



NON-EMERGENCY UNIVERSITY MASS TEXTING POLICY

Policy # UA.004.1

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Advancement

Responsible Office: Communications & Marketing

Originally Issued: 7/11/2023

Latest Revision: 7/11/2023

- I. [Policy Statement](#)
- II. [Purpose of Policy](#)
- III. [Applicability](#)
- IV. [Definitions](#)
- V. [Policy Procedure](#)
- VI. [Enforcement](#)
- VII. [Policy Management](#)
- VIII. [Exclusions](#)
- IX. [Effective Date](#)
- X. [Adoption](#)
- XI. [Appendices, References and Related Materials](#)
- XII. [Revision History](#)

I. Policy Statement

This Policy establishes a protocol for non-emergency mass communications via Text Messages to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (“University”) community. This Policy is intended to consolidate and streamline University Mass Text Communications, increase efficiency, and ensure Text Messages support either emergency and safety or critical student success initiatives. It is also intended to preserve Text Messaging as an additional channel for critical communications as outlined in this Policy.

II. Purpose of Policy

This Policy governs communications via Text Message at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (“University”). All non-emergency Mass Text Communications sent for official University purpose shall go through the University’s Text Communications Committee for approval and adhere to the communication strategy for distribution as determined by the Text Communications Committee and the Individual requester. An Opt-In/Opt-Out feature must be included in every Mass Text Communication.

A. Permissible Mass Text Communications

Texting is reserved for information which is considered critical and/or time sensitive. The following are the categories of Mass Text Communications permitted under this Policy:

- Information critical to student success (e.g., critical academic calendar dates, critical financial notifications, academic advising notifications, etc.);
- Time sensitive/urgent situations that Individuals have Opted-In to receive; and
- Other critical messages as determined by the President, Provost, or their designee.

Text Messaging must not be used as the sole means of communicating an essential message or announcement. Each Text Message must be supplemented by some other means of communication (e.g., email, paper notice, etc.) to ensure all intended recipients, including those who have not Opted-In, receive the message.

Crisis and/or emergency, or significant disruptions to University operations, including activities which pose a threat to public safety are approved Text Messages, but do not fall under this Policy as they are governed by the University's Emergency Notification System. In case of emergency, contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety with any questions about the University's Emergency Notification System at 337-482-5830 or taz@louisiana.edu.

B. Impermissible Mass Text Communications

The following are the categories of Mass Text Communications which are not permitted under this Policy:

- General information to large populations;
- Repeat reminders of Text Messages already circulated;
- Course or class related messages (Moodle and email should be used instead);
- Personal matters (e.g., items for sale, etc.); and
- Solicitation.

C. Opting-In and Opting-Out

Text Message recipients must Opt-In (i.e., provide name and mobile number) to receive Text Messages from the University and ensure their contact information held by the University is current. This can be done through a form on the website, email, or paper form.

Text Message recipients must have the ability to Opt-Out at any time.

If a Text Message recipient chooses to Opt-Out of receiving Mass Text Communications from a specific office, they are not automatically Opted-Out from other offices. Recipients should have the ability to text 'STOP' or 'OPT OUT' at any time to Opt-Out of messages.

D. Compliance Checks

Text Message activity will periodically be reviewed by the Text Communications Committee to check compliance and to ensure that contact information is being utilized in an ethical manner according to best practices.

E. Privacy

Due to privacy laws, such as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), there is some information the University cannot communicate to Individuals via Text Message. If an Individual engages in a Text Message conversation about a sensitive topic, they may be asked to check email or call for a conversation.

F. Text Communications Committee

The purpose of the Text Communications Committee is to ensure that this Policy is upheld in a way to support the University's mission and strategic plan. In doing so, the Text Communications Committee must ensure each Text Message is:

- Valid and in compliance with this Policy;
- The wording is appropriate and aligns with the outlined Text Message content best practices; and
- Has the correct circulation list.

III. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to and enforceable against all Individuals and those affiliated with the University by contract or otherwise (including, but not limited to, non-employees, such as vendors and independent contractors, volunteers, student organization advisors, and retirees) who wish to send SMS or MMS Mass Text Communications to University faculty, staff, and/or students.

