

FACULTY PRACTICE GROUP – Ambulatory Operations

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

SECTION: Code of Conduct

SUBJECT: Email Etiquette

REFERENCE #:

PAGE: 1 OF 4

APPROVALS: FPG: CAO-SC: APCA: N/A EAC: N/A

EFFECTIVE: 062011

PURPOSE:

This standard and guideline outlines standard best practices and Email etiquette for FPG outpatient practices and business offices to sustain professional business communications with internal and external customers. Email is an important tool that enables staff to effectively communicate with customers, colleagues and individuals associated with the University. This document does not cover HIPAA requirements or Electronic Communications Policy (see Reference section for the links associated with HIPAA and Electronic Communications Policy).

POLICY:

Email communication should be handled in an appropriate fashion to maintain a professional UCLA image, to support business operations with timely communication and email documentation. Email correspondence should adhere to the following Email etiquette standards and guidelines;

- 1) Standards for Email Efficiency and Professional Communication
- 2) Standards for Replying to Emails
- 3) Standards for Email Signatures
- 4) Out of Office Notification Policy

1) Standards for Email Efficiency and Professional Communication

a) Email Composition

- Be concise and to the point, keeping the email length appropriate. Compose the email message focusing on key points, facts, and circumstances.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and structure. Email communication is a business document. Proof read your email message before sending it to ensure it is clear, properly structured as a memorandum or letter, and is easy to read.
- Be sure to include a meaningful subject title that will help with email prioritization and tracking.
- Avoid lingo and abbreviations. Business emails should be written without shorthand such as BTW or LOL and represent a professionally composed letter, document, or memorandum.
- Use email templates for frequent or standardized communication. Templates ensure the appropriate message is conveyed consistently for standard business communication.

- Avoid graphics and backgrounds in business e-mail. They make your file larger and consume unnecessary memory in the recipients' inbox.

b) Attaching Files

- Attach files only when necessary. Large file attachments can impact the email server. In some cases, file sizes are restricted and will not be sent. Wherever possible, compress attachments.

c) Email Flags

- Appropriately use the High Priority option. Messages flagged as High Priority should be handled with greater urgency.

d) Professional Email Conduct

- If an email communication has occurred three times and resolution has not occurred, the method of communication should be changed to voice to improve communication efficiency.
- Do not forward chain letters. Chain letters are not part of business communication and can contain viruses.
- Don't send, reply to, or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.

2) Standards for Replying to Emails

- Reply to email communication timely. "Timely" response will be defined by the department based on departmental best practices and customer expectations.
- Include the email thread when replying to a series of email correspondence by using the Reply, Reply All, or Forward function. This ensures that the recipient(s) have the full picture of what was communicated and can use the past email thread to help respond to the message sent.
- Reply versus Reply All. When replying to a message that was composed to a group of individuals, consider if the entire group would benefit from receiving your reply or if only the sender needs to be informed. If only the sender needs to be informed of your reply, do not use reply all in order to reduce the volume of email communication sent.

3) Standards for Email Signatures

Emails signatures should be setup for all FPG email users and structured adhering to the following criteria.

Standard Structure:

Name
 Working Title
 Department
 External Mailing Address
 Phone Number | Fax Number

Example:

Jane Bruin
 Administrative Assistant
 FPG Ambulatory Operations
 1234 Afake Street, Suite 100
 Los Angeles, CA 90095
 O: 310-794-1234 | F: 310-794-4321

Avoid including quotations and sayings in your signature block. Quotations and sayings can often be perceived as offensive or misunderstood.

4) Out of Office Notification Policy

A customized *email out of office notification* should be enabled if a representative will not be available to reply to emails for more than one-business day, in order to inform email senders of his/her availability. An alternative email address/representative should be indicated if replies cannot be returned beyond one business day, such as during a vacation, sick, or extended leave. The *email out of office notification* should be promptly removed upon return to the office.

Example Notification Script—Individual Email Box:

Thank you for contacting YOUR NAME of YOUR DEPARTMENT. I will be out of the office [START DATE] until [END DATE]. If you need immediate assistance, please contact [INSERT ALTERNATE CONTACT INFORMATION].

Example Notification Script—Department Main Email Box:

Thank you for contacting DEPARTMENT NAME. In observance of [NAME THE HOLIDAY], our office is temporarily closed and will reopen on [DAY, DATE]. We will respond to all emails upon our return.

REFERENCES

For more information about other UCLA email policies, visit these web sites, and/or speak with your Human Resources representative:

- Protect Your Email: Security & the Appropriate Use of Email
<http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.789d0eb6c76e7ef0d66b02ddf848344a/?vgnextoid=27e843a82feb6210VgnVCM100000e1d76180RCRD>
- Use of Electronic Information by UCLA Healthcare Workforce
<http://compliance.uclahealth.org/workfiles/PDF2/Policy%20No%209451.pdf>
- UCLA Privacy and Information Security Office - FAQs
<http://compliance.uclahealth.org/workfiles/PDF2/HIPAA%20Privacy/HIPAA%20FAQs/PHI%20and%20Email%20when%20sendingwithin%20the%20UCLA%20Mednet%20system.pdf>

POLICY AUTHORITY:

UCLA Faculty Practice Group Ambulatory Operations

COGNIZANT OFFICE:

For interpretations of this policy, resolution of problems and special situations, contact:

Laurie Johnson

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REVISION HISTORY

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