

Electronic Communication Recommendations – Chemistry

Policy for handling electronic communications (emails/Teams messages) from undergraduate students (BSc to MSc):

In support of the health and well-being of our staff and as part of our commitment to our Silver Athena SWAN, we have adopted the following policy regarding emails **from students to staff**.

- Members of staff are not expected to send replies to emails or Teams messages outside the hours of 9 am - 6 pm Monday through Friday and not at all on Saturday and Sundays. Staff may reply if they wish but are not required to do so.
- Members of staff are expected to reply to an email or Teams messages from a student **within 2 working days** of receipt of the email during term time.
- Email is the expected route of communication between students and staff.
- On an occasion there may be exceptions to this rule, as staff may be away from the University with limited access to their email. On such occasions **staff should post an out-of-office reply** in their email system so that students are aware of the likely delay.
- Students should also note that **emails to staff should only be sent from their University of Southampton account** to avoid problems associated with spam filters.
- In a crisis situation the Student Hub are available during office hours (08.30-18.00) and provide support for students who may be facing difficulties in their life or dealing with a crisis; to contact the team call 023 8059 9599 or email studenthub@soton.ac.uk. If you need urgent support between 6 pm and 8 am, Student Services, in conjunction with University Security, provide an Out of Hours service. Please contact 023 8059 2811.

This policy has been discussed and agreed with students at the Chemistry Staff Student Liaison Committee

Guidelines for emails and or Teams messages from staff and postgraduate PhD students:

Technology makes it easy to check emails on mobile devices, anywhere, anytime. In support of the work-life balance of our staff and as part of our commitment to our Silver Athena SWAN, we have set out the following guidelines for staff:

- Members of staff are not expected to reply to emails or Teams messages outside the hours of 9 am - 6 pm (or their core hours if working part-time) Monday through Friday and not at all on Saturday and Sundays. Staff may reply if they wish but are not required/expected to do so.
- Staff may send emails at any time that they choose but should not expect replies outside of the working hours described above.
- Staff should consider adding a note to their email signatures such as “I often send emails out of working hours, but I do not expect a response outside of your own working hours.”
- Staff should consider using the delay delivery option in Outlook when sending emails at weekends or late at night
- Staff should avoid setting unrealistic deadlines in emails.
- All email messages should demonstrate the same professionalism taken when writing a letter. Email should not include anything which would be considered discriminatory (on the grounds of a person's sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief), defamatory, or other unlawful material (for example, any material that is designed to be, or could be construed as, bullying or harassment by the recipient)
- As much as possible staff should endeavor to limit the number of emails they send (and consider whether cc'ing others is really necessary).
- **During periods of absence, including overseas travel on university business, staff should post an out-of-office reply** in their email system so that the recipient is aware of the likely delay.
- Further details of the University policy on email can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/isolutions/regs.page>

Under specific circumstances, for example when working overnight/weekend at a research facility the stipulations relating to the sending and receiving of emails may be relaxed.