

Improving communication with our students
The University of Manchester
Alex Waddington, Student Communications Officer
November 2010

Introduction

Dissatisfaction with communication is clearly a key factor contributing to poor overall levels of student satisfaction and urgent attention to this issue – and action – is required.

Student communication is a complex issue, involving a number of different interactions at various levels of the University.

This report identifies many of the factors which cause students to report dissatisfaction with the University's communications – and makes some recommendations for actions to tackle them.

The issues fall broadly into two areas, which are addressed distinctly in this report;

- **The channels used to engage with students and the messages being delivered.**
- **Cultural and structural issues within the University that are impeding effective communication and engagement with students.**

Changes and improvements to channels and messages are potentially the most straightforward to carry out, with project stakeholders able to make contributions from existing resources.

But resolving deeper issues linked to the culture and structure of the University and achieving long-term change is more complex and challenging.

This type of change cannot be achieved solely within the scope of this project - although active support can be provided for wider processes - and it will require contributions and enthusiasm from colleagues right across the institution to make genuine and lasting improvements.

It should also be noted that the interactions of academic and support staff in Schools appear to have a significant impact on students' overall satisfaction with communication – and so there is a very important role to be played locally in bringing about improvements.

Executive Summary

What do students mean by communication?

When students talk about dissatisfaction with communication, they are referring to a wide range of interactions that take place across the University;

- **Assessment feedback**
- **Relationships with academic staff**
- **Front line customer service and attitude towards students within schools**
- **Provision of key course information (timetables & exam dates)**
- **Notice of cancelled lectures & seminars**
- **Input into running of course and University decisions**
- **Communication between staff across and within Schools / Directorates / Faculties.**
- **Updates on corporate matters (RAE, financial situation, capital projects)**
- **Access to information about student support services**

Executive Summary

Recommendations

Messages and Channels: A number of tactical steps could help bring about relatively short-term improvements in student communication. Much can be done to improve the quality of the messages we send out and the effectiveness of the communication channels available to us.

Email pollution

- *Moderation rights for ALL STUDENT email lists to be transferred from IT Services to Communications Division and Student Experience Office.*
- *Develop tougher moderation policy for ALL STUDENT email lists and clarify accuracy of data sets used to compile lists.*
- *Review 'eMail best practice' guidelines and raise awareness of them.*

Effectiveness of existing online channels

- *Develop online news and information channels for StudentNet/Portal*
- *Develop weekly e-newsletter for students to signpost online channels*
- *Improve integration of existing online channels (StudentNet/Crucial Guide/Portal/Blackboard/Intranets) and introduce greater tailoring and targeting of information.*

Poor communication of corporate issues

- *Develop student communication plans for all major corporate issues affecting running of the University.*
- *Better communication of key messages around introduction of new student-focused policies and initiatives.*

Social media and new media

- *Develop good practice guidance on best and most effective use of social media and new media for student communication.*
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Executive Summary

Recommendations

Culture and structure: The communication issues outlined below have deeper roots and cannot be addressed quickly using purely tactical measures. Longer-term, more fundamental change will be required to address the issues – but tackling them successfully is likely to have a significant impact on overall student satisfaction. Within the scope of this project, the recommendations below could help encourage some improvements.

Joined up student support

- *Develop forward-look calendar showing forthcoming communication activities of different support teams to highlight opportunities for joint working.*
- *Establish University-wide student communicators group to promote sharing of ideas, projects and plans.*
- *Develop reference guide to help staff at all levels deal with commonly asked questions about different support needs.*

Start of year communications

- *Undertake ‘experience sampling’ exercise at start of academic year to gain further insight into volume, timing and quality of communications (eg during induction and welcome activities) with new students.*
- *Review materials produced centrally and locally to suggest improvements in co-ordination, quality and effectiveness.*

Expectations and responsibilities

- *Development and adoption of a Student Charter document for the University.*

Attitudes to students

- *Develop communication resources (such as training sessions and toolkits) to support those involved in frontline dealings with students.*

Listening

- *Establish a Student Sounding Board to ensure relevance and student-focus of projects.*
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Key findings from review of existing research

A review of existing research, relevant to both the University of Manchester and Higher Education generally, coupled with visits to other institutions, internal discussions and attendance at relevant events, has revealed some interesting points for consideration;

