

Duke Office of Information Technology

Group Email Policy

This policy recognizes the importance of electronic communication to the operation of the university while protecting its faculty, students and staff from mailbox clutter caused by unwanted or unsolicited large-scale e-mailings. This policy applies to all parts of Duke University and Duke University Health System for large-scale e-mailings directed to Duke faculty, students or staff.

- ? [I. Definitions](#)
 - ? [II. Uses](#)
 - ? [III. Principles](#)
 - ? [IV. Procedures](#)
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I. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a "large-scale e-mailing" shall be considered to be any electronic mailing sent to more than 100 people in the Duke University community or more than 500 people in the DUMC/DUHS communities. This definition will be reviewed periodically, as appropriate. If you need assistance in determining whether your message qualifies as a "large-scale e-mailing" contact group-email@duke.edu.

[Return to Top](#)

II. Uses

Large-scale e-mailing is intended for use where the message is of common importance to the receiving community and is not easily conveyed via other media. Requests for e-mailings to broad-based campus groups for the purpose of notices or invitations that could easily be sent via traditional (postal) mail are discouraged.

[Return to Top](#)

III. Principles

1. Large-scale e-mail communications within groups or units, including surveys, announcements, etc. require the implicit or explicit prior approval of that group or unit ; in the case of such communications from outside the unit, the approval must always be explicit. It is the responsibility of the sender / requestor of a group e-mail to obtain the necessary approval from the person or group listed below, or their designee. For example, group e-mails to all students, faculty, or staff within a:

Examples	
<i>Within a</i>	<i>Need the approval of</i>
School	

	The dean or chair of the executive committee of the school's representative faculty council
Department	The chair or head
Student organization	The group
Administrative unit	The administrator
Course	The instructor
Group of advisees	The advisor

2. Official university communications may be sent via group e-mail to university communities by the administrative office responsible for that community. For example, the Registrar may send e-mail notices to any or all students concerning course registration, the Executive Vice President may send a message to members of the university community concerning items of importance to the community as a whole, the Provost may send a message to the academic community, the Chancellor of the Health System may send a message of importance to the DUHS community, and deans, directors and department chairs may send messages to faculty, students and staff within their operating units.
3. For messages being distributed by the Office of Information Technology's group e-mail service, verification of dates, spelling, and grammar should occur before the request is submitted. The content and formatting of the message are the responsibility of the requestor(s) of the group e-mail.
4. Large-scale communications across units must be approved at a level encompassing those units. For example, large-scale communications to students in more than one college require the approval of either a representative student body (DSG for undergraduates, GPSC for graduate and professional students) or of an appropriate dean or vice president or their designee (e.g., group e-mails to all undergraduate students must be approved by the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs). Group e-mails to all students, faculty, and staff in the Duke University/DUHS communities must be approved by the Executive Vice President's Office. For the DUHS/DUMC community, approval for multiple-unit communications may be granted at a senior administrative (e.g. Vice President or Vice Chancellor) or communications officer level; for the entire Health System, approval may be granted by the Chancellor or his/her designee.
5. Suitable technical means, such as the use of group aliases, must be used to prevent disclosure of recipients' e-mail addresses, to help prevent their future use in unwanted large-scale mailings.
6. Messages should be sent in plain text only. Attachments, HTML, Rich Text Format are not supported due to the differing capabilities of e-mail clients. If there is a need for a more graphical display of information or information sent in attachments, people are encouraged to set up a website and include the URL of the website in the email.
7. Large-scale group e-mails may be terminated at the network level by university computing officials if it is determined that they are disrupting network traffic.
8. Approval may be sought for individual e-mailings or for groups of related e-mailings for periods of up to one year. Requests will be acted upon within one week whenever possible.

9. Proposed large-scale e-mailings in conflict with University regulations or applicable laws (chain letters, etc.) are not permitted.
10. Violations of this policy will be referred to the appropriate offices for enforcement under existing University procedures.

[Return to Top](#)

IV. Procedures

1. For department initiated large-scale e-mailings, advance notice should be provided to the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at least one business day in advance.
2. To request OIT's assistance in sending a large-scale e-mailing, or to be directed to the appropriate individual or group for approving a proposed large-scale e-mailing, or for reporting or responding to a violation, send e-mail to: group-email@duke.edu.
3. For more information, or to express questions or comments about this policy, send e-mail to: group-email@duke.edu.

[Return to Top](#)

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