

# Email Etiquette for Staff



Updated Aug 2017  
Human Resources/USO

This guidance is for all members of staff who use their YSJ email accounts to communicate whether infrequently or on a regular basis. When using e-mail, always think before you send. Please adopt these simple points of good practice and etiquette.

## Some points to consider:

- **Keep it simple and brief** – for factual information, but not for matters that require tact or diplomacy
- **Take care over content, factual accuracy and presentation** – check through before sending
- **Make the 'Subject' of your message meaningful**
- **Clearly identify yourself** – use a signature at the end of your e-mail automatically
- **Be polite and show common courtesy** – adhere to the same standards as you would when writing a letter
- **Create a good impression** – your e-mail may be seen by persons who don't know you or the University
- **Use humour and sarcasm with care** – messages can be easily misinterpreted
- **Make your e-mails easy to read** – avoid backgrounds and keep the text plain and straightforward
- **Create mailing lists** – this avoids long lists of recipients at the top of each message
- **Ensure e-mails target the correct audience** – use the "Reply to All" option sparingly; avoid copying or forwarding e-mails to colleagues when it is unnecessary
- **When replying or forwarding an e-mail with comments, include some of the original message for context** – but be selective; don't send the entire original e-mail if it is long
- **Reply promptly to e-mails** – if you cannot reply within a reasonable time (e.g. 48 hours) send a brief response to say the e-mail is being dealt with
- **Respect the privacy of others** – do not disclose private e-mail addresses or contact details. Consider using the bcc function when emailing groups.
- **Do not send attachments unless you need to** – use hyperlinks to documents (on internet or S:Drive) or set up the ELF (E-mail Large File) application
- **Clear out your mailbox regularly** – Staff should regularly review all emails, posts and messages, and delete those that have no continuing value. Save messages or attachments you want to keep into your Documents folder or onto the U:Drive. Advice on email archiving is available on the [ILS webpages](#).
- **Use Out of Office messages** – this helps to manage expectations in relation to your response and helps the University comply with the Freedom of Information Act

## Remember that:

- **The laws** relating to written communication apply equally to e-mail, including defamation, copyright, obscenity, fraud, freedom of information and discrimination
- **Under the University's [Code of Conduct](#)** all employees are required to act professional and honestly, with integrity and respect for others.

- **Freedom of Information (FOI) requests** require the provision of all information held by the University relating to the subject of the request (subject to certain exemptions). This includes e-mails, even if marked as confidential
- **Subject Access requests** - Individuals (staff or students) have the right, under Data Protection legislation, to request access to all information held about them (subject to certain exemptions). As with FOI requests, this includes e-mails, even if marked as confidential.
- **The Internet is an open world** – e-mail messages sent outside the University should not be regarded as private or secure
- **E-mails sent bearing your University e-mail address** are equivalent to sending letter-headed University correspondence. They reflect on the reputation of the University.
- **E-mail messages, when forwarded, can be invisibly edited** – unlike a letter or memorandum
- **E-mail should not be used as a substitute for other forms of communication** – face-to-face or phone may be more appropriate

#### Don't:

- **'Flame'** – Flames are messages or replies that express anger or might anger the reader. Neither post nor respond to incendiary mail
- **Send anonymous mail or 'spoof' your address** – in 99% of cases, your e-mail can be traced back to its source; disciplinary action may then follow
- **'Spam'** – i.e. don't send electronic garbage, newsgroups, list servers or to anyone you don't know as this considered 'spamming'
- **Reply to chain-letters** – these are an absolute 'no-no' on all networks
- **Use your University e-mail account regularly for personal expression** – the University permits incidental use of email for personal use. Our policy is that personal use is a privilege and not a right. Our policy is that personal use is a privilege and not a right. For further information see Section 8 of the University's IT Acceptable Use Policy (link below)

#### And finally:

Please read and comply with the [University's IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)

#### Email Signatures

The following signatures in Arial font are suggested:

##### Internal e-mails:

Either: Ima Scientist | Head of Physics | T: 01904 876666

Or:

Ima Scientist

Head of Physics

T: 01904 876666

##### External e-mails:

Either:

Ima Scientist, Head of Physics

York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York YO31 7EX

T: 01904 876666 | [www.yorks.ac.uk](http://www.yorks.ac.uk)

Or:

Ima Scientist | Head of Physics | York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO 31 7EX |

01904 876666 | [www.yorks.ac.uk](http://www.yorks.ac.uk)

You can of course use the same internal and external signatures if you so wish. However, bear in mind that sign-offs on external e-mails require fuller details, including postal address.