



OU Mass E-Mail Guidelines

- I. Purpose:
To establish guidelines for the use of certain mass e-mail system at the University of Oklahoma (OU).
- II. Definitions
 - A. **Commercial Email:** Any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service (including content on an internet website operated for a commercial purpose). Examples include: emails that advertise ticketed university events, emails sent to prospective students, emails sent by an external vendor to advertise university services or events, and emails sent containing a link to a webpage that promotes a service or product.
 - B. **Official Business:** For purposes of utilization of the OUMM and sending OU Mass Email, University of Oklahoma official business is defined as information about university-sanctioned events, programs, academic initiatives, administrative reports, calendars or schedules, policies, and registered student organizations officially recognized recruitment and event announcements. OU Mass Emails must follow OU's mass email guidelines and procedures and be consistent with any applicable state and federal laws. Use of OUMM and OU Mass Email is restricted to email from OU which is relevant to official University business, the University's mission, and a significant segment of the campus community. These guidelines specify that information systems resources can be used only for authorized administrative, academic, research or clinical purposes or other University business.
 - C. **OU Mass Email:** Any email message using the OUMM to send unsolicited emails to more than 500 internal or external email addresses.
 - D. **OU Mass Email System (OUMM):** Web-based system through which faculty, staff, students, departments and offices may communicate announcements related to the official business of the University.
 - E. **Registered Student Organizations:** Those organizations registered through Student Life here: <https://www.ou.edu/rso>
- III. Scope:
These guidelines apply to all OU faculty, staff, and students desiring to send OU Mass Email using the OUMM. These guidelines do not apply to departments or offices when sending messages within their own department, office, school, or college or to emails in which all subscribers signed up voluntarily to receive information.



IV. Procedures

A. PROPER USE OF OUMM

1. OU Mass Email is appropriate for information that pertains to the majority of the recipients, is critical and/or time-sensitive, and meets one or more of the following standards:
 1. Alerts the campus community to situations about health and safety risk, as outlined in the University's Emergency Operations Plan;
 2. Provides information essential to the operation or execution of University official business;
 3. Notifies the campus community about changes in governance, policy, and practice; and
 4. Communicates important information from the President, Provost, or other University senior leadership.
2. Inappropriate use of OU Mass Emails includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. OU Mass Email that is not in line with the University's mission of teaching, research, and service;
 2. OU Mass Email that is commercial in nature with the exception of those messages that are in support of University business;
 3. Political activities that advocate for or against a ballot measure or candidate;
 4. Marketing or advertising of programs, events, classes, products, or events not offered or sponsored by the University;
 5. Solicitations for contributions, charities, or participation in personal activities not related to University purposes or not sponsored by the University;
 6. Solicitations for non-University businesses operated by University faculty or staff;
 7. OU Mass Email that is discriminatory or infringes on privacy; and
 8. OU Mass Email that is simply in response to other events or mass email messages.
3. Announcements that do not meet the outlined standards or are inappropriate for mass email should use other University communication channels.

B. USE FOR FACULTY OR STAFF

1. Use of OUMM and OU Mass Email that is sent to faculty and staff is intended for urgent, official communication of the University. Any request for an exception will be routed to the Vice President for Marketing and Communications for approval, who will consult with others as appropriate.
2. Required Content: For OU Mass Emails to faculty or staff, please submit the following information to massmail@ou.edu:
 - i. a draft of requested text,
 - ii. subject line,
 - iii. date to be delivered,
 - iv. account from which the e-mail will be sent,
 - v. the group you are targeting (e.g., Faculty and/or Staff)
3. OU Mass Emails to faculty and staff are not available through the student system.



C. USE FOR STUDENTS

1. General

1. OU Mass Email sent to OU students may be used by Registered Student Organizations through their faculty or staff adviser to communicate about Registered Student Organization officially scheduled events and programs or by University departments to communicate about University department officially scheduled events and programs.
2. The full-time faculty or staff adviser of the Registered Student Organization must initiate any mass e-mails to OU students on behalf of the Registered Student Organization for Official Business.
3. A full-time faculty or staff member of a University department may initiate OU Mass Email to OU students on behalf of the University department for Official Business related to their department.
4. Absolutely no OU Mass Emails to OU students may be initiated by any faculty or staff member for personal or commercial use or for any use other than Official Business without the permission of the Senior Vice President and Provost.
5. As permitted herein, full-time faculty and staff may initiate OU Mass Emails to students from: <http://massmail.ou.edu>.

