SITS – the University’s student information system – contains vast quantities of data, recording all aspects of the student’s registration at the University.

This policy documents the principles governing the sending of emails, through the SITS system, to students by either: the self-serve email function used by School staff; or by the SITS Data Management (SDM) office when sending emails on behalf of central administrative services.

Please consider the number of emails a student may be receiving from across the University when determining whether to send an email (i.e. is email the most effective means of communicating the content to the student, or would one of the following methods be more appropriate?):

- IntraBrunel
- Text message
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Blackboard ‘Announcements’ (contact ltt@brunel.ac.uk for more information)
- Blackboard ‘send email’ tool (contact ltt@brunel.ac.uk for more information)
- eVision ‘My Messages’ (contact studentcentre@brunel.ac.uk for more information)

### School staff self-service emails

- The University would prefer all official email communication – once a student is registered with the University - to be sent to the student’s Brunel email address (brunel.ac.uk). As a consequence, the SITS emailing facility (letter code: DEPTEMAIL) sends to their Brunel email address where one exists within the SITS system.
- In order to ensure that the email is received by as many of the recipients as possible, the SITS emailing facility (letter code: DEPTEMAIL) is sent as ‘plain text’. Although this has many advantages, it does limit the formatting possibilities (i.e. it is not possible to underline words or use bold).
- You should always ensure that you retrieve the correct students; be mindful of different types of students (such as LIBT or Associate students), as well as the other criteria – for example, the appropriate level and enrolment status of the students.
- Do not send the same email more than once.
- Do not include attachments unless unavoidable. If you require media-rich content, use a link to a website.
- If sending emails to a large number of recipients, it is advised to do this outside of core business hours (9-5) due to the load on the email servers.

If you would rather email students from Outlook you can retrieve student’s latest email address from the SITS system. To do this run the ‘BRUNELEMAIL’ SRL from the SPR screen, the output of which can be copied and pasted directly into the ‘To:’ field in Outlook. Please be aware that only 50 emails can be sent in one batch via Outlook.

### Email services provided by SITS (Data Management)

The SDM office has the ability to generate emails for large groups of students on behalf of central administrative services (i.e. when sending NSS communication). In addition to the above, the following principles will be applied:

- SDM will not provide this service where the content is related to surveys or polling (unless statutory). Any exceptions will be rare and at the discretion of the SDM office.
- Reminder emails will not be sent to students on the same subject.
- All emails will be sent overnight at an agreed date and time to ensure efficiency; for large groups of students this can take several hours. Please note that SDM will require three working days notice prior to sending an email in batch.
The person requesting the email that is to be sent is responsible for the content of the email (including the email subject), i.e. spelling mistakes and typos. SDM will use its discretion when determining whether an email could be damaging to the reputation of the University.

The requestor must also be clear about who should receive the email. SDM can offer advice, but cannot take responsibility for emails sent in error.

Emails sent in batch will be sent from the Admin Postmaster account (admin-postmaster@brunel.ac.uk); please note, that replies to this account are not monitored (this is stated at the bottom of all emails that are sent).

SDM can send HTML emails (i.e. emails with formatting, as you may see in Word or Outlook), but there are reasons why this may not always be beneficial:

- **Not all email programs read HTML emails**: Many people use email clients that are unable to interpret HTML emails, the result of which is that the email content is unreadable for the recipient.

- **HTML emails are deemed a security risk**: A high proportion of email viruses and trackers are spread through HTML emails. Many email service providers and mailsweepers will therefore block HTML emails, sending them to a ‘spam’ folder or deleting/quarantining them entirely.

- **HTML emails use more bandwidth**: A typical HTML email is more than twice as big as a plain text equivalent.

- **HTML emails are less accessible**: Many email recipients configure their email clients in such a way that emails are displayed in larger or more readable fonts, or use screen-reading software to read the content aloud. Using HTML email reduces the effectiveness of this, meaning that some users will be unable to access the contents of the email in the same way that they can with plain text.

- **HTML emails require additional programming**: In order to send an HTML email, we are required to convert the supplied text into HTML (including formatting, images, hyperlinks, etc), which may result in a delay, depending on workload within the team. Please allow plenty of time when making your request.