- Consultations carried out at Manchester and other universities indicate that students have a very strong preference for receiving communications via email.
- The 2008 Student Communications Focus Group and other anecdotal evidence reveals that students routinely ignore, don't see, delete mass emails originating from the University.
- The University of Salford has launched an online Student Channel, which is viewed by 77% of students, and its weekly e-newsletter is read at least occasionally by 66% of students. The same survey revealed 49% of students read news and announcements on Blackboard regularly.
- Higher Education Consultant Rosemary Stamp reports that there is now an expectation amongst most students of an on-line interface tailored to their individual preferences.
- The University's 2008 Student Communications Focus Group reported that students are concerned that they may miss information because it is not all in one place. A Student Retention Project Focus Group also revealed a desire for an electronic resource that pulls all relevant information together.
- The University of Nottingham has incorporated dynamic news and support information within its Student Portal. Students have reacted positively to its introduction and top items regularly get 10,000 views.
- Responses to the 2008 Student Communications Focus Group and the National Student Survey and Student Satisfaction Survey, make it clear that academic feedback and the responses of academic staff to requests for help, are key factors in students' satisfaction with communication.
- Several Manchester surveys and the 2008 Student Communications Focus Group reveal frustration with poor notification of cancelled lectures/seminars.
- Feedback from several Manchester surveys suggests poor communication and inadequate information provision at the start of year (especially during induction and orientation for first year UGs), is a cause of dissatisfaction for students.
- The NUS Student Experience Report (2009) notes there is a danger of overloading students with "far too much information" before they arrive. Referring to money issues, it states that hearing about other students' experiences living away from home and how they plan their finances is considered the easiest and most relevant form of communicating messages.
- The 2008 Student Communications Focus Group found that students "show frustration at being passed around various departments, finding themselves 'piggy in the middle' between the School and central administration".
- Manchester-specific student surveys have revealed that some students are unsure or confused about how key information will be delivered to them.
- The 2009 Review of Student Recruitment Communications noted that the 'single point of contact model' for current students has been widely favoured in many research studies.

- Evidence gathered in the 2008 Student Communications Focus Group indicates that students want to be informed about wider issues affecting the University, such as its financial performance, issues affecting staff and the overall strategy.
- The 2008 Student Communications Focus Group makes it clear that students view good communication as being two-way and they expect the chance to have their views and input heard, considered and, where appropriate, acted upon.
- Work carried out by Graduate Prospects in 2008 identified those born between 1982 and 2001 as being technology-dependent, requiring immediacy of information and also feedback 24/7. They prefer short bursts of information, prefer looking and listening to reading, and see video as “supreme”.
- The 2009 Review of Student Recruitment Communications suggested that video content is ‘king’ and is now the preferred medium amongst most web users across all prospective audience groups.
- Research by the University of Nottingham Students Union revealed that 53% of current students use Facebook more than once a day.
- An OpinionPanel Student Panel consultation exercise in Nov 2007 suggested that students who chose to make friends with an organisation on Facebook are displaying ‘brand loyalty’.
- Research by Nielsen in July 2009 revealed that of the Twitter user base, just 16% are under 24.
- It is widely predicted that smart phone penetration will grow as mobile users replace and upgrade their handsets. A recent student survey by the IS department at the University of Edinburgh reported that 49% of students have smartphones, with Apple accounting for 35% of smart handsets. The information students most wanted to see on their phones were course information, timetables and PC cluster availability.

Methodology

With high quality data available from recent student consultation exercises, both locally and nationally, it was felt that it was unnecessary to commission new research for the purposes of this exercise.

This report has drawn conclusions based on student feedback data specific to Manchester, such as the National Student Survey, the Student Satisfaction Survey, the Barometer Survey (for international students) and the Taught Student Survey, and a wealth of qualitative data from internal focus groups.

Approaches in Schools and the PSS, and within other Universities, have been examined, with opinions sought on problems and issues. **Appendix A** provides a full list of sources consulted.

An initial version of this report was prepared by the Student Communications Officer (appointed in March 2010) and then discussed by a Project Board Steering Group (see **Appendix C**). Following these discussions and written feedback from members of the Group, a final report was produced. This current version has been updated as work has progressed and further information and evidence has been gathered.

Further information are available from Alex Waddington, Student Communications Officer (alex.waddington@manchester.ac.uk) / 0161 275 8153.

