Email & Digital Communications Policy

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Responsible Officer
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Responsible Office
IT
Approving Body
Board of Trustees
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Policy Statement

All CU employees and students are provided means of electronic communication (e.g. email, video conferencing, chat features, discussion boards, etc.) All employees and students are required to use official university electronic accounts for official university correspondence. This policy is meant to include both synchronous and asynchronous communication. All employees and students are not obligated to read, receive, or respond to communications where these guidelines are not followed.

Rationale

The use of email and other electronic communications by employees and students should be done in a professional manner.

Policy Procedures

Employees

Regular email usage is expected from all staff and faculty. As a standard practice, responses to emails should be completed within one business day. When taking leave, an out-of-office reply is expected in order to communicate any delay in responsiveness.

Mass emails require approval from a member of the Administration and should not be of a personal nature.

Students

Students are expected to use the provided email account for all institutional communication. Student email addresses are not to be considered permanent and are deleted within 30 days of the student withdrawing or graduating. Emails should not be used for private promotion and/or enterprise. Email must be checked regularly, especially when enrolled in an active course. Digital communication at CU is not entirely private. The Administration reserves the right to inspect digital communications for the purpose of troubleshooting and for suspected abuse.

Adhere to the following guidelines when communicating online with professors, university employees, and other students. These guidelines are intended to foster courtesy and respect in addition to minimizing IT risks.

- Accounts: Only university email and related systems should be used for institutional communications. Do not use personal email or video conferencing accounts.
- Names: Refer to professors and CU employees by their last names with appropriate honorifics (e.g., "Dr." or "Prof."). For professors, if you cannot easily verify their degree or status, "Prof." is most appropriate—not "Ms." or "Mr." *Under no circumstance should you use first names unless given explicit permission.*
- Introductions: Use subject lines appropriately and begin any course-specific email with your first and last name, the course number, and your exact section number or meeting time (e.g., "101-05," "9 am MW," but not "this morning").
- Grammar and Style: All written communications must conform to standard English. Emails and discussion board posts should not resemble text message, chat, or social media posts. Use complete sentences with correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Coordination: All members of a synchronous, online interaction should participate by the same mode of interaction when

possible. For example, join video conferences with video. This is especially true for one-on-one meetings with your professor and small group video discussions in or outside of class.

- "Class" Conduct: When participating in synchronous classes or meetings (especially when using video), conduct yourself as if in the classroom. Be on-time and mentally present. Be seated at a desk or table. Dress according to classroom standards. Do not introduce distractions into the interactions and be prepared to stay for the duration of the session per normal classroom behavior.
- Complexity: In general, asynchronous communication is appropriate for simple questions and activities. Complex questions that require more than one simple response should be addressed synchronously—during class is often best. If you are unable to ask your question during class, or it is too personal to do so, use an asynchronous method to arrange a synchronous meeting.
- Boundaries: Synchronous communication is less formal than asynchronous. However, the appropriate use of names, language, acronyms, and emojis must still conform to classroom standards. Since we do not all share the same online culture, be prepared to explain yourself if your acronym or emoji is not understood. Be polite and respectful when asking for clarification, and gracious when misunderstandings occur.