Guidelines for Mass Email and LISTSERV Usage at Emory

Mass emails—sent to a designated group of recipients through tools such as Outlook distribution lists, Microsoft Office Groups, and LISTSERV lists or through marketing systems such as Salesforce, ContactMonkey, or MailChimp—are a powerful communication tool that require oversight and governance to be deployed effectively. Schools and units are responsible for governing the use of mass and group email channels within their respective areas to ensure compliance with Emory University policies and guidelines. These recommendations are designed to help schools and units establish their own best practices for sending and moderating mass emails.

Definition
Mass emails are emails sent to a designated group of Emory.edu addresses (e.g., members of a department, organization, unit or program, etc.) at once for internal communications, departmental updates, announcements, newsletters, or promotional purposes.

Acceptable Use
- **Business and Academic Use:** Mass and group emails sent using Emory IT systems, including emails to @emory.edu addresses, are intended for mission-centric business and academic-related communication. Messages must assist in or support the recipients' ability to conduct their business or education at the university.
- **Emergency Communications:** The Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response sends alerts to the campus about health and safety risks. Members of the community are encouraged to register for the Emory Safe app to receive emergency alerts.
- **Audience:** Messages must be relevant to the recipients of the mass email. The information should be deemed critical enough to warrant distribution via mass email. Please see the "Inappropriate use" below for additional guidance.
- **Professional Communication:** Mass emails should be written in a professional tone, free of inappropriate, biased, or offensive content. Avoid using all caps, excessive punctuation, or informal language. Messages should be self-explanatory, clear, and concise.
- **Timing:** Mass email messages should be sent in a timeframe that aligns with the urgency of the message. Senders should avoid sending non-urgent emails outside of standard business hours and during weekends and holidays. Be mindful of current events. Avoid sending mass email messages at a time that would appear to be tone-deaf with regard to current events.

Inappropriate Use
- **Personal Messages:** Messages that are personal in nature and do not align with the university's mission, sponsored academic activities, or business operations.
- **Harassment:** Emails that contain abusive, obscene, discriminatory, threatening, or harassing content are strictly prohibited.
- **Spamming:** Sending unsolicited commercial mass emails (spam) either within or outside the organization is not allowed. Newsletters and other non-transactional mass email messages sent to external recipients must include an option for recipients to unsubscribe. Unsubscription processes should make clear that the unsubscription applies only to the same, specific communication and not to all communication from Emory.
- **Non-Compliance:** Using email in a way that violates university policies, local laws, or regulations.

- **Confidentiality:** Confidential or protected information must not be shared through mass email.
- **Internal Marketing:** Internal marketing refers to messages sent to large internal lists for marketing or advertising purposes. Mass email recipient lists should not be used to promote programs, majors, classes, awards, job postings, products, or events sponsored by individual members of the community or individual units. It is recommended that units use other approved communication methods for these purposes, such as *Emory Report*, *Health Sciences Update*, the university events calendar, or email newsletters or social media channels managed by their respective units. Student organizations should refer to the Student, Leadership, and Transitions (SILT) [website](#) for internal marketing strategies.
- **Solicitations and Lobbying:** Mass emails must not be used for solicitations for contributions to charities, political organizations or causes, or to promote participation in personal activities not related to the university's mission or not sponsored by the university. Mass emails must not be used for private financial gain, for supporting non-Emory related businesses, or for political activities that advocate for or against a ballot measure or candidate.

Best Practices for Moderating Mass Email Communications

- Schools and units are responsible for ensuring appropriate moderation and approval protocols for all mass email channels in their purview. As a general guideline, mass email recipient lists with roughly more than 20 to 30 Emory.edu addresses, or that constitute a primary communications channel for a unit, program, school, or department, should have moderation or approval protocols enabled. All emails sent using Emory IT systems, including @emory.edu addresses, are expected to follow Emory University policies and guidelines.
- Moderators must be familiar with university policies and guidelines concerning electronic communication. Schools and units should consider a dual-approval mechanism so that no one person is making decisions about moderation in isolation.
- If moderators are unsure whether a message submitted to the list is appropriate for mass distribution, they should check with their designated unit or school leader prior to approving the send.
- **Emails that violate university policies should be reported to school or unit leaders for follow-up, including subsequent reporting to the appropriate authority based on the specific concern.**
- Moderators should refrain from approving duplicate messages about the same announcement.
- List owners should review and update recipient lists on a regular schedule (at least annually).

Policies and Guidelines for Electronic Communications and Network Usage

- Policy: [Information Technology Conditions of Use](#)
- Faculty Handbook: [Information Technology Guidelines](#)
- Policy: [Emory University Undergraduate Code of Conduct](#) (Section I: Honor and Ethics)
- Graduate Student Handbook: [Laney Graduate School Student Handbook](#) (Part V)

Alternative Communications Channels

- Explore alternatives to LISTSERV and unsupported mass email sending systems. Microsoft [Teams](#), [Microsoft Office 365 Groups](#), and [distribution lists](#) are examples of recommended communication methods.
- As an alternative to sending a dedicated mass email message, community members are encouraged to include information through other mass communication channels, which may

include, but are not limited to, [Emory Report](#), [Health Sciences Update](#), and [Emory's events calendar](#).

Preferred Email Communications Tools

- Microsoft [distribution lists](#), [Microsoft Office 365 Groups](#), and [Teams](#) are the preferred tools for sending internal messages within units. Lists and groups can be created seamlessly and are easily maintained. They also simplify moderation and governance.
- Salesforce Marketing Cloud is recommended for sending emails to internal audiences that include more than 5,000 subscribers. Contact University Communications and Marketing for information on Salesforce.

Resources

- [Enterprise Messaging and Directory Services Website](#)
- Please contact your unit's IT and communications team for questions and support.