Messages and Channels

A number of tactical steps could help bring about relatively short-term improvements in student communication. Much can be done to improve the quality of the messages we send out and the effectiveness of the communication channels available to us.

Email pollution

Every student has a University email address and data gathered from internal and external consultation reveals they have a strong preference for receiving key information this way.

But there is also very strong evidence that our students routinely ignore email messages, fail to see them, filter them straight to 'junk, or delete them. They are so bombarded with 'spam' (their words) from different parts of the University that genuinely important messages – for example, regarding their programme of study – are simply not getting through.

Recommendations:

- ***Moderation rights for ALL STUDENT email lists to be transferred from IT Services to Communications Division and Student Experience Office.***
 - ***Develop tougher moderation policy for ALL STUDENT email lists and clarify accuracy of data used to compile them.***
 - ***Review 'eMail best practice' guidelines and raise awareness of these.***
-

Effectiveness of existing online channels

If restrictions are to be placed on the use of ALL-STUDENT email lists, alternative channels need to be available for colleagues in the University to engage students effectively – and ideally these channels should be two-way and allow students to interact with information and customise it.

In line with the way our students use Amazon, iTunes, Google and BBC Online, they will also increasingly expect and demand relevant and personalised information – and so we should explore all opportunities for doing this.

The University currently has some online channels which could be used to communicate with large numbers of students. The student portal is a hugely powerful channel (up to 32,000 student logins in a day), and has the potential to deliver targeted information according to user 'characteristics', such as level of study, faculty and school.

An 'Announcements' service does already exist, but statistics from April 2010 show that most items posted that month were only viewed a few hundred times, as compared to the 10,000 views the University of Nottingham is currently achieving for items posted to its more developed and user-friendly news channels within its student portal.

Based on the success of universities like Nottingham and Salford, it is proposed that an email newsletter for students should be introduced, to round up and highlight key news and information published during through online channels over the course of a week.

Of course, the student portal sits alongside Studentnet, The Crucial Guide Online and also Blackboard as vehicles for delivering key information. A recent University review of student recruitment communications, coupled with opinions gleaned from the last two NSS surveys indicates a strong student desire for key information to be made available in one place. Therefore, consolidation and better integration of all these channels should be a priority.

Recommendations

- ***Develop online news and information channels for StudentNet/Portal***
 - ***Develop weekly e-newsletter for students to signpost online channels***
 - ***Improve integration of existing online channels (StudentNet/Crucial Guide/Portal/Blackboard/Intranets) and introduce greater tailoring and targeting of information.***
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Notification of timetabling changes

One clear area of frustration is with insufficient notification of cancelled lectures and seminars.

Feedback from recent internal surveys reveals students feel frustrated by the fact they have only found out about alterations to their timetables at a late stage – and often only once they have arrived on campus.

One medical student spoken to said his peers regularly forward notifications to each other via Facebook and SMS, as many don't check the MedLea Virtual Learning Environment or student email for such messages. He said the University should work harder to keep students informed of these changes.

However, after discussion of this issue at Project Board Steering Group meetings, it emerged a newly established Timetabling and Shared Learning Spaces Group, which stems from the Review of Undergraduate Education, is working to roll out timetabling software which will enable the publication of individual student timetables and the use of instant messaging to notify students of any amendments to timetables.

At this stage, it is felt this initiative will be sufficient to address this issue and bring about the improved notification of timetabling changes that students clearly want.

Poor communication of corporate issues

When it comes to communicating important University issues, such as financial situation and the results of the Research Assessment Exercise, little consideration has traditionally been given to how this corporate information should be communicated to students.

A paper on 'The Problem of Communicating with Students' in 2008 concluded that student "perceive that news/decisions/policies of importance are hidden from them".

Students have a desire – made clear in a 2008 Focus Group and other recent surveys – to be kept informed about wider University issues.

In particular, it is important that we relay key messages to students about new student-focused policies to raise awareness of the steps that the university is taking to respond to their concerns.

And with the current national debate around the Browne Review and HE funding, there is a real need for the University to get key messages across about his own position and to challenge misinformation and allay unfounded fears – as well as providing opportunities for discussion, debate and feedback.

For this to happen, there needs to be a high-level commitment to sharing news and information with students at the same time as other stakeholders (such as staff, external stakeholders and the media).

