



— Est. 1992 —

International College of Hotel Management
ADELAIDE – AUSTRALIA



Communications Policy & Procedure

Communications Policy and Procedure

Modification history

Date	Modification	Person Responsible
June 2016	Policy creation	Dr Ian Whyte & Gerald Lipman
October 2016	Policy approval	Dr Ian Whyte & Gerald Lipman

Purpose

ICHM is committed to ensuring all employees and students are communicated with in a reliable, timely, effective and efficient manner.

The purpose of this policy is to detail the appropriate method and manner in which to communicate, and to clarify expectations and responsibilities.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees and students of ICHM.

Definitions

'Academic staff' includes those employees engaged to teach students, where a majority of the employee's teaching work is in the delivery of units or programs.

'Student' refers to a person who is enrolled in an ICHM subject or program, a potential student or a member of the ICHM alumni.

Communication Principles

Communication is a two-way process and involves one or more parties giving and receiving information in dialogue with one another through listening to, and delivering a message. All official ICHM communication must be audience specific, timely, effective, clear and concise, and sent via the most appropriate communication channel.

Key responsibilities need to be taken into account when determining the audience. With this in mind, the responsibility assignment matrix, RASCI, applies:

- R** Responsible (those who undertake the work in order to achieve the task).
- A** Accountable (those who delegate tasks and are ultimately liable for the end result).
- S** Support (resources provided to those responsible, who assist in undertaking the work).
- C** Consulted (provide input into the tasks and are often referred to as subject experts).
- I** Informed (those who are notified when a deliverable or task has been achieved).

When preparing to communicate with an employee or student, it is important to consider the following key questions:

- What is the aim of your communication?
 - What action/outcome are you expecting or require?
 - Have you stated if a response is required, or if the communication is for information only purposes?
- Who is the target audience?
 - Is this the most appropriate person (consider RASCI)?
- Can this information be sourced elsewhere?
 - Check the Share drive, OneDrive, previous communication
- Is there a specific timeframe in which you require a response?

- Are your questions clear, concise and specific?
- What communication method is the most suitable?
 - Telephone
 - Email
 - SMS
 - Face to face meeting
 - Skype
 - Social media
 - Online portal

Etiquette

- a. Appropriate etiquette must be used when communicating to employees and students. All ICHM communication must be conveyed in an accurate, professional and respectful manner, and in accordance with relevant ICHM policies, including, but not limited to, the Code of Conduct (employees), Personal Conduct (students), Information Technology Policy (employees), and the Computer & Internet Policy (students).
- b. Consideration must be given to factors such as tone, the use of humour and cultural differences. Language used should be simple, clear and concise, and not threatening or intimidating. Non-verbal communication must also be considered when communicating face to face or via Skype, with awareness of facial expressions, body movements, gestures and eye contact required.
- c. It is reasonable to expect a response to both written and verbal communications within 3 business days. Where an individual is unable to respond within this timeframe, they should communicate the steps being taken to respond, and outline a reason for the delay within the timeframe. Where the communication has not been responded to within the allocated timeframe, it would be appropriate for the requesting party to follow up with the individual they are requesting information, advice and/or support from in order to obtain an update.
- d. ICHM employees are not expected to work out of normal business hours including evenings, weekends and Public Holidays. ICHM employees are also not expected to undertake work during periods of leave including annual and sick leave. Students and fellow employees are expected to respect this, and take this into consideration when attempting to contact employees out of normal business hours.
- e. Academic staff will allow time during the semester to communicate with students, whether this is via written or verbal communication, or a mixture of both.
- f. Consider the correct line of communication when raising concerns. Further information regarding the complaints process, including the correct line of communication can be found in the Grievance Policy on the I Drive (employees) and the Grievance Policy on the ICHM website (students).
- g. Any employee who is not contactable during periods of absence from the workplace or Campus must ensure that an out of office auto-reply has been set up on their email account and voicemail, with alternative contact details provided for obtaining advice during this period and a return date. These details should also be left with the College Administration team.

