

Estate Support Service Communication Standards

1. Introduction

The objective of this standard is to ensure best practice for each method of communication we use and to ensure it is implemented throughout the service.

We aim to provide a high standard of communication and we will ensure that we will communicate with you in a timely, polite, friendly and helpful manner.

Our Standards

You can expect the following standards from us when we are communicating with you.

Plain English

We will avoid using technical jargon, abbreviations and will communicate in clear and easily understood language

We will take into account the urgency and nature of the issue being communicated and use the most appropriate method of communication.

We will give priority to communicating face-to-face, followed by using the telephone before choosing to write emails or letters.

2. Face-to-Face Communications

We will agree a convenient time to come and see you and inform you in advance of the reason for our visit.

We will display photo identification smart cards. (Cards may be temporarily removed if they present a risk to health and safety)

When we come to visit you or carry out work in your work area we will introduce ourselves and tell you why we are there.

3. Communicating using the telephone

When contacting you we will give you our name and tell you the service and area we work in. We will also ask you if the timing of the call is convenient for you and if not, when would be a convenient time to call back.

When you telephone us we will answer the call within 5 rings and answer with name of the Directorate and our own name

Voice mail

When we are away from the office for more than one day we will avoid the use of the voice mail system. We will instead arrange for your call to be forwarded to a colleague or the ESS Customer Services Section who may be able to help you with your enquiry.

Alternatively we may use a facility on voicemail which allows the caller to divert to a pre-programmed extension so you may speak to a person. This gives you a choice - to leave a message or speak to someone else

When in use the voicemail message will contain the following details:

- Name
- The name of the Directorate
- The contact details of a colleague who will be able to help you while the person you are trying to contact is away from their desk.

4. Communicating using Email

We will use Arial size 12 font in black text on a white background. We will be happy to increase the font size of written documents to accommodate disabilities e.g. visual impairments.

We will acknowledge and respond to your email within 2 working days. If it is not possible to provide a full written response within that timescale we will tell you when you can expect a full response and the reason for the delay.

When we are away from the office we will use the 'out of office assistant' to inform you of the date of our return. We will also provide alternative contact details to enable your enquiry to be dealt with promptly.

Email Signatures

All emails will include the full contact details of their owners including:

- Name
- Job Title
- Service Area
- Telephone Number
- ESS Mission
- Link to Web Feedback Form

5. Communicating using Written Documents

We will use Arial size 12 font in black text on a white background. We will be happy to increase the font size of written documents to accommodate disabilities e.g. visual impairments.

When you write to us we will acknowledge and respond to your letter within 5 working days. If it is not possible to provide a full written response within that timescale we will inform you of when you can expect a full response and the reason for the delay.

6. Communicating Significant Construction Works

Advance notice of significant works

For works that will have a significant impact on you and/or your working environment we will arrange to meet you and/or the Faculty Co-ordinator one month prior to work beginning whenever possible.

Displaying information signs

Signs will be displayed for the duration of the works and will include information relating to

- The nature and duration of the works
- The ESS manager who has overall responsibility for managing the works including the service area they work for and their contact details.