

# RNCM Email

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## Good Practice Guide for Staff

The following guide introduces good practice for writing, sending and managing work emails.

### In Brief

Email is a fast, effective and inexpensive way of communicating and sharing information. However, there is a danger that it can be used to abdicate responsibility for conveying important messages in person, create an unmanageable workload, and assume an unhealthy prominence in a staff member's life.

Once sent, an email cannot be retrieved or amended. Before committing to send, it is good practice to take a few seconds to review the structure, spelling and wording of the message, and to ask yourself what your reaction would be if you received it.

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### Staff Responsibility

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** Unless otherwise stated, the emails received and/or sent are for the recipient only. Under the Data Protection Act/Freedom of Information legislation, most emails are records of College business. Think carefully about the content of your email: the RNCM and/or sender can be made liable.

**Signature:** The RNCM has an official signature which all staff should use. Please use the following example as a template and note that the use of personal website/email addresses and external job titles should be avoided.

**Text Font:** Arial

**Text Size:** 10pt

**Name Name**

**Job Title**

Royal Northern College of Music

124 Oxford Road

Manchester

MB 9RD

**T** 0161 907 5369

**M** 0771 779 07 49

**E** [name.name@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:name.name@rncm.ac.uk)

[www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk)

If your name includes a professional title, please use the following:

**Professor (never Prof or Prof.)**

**Dr (never Dr.)**

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### Good Email Practice

**All College Staff/Students:** Following the results of the most recent Staff Survey, the option to send emails to all staff and students has been limited to a small number of people. This is to ensure that unnecessary and irrelevant emails do not add to busy inboxes.

While you'll still be able to select this option when writing an email, content will be reviewed to ensure that information is disseminated via the appropriate platform, such as Staff News, Moodle and the Intranet.

**Out of Office:** If you're on annual leave or away from the office with limited access to email, it's important to set an 'out of office' reply. All out of office messages should be short, professional and informative. Ensure you include the dates you'll be unavailable and, where possible, a colleague's email address to help with enquiries. For example:

*'Many thanks for your email. I'm on annual leave until Monday 16 September and will get*

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*back to you as soon as possible on my return. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact my colleague at [xxx.xxxx@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:xxx.xxxx@rncm.ac.uk) or call 0161 907 5XXX.'*

If you need to include an out of office during peak busy periods, please avoid sentences with negative connotations, such as references to staff shortages or excessive hours.

**Receipt of Email:** Acknowledge receipt of an email when you are unable to respond quickly (don't expect recipients to respond immediately - two to four days is an acceptable amount of time to wait for a full response). Use an Out of Office reply if you are unable to pick up emails.

**Read Receipts:** Avoid the use of Read Receipts as colleagues may think that you are monitoring their actions (and it only adds to your inbox).

**Keep it Simple:** Messages should be short and to the point, objective and factual. If possible, limit content to one subject per email to avoid confusion, and number multiple items for clarity. Matters requiring tact and diplomacy might be best handled in person.

**Be Courteous:** Always greet colleagues politely and use neutral tones within the body of the email. Abrupt and/or cryptic messages could easily be misconstrued as rude.

**Sensitive Issues:** Avoid using email, and stop an email chain, when matters become sensitive or fractious. Opt for phone or face-to-face conversations instead, and never copy others in on criticisms and/or complaints about colleagues.

**Forwarded Emails:** Remember that the content of your email could be forwarded to others. Take a moment to check that you are entirely happy with the message before sending it. If in doubt, contact the person directly.

**Carbon Copy (cc):** Think carefully about who needs to see the email; building a large 'cc' list can create unnecessary work for colleagues. Staff members who receive a copy of a message should presume that it is for information purposes and need only respond in exceptional circumstances.

**Blind Copy (bcc):** To avoid data protection issues, the Blind Copy function must be used when messages are sent to the personal email addresses of applicants, students, graduates and staff.

**Reply All:** Only Reply All when it is essential that all recipients need to see your response.

**High Importance:** Use the High Importance exclamation mark sparingly. It may indicate a priority for the sender, but not necessarily the recipient.

**Email Chains:** Joining a lengthy email chain can be tiresome and irksome. Help a recipient by summarising long discussions without requiring them to read numerous previous messages.

**Capital Letters:** Avoid the use of capital letters in messages. It is the equivalent of SHOUTING!