Email Charter

This email charter has been put together to give you good practice tips and to help you spend less time doing emails.

You may wish to consider calendaring half-days at work where you can't go online. You should be having email-free evenings, weekends and holidays but if you choose to send emails in your own time, please make use of the Outlook facility that can delay or schedule when messages are sent.

This is not to prevent you working flexibly but tries to avoid creating pressures for others to respond out-of-hours. We recommend use of the following statement in your email signatory to show your support for the charter and the messages we want to get across:

I try to follow the University email charter – Link to this doc

We encourage you to think about adopting the following Out of Office message (or similar) but only where this does not impact on other services i.e. this may not be appropriate for student facing roles.

> I will not be reading emails sent between [START DATE] and [END DATE].
>
> If you need me to action or read something, please resend after [END DATE], otherwise I may assume your query has been addressed by someone else. In my absence or for urgent matters, please contact [EMAIL address].

10 tips for emails

1. **Respect your recipients' time**

   As the message sender, it's your responsibility to minimise the time your email will take to process, even if it means taking more time to think about what you are sending to make your email easy to read.

2. **Short is not Rude**

   Given the email load we face, it is OK not to give detailed responses to all questions. If you receive a brief reply, don't take it personally and know that others won't. Wordy responses take longer to read, and recipients may miss key details if they just scan it. Similarly, it's OK if replies aren't sent immediately. Don't feel you need to give an instant response and don't expect to receive one. If something is urgent or needs a quick reply, use MS Teams or a telephone.

3. **Celebrate Clarity**

   Start with a subject line that clearly labels the topic and identify whether the email is for [Info] or [Action] and indicate its priority. It is best to keep emails short but if the

email must be longer than five sentences, make sure the first provides the basic reason for writing.

4. **Quash Open-Ended Questions**

   Avoid sending someone an email with several long paragraphs of text followed by a non-specific question such as: "Thoughts?". Email generosity requires simplifying and asking easy-to-answer questions. Try and avoid the subject header 'Quick Question' as people may feel under pressure to answer quickly and it may not be a quick response.

5. **Slash Surplus cc's**

   Consider who needs to be copied into the email as for every recipient you add, you are multiply the total response time. When there are multiple recipients, don't default to 'Reply All'. You may need to cc a couple of people on the original thread, or you may only need to reply to the sender.

6. **Tighten the Thread**

   Some emails depend on context for their meaning which means it's usually OK to include the thread being responded to but try not to extend a thread to more than 3 emails. Before sending, cut out what's not relevant or make a phone call instead. The subject header should refer to the email content and not cover other topics as an aside.

7. **Attack Attachments**

   Don't use graphics files as logos or signatures that appear as attachments as time is wasted trying to see if there's something to open. Don't send text as an attachment if it could have been included in the body of the email.

8. **Give a Gift**

   If your email message can be expressed in half a dozen words, put it in the subject line, followed by EOM (End of Message). This saves the recipient having to open the message. Ending a note with "No need to respond" or NNTR can also be helpful.

9. **Cut Contentless Responses**

   You don't need to reply to every email, especially those that are clear responses. An email saying "Thanks for your note. I'm in." does not need you to reply "Great." That costs someone 30 seconds.

10. **And Finally**

    Where possible, pick up the phone, call someone on MS Teams or walk and speak to the person you want to communicate with and don't hide a difficult conversation behind an email. Be mindful of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and GDPR as emails do form a written record.