

University of Utah

Mass Text Messaging Guidelines

Overview and Scope

The University of Utah values the privacy of students' information and preferences in receiving messages. All non-emergency University of Utah communication via Text Messaging will adhere to this Guidelines as well as applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to the [Telephone Consumer Protection Act](#).

These Guidelines does not address Emergency Notifications used by University of Utah's Campus Alert System to relay important and time-sensitive information, such as emergency notifications and campus closures.

For purposes of clarity, these guidelines defines a Mass Text as sending to 100 or more recipients who are not defined by a cohort or group.

Student Opt-In/Opt-Out Feature

For non-emergency communication, students currently indicate their preference for Text Messaging by opting-in or opting out via the self-service screen in PeopleSoft. University-licensed platforms with mass texting capabilities must utilize this PeopleSoft field as the source of truth when selecting recipients for Text Messaging. The FCC requires an automated method to opt-out of future Text Messages, so every Text Message sent should include information on the procedure to opt out of the texting service (i.e., "text STOP to end").

Mass Text Messaging for Opted-In Students

All non-emergency Text Messages sent by a University official must adhere to the following criteria:

- The University official sending the Text Message is doing so for a purpose within the scope of their University employment.
- The University official's supervisor must approve the purpose and scope of the Text Message(s).
- The message is timely, so it correlates to the timing of the event, deadline, or request.
- If the message is actionable, the requested next step must be clearly stated.
- The message is necessary, valid, relevant, and appropriate for the intended audience.
- The recipient list is limited to a specific population and is checked for accuracy prior to sending.
- The message will not be used to promote services to an undefined, large population of students.
- The sender is clearly identifiable as a University of Utah official.
- The sender monitors replies and responses in a timely manner.

- The message will not include any information outside of directory information as defined by [FERPA](#).
- The message will not be used for personal matters.
- The message is sent during waking hours and not between the hours of 9:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. Mountain Time.

Mass Text Messaging for Opted-In Students is not intended to communicate

- Marketing or promotion of University related products or services available for sale.
- Announcement of ticketed events such as concerts, sporting events, theatre performances or symposia.
- Personal matters.
- Information that contains private or FERPA-protected information.

Best Practices for Text Messaging

- Text Messages should be a component of a well-constructed communication plan.
- Carefully consider the quantity, frequency, relevance, and timing of messages to avoid oversaturating or inundating students with communication.
- Limit Text Messages to 160 characters or less.
- Always clarify your position or role within the University. To maximize character use, consider naming your office prior to the message, such as “College of Science: Hi [First Name]. Looking forward to seeing you at the [Event Name] on [Date] at [Time]. Text STOP to opt out.”
- Maintain a professional and courteous tone.
- Shorten URLs to create a visually appealing Text Message. Use [TinyURL](#) to create short and branded links.
- Create a plan within your unit to respond to replies in a timely manner. Consider running capacity tests on bandwidth prior to sending.
- Create a plan to assess the impact of the texting campaign and adjust future messages accordingly.
- Educate yourself on [digital accessibility](#) so Text Messages are accessible to those with disabilities who use assistive technology, such as screen readers.
- Maintain knowledge of texting best practices and process mapping on communications via [resources like this](#).