2. Required Content

1. All OU Mass Emails will use the first line of the body/message content to identify who the mass email was sent to, for example: "TO: All Students" or "TO: All Graduate Students" or "TO: All Education Juniors." Senders are strongly advised to target the recipients of their message to only send to their specific audience. Senders may select recipients by college or classification.
2. All OU Mass Emails will have a clearly stated subject line, with the prefix "OUMM" to denote "OU Mass Mail System," for example: "OUMM: SGA Elections Tomorrow." "OUMM" will automatically be added to the beginning of the subject line.
3. The signature information of OU Mass Emails for Registered Student Organizations should include the name of the full-time faculty or staff advisor sending the message.
4. The signature information of OU Mass Emails for University departments should include the name and department of the sender.
5. The last line of all OU Mass Emails should include information indicating the full-time faculty or staff who approved the mass email. This should be the name of the full-time faculty or staff advisor of the Registered Student Organization or the full-time faculty or staff in the University department who is sending the OU Mass Email.
6. All OU Mass Emails will automatically include a Web link to a page that explains how a recipient may filter OUMM messages from his or her Inbox.

3. Filtering E-Mail For OUMM

1. Some students may not wish to receive OU Mass Emails. To manage these messages, users should use one of the filtering



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

techniques described at:

<https://itsupport.ou.edu/TDClient/30/Unified/KB/ArticleDetails?ID=272>.

2. Students are strongly advised to review OU Mass Emails before deleting them to avoid deleting important communication from their academic department.



D. COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. The CAN-SPAM (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing) Act was passed into law in January 2004 to protect individuals from unwanted email messages. It is crucial that any University emails of a commercial nature comply with the law, but non-commercial projects should also take advantage of the best practices set forth in the regulation.
2. The basic requirements of CAN-SPAM are the following:
 1. **Valid Email Information**
Provide a descriptive subject line. The from address of the email should be from an OU email address that is not an acronym or misleading.
 2. **Unsubscribe Option**
All emails to external audiences (i.e., recipients that are not @ou.edu addresses) are required to provide a means for recipients to unsubscribe. This can take the form of a link in the body of the email. If an unsubscribe link is not an option, instructions should be provided on how recipients can opt out, such as to contact the sender to request removal from the list. Requests to unsubscribe should be processed within 10 days.
 3. **Identify the message as an advertisement.**
The law allows for flexibility in how to do this, but one must disclose clearly and conspicuously that the message is an advertisement.
 4. **Tell recipients your location.**
For most emails the main address of the University in the footer of the email can easily fulfill this requirement:

E. ENFORCEMENT

1. The University considers violation of the OU Mass E-mail Guidelines to be a serious offense and reserves the right to copy, monitor or examine any files or information residing on the University systems, networks or computing resources allegedly related to a violation of these guidelines and to protect its systems, networks and computing resources from events or behavior that threatens or degrades operations.
2. Violators are subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, penalties described in the Student Code, Faculty Handbook, and Staff Handbook.

F. BEST PRACTICES

To keep the amount of OU Mass Emails at a minimum and to promote readability, follow these best practices:

1. OU Mass Emails should be brief, self-explanatory, clear, and concise. If there is a need to convey more information, the sender should link to a webpage or provide contact information in the OU Mass Email.
2. Avoid sending frequent or repeated OU Mass Emails. Follow-up messages or reminders should seek other communication channels, with the exception of emergency communications.
3. Collaborate with others at the University to avoid redundancy and reduce the number of messages sent.
4. Include a succinct subject line in the OU Mass Email that conveys the email's purpose.



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

The UNIVERSITY *of* OKLAHOMA

5. Attachments are not allowed in OU Mass Emails. A link to a webpage is recommended.
6. Avoid acronyms and jargon in OU Mass Emails. Do not use acronyms on first reference in the body of an OU Mass Email. For example, write out “College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)” on first reference, then use “CAS” on future references.
7. Check spelling and grammar, and copy edit message to align with OU’s brand guidelines and AP Style.
8. Unified JPEGs should not be used. All images should contain appropriate ALT text to better ensure compliance with accessibility guidelines.