These messages should come, not just from 'the top' directly to students, but should also be cascaded down through appropriate channels and communicated at a local level.

Recommendations:

- ***Develop student communication plans for all major corporate issues affecting running of the University.***
 - ***Better communication of key messages around new policies and initiatives that have impact on students.***
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Social media and new media

Manchester students are highly technology-dependent, requiring immediacy of information, fast feedback and have preference for receiving short snapshots of information, delivered using multimedia methods.

They will almost certainly use Facebook and YouTube, along with other social networking services – although evidence strongly suggests they are not big users of Twitter.

Students are, however, increasingly using their mobile phones to access electronic information and evidence from Edinburgh University indicates up to 50% may now have smartphones with Internet access.

But despite the popularity of social media and new media among our student audience, it is highly questionable whether it is appropriate for the University as a corporate body to suddenly start using Facebook or other social networking channels to communicate with its current students.

Evidence from student representatives on the Project Board Steering Group suggests that large organisational entities are not viewed favourably when they use social media to 'talk at' students. Social media is about active dialogue and engagement, which demands considerable time, resource and commitment to be successful.

It is also well documented that neglected blogs, Twitter accounts and Facebook pages do not reflect well on an organisation. If long-term resource is not available to proactively and enthusiastically sustain such channels, it is much better not to start them in the first place.

With regard to this project, it is recommended that improving the effectiveness of already established and potentially powerful channels, which are already used by large numbers of students, should be a priority.

But this is not to say that new media and social media have no place within our approach to student communication; video can certainly be a powerful way of engaging students and is being increasingly used across the institution. For example, the recruitment team has recently launched user-generated videos which use existing student to deliver messages about the student experience.

It should also be noted that the social networking and community features of the new BlackBoard 9.1 Virtual Learning Environment will offer some good opportunities for students to engage with peers and staff.

But if new media tools and social networking sites are to be exploited, it should perhaps be at a local level (eg programmes, residential halls and leisure pursuits), where communities naturally and readily exist.

It is clear that staff members throughout the University are keen to explore the possibility of using social media and new media to communicate with students – and more will look to do so in the future. This being the case, staff would likely benefit from some informed guidance on the tools available and the purposes to which they are best suited.

Recommendations;

- ***Develop good practice guidance on the use of social media and new media for communicating with existing students.***
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Culture and structure

The communication issues outlined below have deeper roots and cannot be addressed quickly using purely tactical measures. Longer-term more fundamental change will be required to address the issues – but tackling them successfully is likely to have a significant impact on overall student satisfaction. Within the scope of this particular project, the recommendations below could help encourage some improvements.

Joined up student support

It has been observed that teams and Directorates involved in providing student support generally 'go it alone' when engaging with students, not considering or being aware of the related communication activities of their colleagues.

The internal boundaries that denote where responsibilities start and end are upheld and promoted - even though our students just want help and support, rather than an explanation of who is delivering it.

Student consultation suggests our current outward presentation of the internal structuring of student support can cause confusion and frustration – and can lead to poor communication experiences.

It should be noted that this issue is certainly not limited to the PSS – it applies to all staff right across the University. The 2008 Student Communications Focus Group noted that “***when students have a problem that is not the responsibility of the School, they have no idea where to get help, who is responsible. They are passed around.***”

While there may be structural and organisational issues to consider in delivering a more student-focused service, this project could also support improvements in a number of ways.

Recommendations;

- ***Establish University-wide student communicators group to promote sharing of ideas, projects and plans.***
 - ***Develop forward-look calendar showing forthcoming communication activities of different support teams to highlight opportunities for joint working.***
 - ***Develop easy reference guide to help staff at all levels deal with commonly asked questions about student support services.***
-

Start of year communications

Surveys of our students indicate poor communication and provision of information at the start of academic years – particularly during the periods of registration, induction and orientation – can be a cause of dissatisfaction.

The quality of information exchanged appears to vary widely from School to School and is not always joined up with core communications coming from the PSS, resulting in confusion and even contradiction.

Students indicate they often feel overwhelmed and overloaded and express a preference for 'need to know' and 'nice to know' information to be separated and delivered in a targeted way at appropriate times of the student lifecycle.

