prior to submitting your mass email request using the Registrar's Mass Email service. Please include this PDF in the mass email request as an attachment.
 - An Ethics Approval Notice from each campus (Main, Brescia, Huron, King's) is required to send to designated students.
 - A study will be emailed a maximum of three times.
 - Contact information for Western Ethics: <https://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/human/about/index.html>
2. When completing the Mass Email Request Form, the subject line and sender must be "Mass Email Recruitment". The reply-to email is customized.
 - As a research-intensive institution, Western students cannot opt out of Mass Email Recruitments; however, this consistent formatting allows them to filter these messages if they do not wish to receive them.

At this time, The Office of the Registrar cannot send mass email recruitment communications to Western's Faculty and Staff.

Other Communication Methods

If one wishes to reach out to the University student community, but the request does not meet the criteria stated above for a student email, there are additional communication methods that are available. They include:

- Websites
- Social media
- CHRW
- TV Western
- USC's communication channels
- Posters through the Poster Patrol
- Campus [Visix screens](#)
- USC and Faculty/Residence Meetings
- Communications through Residence Managers
- Consult with your [communications staff](#) for departmental or faculty-based communication channels

Exceptions and Revisions

No exceptions to this Policy will be made without the permission of the Registrar.

These guidelines are based on best practices, applicable law and technical capabilities at the time of the latest revision and will be updated periodically as technology and other factors change.

Last updated: April 2023