Written Communication

- a. Written communication includes the use of email, text messaging (SMS) technology, social media and online portal mediums.
- b. Consideration needs to be given when composing written communication so as to ensure the expected etiquette standards are being met.
- c. The composer of the communication must ensure that the medium used is appropriate for the topic. For example, it would not be appropriate to utilise an online portal for an enquiry regarding a confidential matter.
- d. Consider RASCI when determining the audience.
- e. Written communication does not allow for visual or verbal cues, and the words that are chosen, the format in which they are presented and visual enhancements (colour, font size, emoticons, bold, underline) all convey the tone of the message. Words and visual enhancements should be chosen carefully as written communication can often be misconstrued by the reader due to perceptions regarding the tone.
- f. In order to enable timely and appropriate responses to written communication and in particular, emails, it is important to include a topic specific subject header in the email and a timeframe in which a response is expected. Further to this, it is appropriate to use full words, correct grammar and punctuation, and avoid abbreviations.
- g. Students should include their 4-digit student ID number in the subject header of emails and in written correspondence, along with the subject code for enquiries relating to their studies. Employees should include the 4-digit student ID and student name in the subject header of emails and in written communication when communicating with other employees about the student.
- h. Employees and students are discouraged from using personal email accounts due to the privacy and confidentiality issues that may arise from doing so. Employees and students should use ICHM email accounts when communicating on ICHM business matters.
- i. The common understanding when including recipients into the "CC" section of an email is that the email is for their information only and no action of this person(s) is directly required. The person who the email has been sent "To" is expected to respond to all recipients, including those in the "CC" section.
- j. ICHM mailing lists are to be used where a message or key announcement needs to be communicated to multiple parties. Consider RASCI when determining which mailing list should be included in the email correspondence, and whether all individuals on the mailing list are required to receive the correspondence.
- k. All urgent enquiries should include a reason for the urgency, specific response timeframe so as to ensure the reader is aware of the urgency of the request and the time in which a response is required. It may be more appropriate for urgent requests to be communicated via telephone or in a scheduled face to face meeting.

- I. Text messaging (SMS) and utilising the messaging services on social media platforms such as Facebook messenger, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, MSN messenger, etc., should be used sparingly as an informal communication tool for reminders or updates that do not need to be formally recorded or responded to. Text and social media messaging should not be used as a follow up method when other communication tools have been unsuccessful or where a response has not yet been received. Text messaging can be used to contact someone who is in a meeting to request the individual checks an urgent email when they are back at their desk or out of the meeting. However, it would not be appropriate to send a text message to a Manager requesting leave approval or to a lecturer requesting an extension on an assignment, for example.

Verbal Communication

- a. Verbal communication can take place via phone, face to face meetings, or Skype discussions. The choice of medium used to communicate will be dependent on the information required to be conveyed, its urgency and the party's availability for a verbal conversation.
- b. Verbal communication is one of the most beneficial methods of ensuring information and knowledge is shared. The conversational nature allows for greater understanding of the message being conveyed and allows for reflection, feedback and questioning.
- c. When preparing for a scheduled meeting, ensure all information required for the meeting is at hand and suitable questions relating to the information being sourced have been prepared.
- d. When communicating verbally, it is important to ensure that the information is conveyed in the following manner:
 - Clearly and concisely
 - Friendly and professional
 - Active listening skills are used
 - Appropriate feedback is provided
 - Non-verbal communication styles are considered
 - Cultural sensitivity is displayed.
- e. Consider the appropriate line of communication and RASCI when scheduling meetings or organising phone conversations, and take into consideration workloads and competing priorities for the parties requiring involvement in a meeting and/or phone conversation.
- f. Unless authorised by the individual, personal phone numbers may not be distributed to employees or students at any time. Employees and students are encouraged to contact the desk phone of the employee they are wishing to communicate with due to the limited mobile phone reception within the main ICHM offices on Campus.
- g. Students are expected to be contactable via phone during business hours and are encouraged to set up a professional voicemail in order to ensure industry contacts and ICHM employees are able to leave a message.

- h. Students and employees are expected to return phone calls within 3 business days, unless it is a matter of urgency or priority, in which case they must respond as soon as possible.
- i. Employees and students are expected to be on time for all meetings, including Skype meetings. Where an employee or student may be running late, this must be communicated to the other parties involved in the meeting as soon as possible prior to the meeting start time.
- j. IT support is available to assist in setting up Skype for meetings.
- k. Where appropriate, follow up with a written summary of the meeting including agreed outcomes, action items and timeframes.

Relevant Resources

Employees

- Code of Conduct
- Information Technology Policy
- Grievance Management Policy
- Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying Policy

Students

- Personal Conduct Policy & Procedure
- Computer and Internet Policy & Procedure
- Grievance Policy & Procedure
- Access & Equity Policy & Procedure

Review and Approval

The Chief Executive and Principal are responsible for the review of this policy on an annual basis. Any changes must be approved by the Chief Executive and the Principal.