In its Student Written Submission to the QAA, the Students' Union noted "the University provides a wealth of information through induction, handbooks, policies and websites, but it is often not tailored to when and where students may need to receive this information". It recommended the University look at dispersing induction information in a more strategic way and tailoring the timing of induction to when students need the skills.

Again, while a more fundamental review of current induction provision and processes may be needed, this project could also support improvements in a number of ways.

Recommendations;

- ***Undertake 'experience sampling' exercise at start of academic year to gain further insight into volume, timing and quality of communications.***
 - ***Review materials produced centrally and locally to suggest improvements in co-ordination and effectiveness.***
-

Expectations and responsibilities

Feedback indicates that students feel there is a lack of clear direction and clarity regarding the channels that will be used to communicate with them. They also say they are dissatisfied with responses to requests for assistance from staff. In turn, staff also report problems and frustration in getting key information to students.

One University has implemented a Student Communication Charter (see **Appendix B**) to define the standard of communication students should expect, to define key channels and emphasise student responsibilities to stay informed.

Originally, this report recommended adopting a similar Student Communication Charter.

But discussion of this idea within the Project Board Steering Group was extremely positive and produced the idea of an overall Student Charter – a concise and precise communication vehicle, defining exactly what standards students should expect from their University of Manchester experience, as well as specifying students' own role and responsibilities in achieving success.

The Charter would cover all aspects of the student experience, such as accommodation, welfare and support, and not just teaching and learning.

It would pull together specific points from existing policy documents, signposting people to them for further information where necessary, and would focus on defining and building a relationship. Its aim would be to bring staff and students together, rather than being an officious contract or a heavy-handed policing tool.

Evidence suggests that there is often a gap between what students believe their University experience is going to be like and the reality once they arrive in Manchester - and it is argued a Charter document could help address this issue.

But for the Charter to be credible and successful, it would need high level support and sponsorship, and be approved by Senate after going through a full and proper process of consultation

Recommendation:

- ***Development and adoption of a Student Charter document.***
-

Attitude to students

Responses to student surveys provide evidence that negative and unhelpful attitudes and poor responses from staff – including those supporting students' study in Schools – have a significant impact on how our students view the University's communication.

It appears the interactions students have with our staff - academic, administrative or more general support (such as porters, car park staff or cashiers) - at the 'coal face' are significant in terms of their satisfaction with communication.

Discussion of the issue of 'customer service' within the Project Board Steering Group produced an interesting debate on whether we should see students as partners, customers or a mixture of both. It was agreed that some clarity and guidance on this matter would be welcomed.

It was noted that different staff have different relationships with students across campus – for example a cashier working in a good outlet and an administrator working in an Undergraduate Office in a School.

Project Board Steering Group members also noted that in some areas of the University compulsory customer service training has been introduced – and that staff reaction has not been wholly positive.

It is argued this project can only attempt to make fairly peripheral improvements in this area, and more strategic and fundamental consideration needs to be given to the issue – and how to address it - by the University.

Recommendations;

- * ***Develop communication resources and support (such as training sessions and toolkits) for those involved in frontline dealings with students.***
-

Listening

Students clearly view communication as being as much about opportunities for their voices to be heard and their views engaged with, as having information delivered to them. This is an important point, and when Faculties and Schools think about good communication, listening and engaging with students should be high on the agenda.

But 'survey-fatigue' appears to be a major issue, with students frustrated at being constantly asked for their opinions by different parts of the University – an issue currently being investigated by the Communications, Media and PR Division. This problem is often exacerbated when students hear nothing further about outcomes or actions, which leads to the impression that nothing ever changes.

The student rep system has the potential to be a powerful two-way channel for key information between students and the staff directly involved in running programmes. But from discussions with staff in Schools and Faculties and members of the Students Union Executive, it appears the system is not working as effectively as it might.

From talking to staff working on the TLSO Students as Partners programme – a scheme commended by the Students' Union in a submission to the QAA – it seems good two-way channels of communication have been opened up between student co-ordinators, who meet with students regularly to discuss issues and problems, and academic staff in schools. As this popular scheme grows and is embraced by more schools, student satisfaction with communication may also improve.

One idea which found favour among the Project Board Steering Group is the recruitment of a Student Sounding Board, to act as a guide to student opinion and views. This group could be used instead of surveys by different areas of the University seeking student views on the services they offer.

