



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Email Policy for Messages Containing Information on Specific
Students

Introduction

As the nature of electronic mail and the public character of the University's business make electronic mail less private than users may anticipate, UCEAP faculty and staff must strenuously attempt to protect student privacy in all communications with or about students and exercise extreme caution in using email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters.

UC policies indicate that email, whether or not created or stored on University equipment, may constitute a University record, subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act or other laws, or because of litigation. Users of electronic communications systems and services shall not disclose information about students in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), and the University policies that provide guidance in meeting FERPA requirements.

Given that so much information (both confidential and non-confidential) about students circulates within UOEAP, the campus EAP offices, the Study Centers, UC's Office of General Counsel (OGC) and other UC campus offices (Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Students with Disabilities, etc.), EAP has instituted the following policy to protect **the privacy and confidentiality in electronic communications**.

Email Policy Governing the Use of the Subject Line and the Addition of Confidentiality Footer within the Text of Email Communication:

1. Content of Subject Line when the discussion in the email is not a confidential matter:

In these cases, the Subject Line should be structured as follows: [Name of student] – [Program Name]. For example, Subject Line: "John Smith – France, Lyon Year"

2. Content of Subject Line when the discussion relates to confidential matters, such as health or discipline:

In these cases, the name of the student should not be

included in the subject line but it can be used in the body of the email. In these confidential cases, the Subject Line should be structured as follows: CONFIDENTIAL – [Topic]. For example, Subject Line: “CONFIDENTIAL – Letter of Reprimand, Student at HKU Fall 0607”, or “CONFIDENTIAL – Psychotropic Information.”

3. Confidentiality footer

The use of an email confidentiality footer serves an important function, reflecting that EAP values the privacy of email communication as much as the privacy of a telephone call or other correspondence. The use of such a footer also serves a practical purpose if there were ever a legal records request for emails, because the footer would identify these emails as potentially containing private information. Therefore, EAP faculty and staff should include a confidentiality footer in any email discussing a student, regardless of the content of the email and whether or not such content is viewed as “confidential.”

This footer should read:

Email Confidentiality Notice

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it may contain privileged and confidential information subject to privacy regulations. This information is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. If you have received this message in error, please notify us and remove it from your system.