IV. Definitions

1. **Customer Engagement Platform**: is software that helps organizations manage complex customer relationships and provides mechanisms for engagement, such as Text Messaging.
2. **Individuals**: all University faculty, staff, students, alumni, or donors.
3. **Mass Text Communications**: is the act of composing and sending electronic messages via mobile devices or compatible computers between Individuals directed to, or reaching, twenty-five (25) or more people and encompasses communications sent campus-wide or to large, segmented groups (e.g., all students, all faculty, all staff, or all employees).
4. **Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)**: are messages generally sent from one mobile device to another that includes multimedia such as pictures, videos, and other attachments over Text Messaging channels.
5. **Official University Purpose**: means the Individual sending the Text Message is doing so for a purpose within the scope of their University employment.
6. **Opt-Out**: is the ability for a recipient to choose to not receive future Text Messages. Opting-Out must remove the recipient from the specific Mass Texting Communications identified.
7. **Opt-In**: is the ability for a recipient to agree to receive future Text Messages. The recipient should receive Text Messages only related to the subject or service chosen.
8. **Short Code**: is the special telephone number designed for high-throughput, two-way messaging. Short Codes are used to send and receive SMS and MMS messages to and from mobile phones. Short Codes must be approved by the Office of Information Technology.
9. **Short Message Service (SMS)**: is a message generally sent from one mobile device to another over Text Messaging channels. SMS is text-only.

- 10. Text Communication Plan:** is a written plan which is attached to the Online Text Request Form and indicates the purpose, content, and frequency of Text Message that will be sent to Individuals.
- 11. Text Message:** is an electronic communication sent and received by mobile phone or compatible computer and typically consist of alphabetic and numeric characters. Images may be included.

V. Policy Procedure

A. Approval of Customer Engagement Platforms

All Mass Text Communications must be distributed via University-approved Customer Engagement Platforms using a designated University Short Code. Recipients must have the ability to Opt-Out of Mass Text Communications. The desired Customer Engagement Platform must be indicated on the Online Text Request Form and must be approved by the Office of Information Technology and the University Text Communications Committee prior to use.

B. Approval of Text Communication Plans

Individuals wanting a Text Message sent on their behalf must complete the Online Text Request Form and attach their Text Communication Plan. The Online Text Request Form and Text Communication Plan must be approved by the Text Communications Committee in order for any Text Message to be sent. This reduces communication overload, allows University Text Communications to be streamlined, and ensures Text Messages are used appropriately.

Text Messages containing images or video must be submitted to communications@louisiana.edu and reviewed and approved in advance by the Office of Communications and Marketing to ensure proper logo usage, branding, colors, fonts, voice, etc.

In urgent situations where the Text Communication Plan may not be approved in a timely manner, the Chair of the Text Communications Committee may approve the Text Message so long as it adheres to the requirements of this Policy.

C. Text Messaging Prospective Students

For prospective student communication, the University must obtain permission to communicate via Text Message during the application process on a request for information form, inquiry card, or on the application itself. Prospective students must Opt-In to each communication channel individually — text, email, phone, mail — for customized preferences. If a prospective student does not choose to attend the University, an Opt-Out should be assumed and they should be removed from receiving future communications.

D. Text Messaging Current Students

When a student enrolls at the University, they must confirm or update their communication preferences in Banner. Students should be reminded of the types of messages they will receive through Text Message and asked to Opt-In to each type individually.

E. Text Messaging Employees

At this time, faculty and staff shall only receive Text Messages governed by the University's Emergency Notification System.

F. Text Messaging Guidelines

All Individuals who wish to send a Mass Text Communication must adhere to the Non-Emergency Text Messaging Guidelines.

VI. Enforcement

The Vice President for Advancement is responsible for monitoring the enforcement of this Policy. Review of possible violations of this Policy by faculty will initially be referred to Faculty Affairs for appropriate investigation, disciplinary action, and/or remediation. All employees and further referrals will be sent to Human Resources for appropriate investigation, disciplinary action, and/or remediation. Review of possible violations of this Policy by students will be referred to the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities for appropriate investigation, disciplinary action, and/or remediation.

VII. Policy Management

Upon adoption, the Vice President for Advancement shall be the Responsible Executive for this Policy. The Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing shall be the Responsible Officer for this Policy in charge of the management of this Policy. The Office of Communications and Marketing shall be the Responsible Office for this Policy.

VIII. Exclusions

The Policy does not apply to the following Mass Text Communications:

- Emergency Notification System alerts and Text Messages; and
- Alumni fundraising and alumni Mass Text Communications, which must be coordinated through the Director of Advancement Communications.

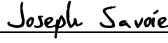
One-on-one Text Messages between faculty or staff and students who have consented to communication via Text Message may be directly Text Messaged (to one student at a time only). All class-based messages should be sent via email, Moodle, or Teams.

IX. Effective Date

This Policy shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this Policy.

X. Adoption

This policy is hereby adopted on this 7/11/2023.

DocuSigned by:

 1405E1487C93461...
Dr. E. Joseph Savoie
President

XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials

- ✿ Online Text Request Form
- ✿ [University Internal Mass Communications Policy](#)

✦ [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)

✦ [Telephone Consumer Protection Act](#)

✦ Non-Emergency Text Messaging Guidelines, UL Lafayette, Office of Communications and Marketing

✦ University of Louisiana at Lafayette Text Communications Committee Charter

✦ [Emergency Notification System](#)

XII. Revision History

✦ Original adoption date: 7/11/2023.