However, it should not be used instead of full and proper consultation processes - or existing mechanisms such as the student rep system or the Students' Union - and care would need to be taken not to draw concrete conclusions from the outputs of this group.

Initiatives to improve student communication and indeed the overall student experience should have input and guidance from students. This sounds obvious but it is not necessarily a natural process for the University.

Recommendations;

- ***Establish a Student Sounding Board to ensure relevance and student-focus of projects.***

Appendix A – Sources

Data Sources - *Data collected during local and national projects was examined.*

- Review of Student Recruitment Communications (2009)
- National Student Survey 2008/2009
- Student Satisfaction Survey 2008/2009
- Taught Student Survey 2010
- International Student Barometer Survey 2007, 2008, 2010
- Registration Survey 2009
- Student Retention Project Focus Groups
- Student consultations and focus groups coordinated by the TLSO Students as Partners programme
- STARS Campus Forum March 2010
- Food on Campus 'Your Opinion Counts' Survey 2009
- EPS Student Support Project 2010
- School of Dentistry Weekly Update Feedback 2009
- IT Services Directorate Communications Review (2009)
- Communications With Students Focus Group 2008
- Student Experience Office 'The Problem of Communication With Students' 2008
- Food on Campus Survey 2009
- DIUS Student Juries 2008/2009
- OpinionPanel Student Panel Nov 2007
- Sodexo Student Lifestyle Survey 2010
- NUS Student Experience Report 2009
- National Student Forum Annual Report 2008, 2009, 2010
- HEAR 'The first-year experience of higher education in the UK' Feb 2007/2008
- JISC Learner Experiences Project 2005-2009
- JISC / MORI 'Great Expectations of ICT: how Higher Education Institutions are measuring up' 2009
- University of Edinburgh IS Survey Results: Mobile Services 2010
- UMSU 'Researching your experience as a Manchester student' 2010

Meetings

A number of visits and meetings took place to identify good practice and relevant issues.

- The School of Dentistry
- The School of Physics and Astronomy
- The School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures
- The School of Medicine
- TLSO Students as Partners programme
- Student Experience Office
- EPS Academic Services
- The University of Nottingham
- The University of Leeds
- The University of Salford
- The University of Glamorgan
- oMbiel (mobile computing solution provider)

Other Inputs

Participation in University groups

- Student Recruitment Communications Group
- Crucial Guide Live Steering Group
- Start of Year Communications Group
- Manchester Learning Environment (MLE) Project Workstream 5

Presentations from several conferences have also been examined

- The Future of Social and Digital Media in HE May 2010
- Higher Education Marketing and Communications Forum March 2010
- Clunk2Funky: AMOSSHE (UK Student Services Organisation) November 2009

Appendix B – Anglia Ruskin University Student Communications Charter

Cambridge Campus
East Road
Cambridge
CB1 1PT

Chelmsford Campus
Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford
CM1 1SQ

Click: www.anglia.ac.uk
Email: answers@anglia.ac.uk
Call: 0845 271 3333

pp431


 Anglia Ruskin University
 Cambridge & Chelmsford

Student Communication Charter 2008



www.anglia.ac.uk

Welcome to Anglia Ruskin University!

This Charter will tell you some important things about the ways we will communicate with you whilst you are studying with us, as well as explaining what you can expect of us and what we expect of you.

How we will communicate with you:

We will communicate with you in a number of different ways. Your Faculty and the Support Services you use, for example the University Accommodation Service and the University Library, will provide you with details of the specific ways in which they will communicate important messages to you and give you information about the ways in which you can communicate with them.

However, there are several key methods of communication which all Anglia Ruskin students need to familiarise themselves with. These are:

- The Anglia Ruskin student email account, through which teaching staff and others will communicate with you personally.
- The ANET student pages, which are accessible via the Anglia Ruskin website and which give information about support services at our University and also how to contact Departments and Individuals like ANET Directway. The ANET Student Homepage is also where you will find any urgent messages relating to IT services or campus wide.



- e-Notes, where you will find essential information and get your marks.
- Our student magazines, The Year Information which is published regularly throughout the year and is available free from special 'hot' or all our campuses and within our regional partner colleges.
- Our on-campus Information Screens where you will find information about what is happening on your campus, details of forthcoming events, and details about any planned changes to teaching. You can also access the Information Screen via the ANET page <http://www.anglia.ac.uk/information> and set up an RSS feed.
- Departmental and support service notice boards.
- Our e-courses (includes information content). With courses at our Cambridge, Colchester and Chelmsford campuses, the e-courses offer a range of services for students. These knowledgeable staff can deal with all non-academic enquiries about processes and procedures at Anglia Ruskin University.
- SMS text is used by some departments to coordinate appointments with you, give information about class changes, and/or as part of their student absence-reporting procedure (Absing). Your Faculty and support services will give you more information about this.

What you can expect of us:

- We will provide the infrastructure and staff to support a range of communication channels, including student email, ANET e-Notes, regular editions of the Year Information student magazine, and the Information Screens.
- We will be open to you, via the Information Screens and the Student ANET, where there are technical difficulties that might affect your internet access and email account. We will tell you how long these difficulties are expected to last and how to get further help and information.
- We will be open to you, as soon as possible, about any changes to your teaching. We will do this by sending messages on the Information Screens regarding any considerable alterations to class times or locations.
- All the communications you receive from your Faculty and support services including Don't-fuck-up, information and email contact, will be clear, courteous, respectful, and accurate.
- You will receive communication, prior to your arrival at Anglia Ruskin University, which explains what you need to do when you get here or when you start your studies in off-shore courses, and what services will be available to you.
- During your induction period, your Faculty will communicate with you, how you can find information about the modules available to you, and advise how you will be assessed.



What we expect of you:

- We aim to make our communications as jargon-free as possible, and you can expect to receive information from individuals and departments who clearly identify themselves and tell you how you can contact them, in response to their message.
- If you have comments to make about the services you receive at Anglia Ruskin, you can expect us to listen to your concerns and to tell you about any action we take as a result.
- In addition, whilst at Anglia Ruskin, you will regularly be offered opportunities to tell us about your experience of studying with us. You will be asked to complete Module Evaluation forms such as the Student Satisfaction Survey and the Assessment Design/Feedback Survey, to participate in surveys, including our annual Student Experience Survey and the National Student Survey (NSS), and to contribute to our communication with the student body by acting as a Student Representative or by bringing any ideas or issues to the attention of your Student Rep. You can expect us to make these opportunities available to you and, in the case of Module Evaluation and our student surveys, to ensure that informative remains anonymous.
- We will feed back to our students the results of any surveys we undertake, including Module Evaluation, the annual Student Experience Survey and the NSS. We will do this via Programme Committees, through the Student ANET, and the Year Information magazines.
- We expect all our students to familiarise themselves with communication at Anglia Ruskin. You can do this by logging on to your email account, and to e-Notes, as soon as possible after you join our University, accessing the Student ANET, and by looking out for notice boards and Information Screens around your campus.
- We expect our students to read the information given to them in induction, including the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students and the Assessment Design/Feedback Surveys. Such are also available online via Student ANET.
- We expect you to make use of the communication channels we make available to you, in particular, your e-Notes and email accounts.
- You should check e-Notes for information about timetables, as well as administrative and re-submission deadlines, it is your responsibility to plan for hard to deadlines and to ensure you get your work in on time.
- In order that we can communicate with you effectively and efficiently, we expect you to update your personal contact details online, whenever these change.
- We expect you to check your Anglia Ruskin student email account at least twice a week during teaching periods, and to use this account when you communicate with any department or individual at our University. These email communications should always contain your name and ID number, as this information will often allow staff to deal with your enquiry more quickly.

If you have any queries about communication at Anglia Ruskin University, please contact Student Services.
Chelmsford: 0845 196 4278
Cambridge: 0845 196 2415

Appendix C – Project Board Steering Group Membership

Jeremy Buck, Communications Officer, UMSU

Kate Little, Academic Affairs Officer, UMSU

Annette Babchuk – Head of Alumni Relations

Alan Ferns – Director, Communications, Media and PR Division

Paul Govey – Head of Student Marketing and Admissions

Rachael McGraw – Internal Communications Manager

Layton Quinton - General Manager - Sales & Marketing , STARS

Dr Patricia Sponder – Head of Student Support and Services

Alex Waddington – Student Communications Officer

Louise Walmsley - Head of the Teaching and Learning Support Office

Jenny Wragge – Student Experience Officer