Student Communications Policy

Version number	Date approved (including committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Proposed next review date
V1.3	May 2022 ExCo	Annual Review	Head of Marketing	Biennially and as required
Related policies				
Social Media Policy Acceptable use of IT Policy				
External Reference				
• UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Enabling student achievement. ICMP has developed targeted communication approaches.				

1. Background

1.1. ICMP is committed to providing students with an excellent experience and a significant part of that experience is influenced by how we communicate.
1.2. It is therefore vital that we continually review and consider how we communicate with our students in the increasingly diverse and constantly evolving communication landscape.
1.3. This policy aims to describe the main channels we use in communicating with students.

2. Principles

The guiding principles of this Policy are:
2.1. To ensure effective communication channels exist for students to access useful, engaging and essential information.
2.2. To minimise the need for students to monitor multiple communication channels.
2.3. To facilitate effective two-way communication to encourage student feedback.
2.4. To comply with data protection legislation.
2.5. To communicate effectively during serious incidents.

3. Message categories

ICMP must comply with data protection legislation in the use of personal data. We must advise students how we will use their contact details and only use them for those purposes.

Below are the categories of message ICMP has defined along with those responsible for each category:

3.1. **Broadcast communication (to all students or large groups)**
This includes all communication to large groups or to all students and can cover subjects such as advertising student support services, promoting events, promoting campaigns such as NSS or providing official information. Such messages are sent by Marketing and would typically be via the student's ICMP email account. Outside of term-time, when necessary messages may also be sent to students' personal email accounts.

3.2. **Operational communication**
This includes operational messages such as room changes, timetable changes, deadlines – anything related to the students' learning experience and working environment. Such messages are sent by members of the Data and Academic teams and would typically be via the student's ICMP email account or via the virtual learning environment (VLE).

3.3. **Learning and teaching communication**
This includes all formal or informal communication between teaching staff and students, on an individual basis or in groups. Such messages are sent by members of the Academic team and would typically be via the VLE or student email accounts, via Quercus.

3.4. **Serious incident communication**
This includes all communication to students related to a serious incident. Such messages are sent by ExCo and would typically be via ICMP Email and SMS. Where appropriate, messages may also be communicated via social media to ensure maximum and immediate reach – eg. an unexpected site closure.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. **Marketing are responsible for:**
4.1.1. management of all broadcast communication through central channels;
4.1.2. serious incident communication, where instructed by Directorate;
4.1.3. maintenance of this Policy and advice on its implementation.

4.2. **Academic Support are responsible for:**
4.2.1. learning and teaching communication with their students;
4.2.2. operational communication related to students' working environment and the administration of their course;

4.2.3. serious incident communication, where instructed by Directorate;

4.2.4. ensuring all staff adhere to this Policy.

4.3. **Student Support Teams are responsible for:**

4.3.1. communicating with large groups of students;

4.3.2. communicating on an individual basis with students who are engaged with their service;

4.3.3. serious incident communication, where instructed by Directorate;

4.3.4. ensuring all staff adhere to this Policy.

4.4. **Students are responsible for:**

4.4.1. Ensuring they check primary channels of communication regularly and respond in a timely manner where necessary.

4.4.2. Informing their Academic Support if messages or information is not reaching them in an appropriate or satisfactory manner.

4.4.3. Informing their Academic Support of any changes to personal details.

5. Communication channels

This is a summary of the primary and secondary channels available with which to communicate to and with students, and the people responsible for them:

5.1. **Primary channels**

5.1.1. The two primary channels are ICMP email and via the VLE. We will monitor these channels to ensure they are the main preferred routes of communication.

5.2. **Email**

5.2.1. All students have an ICMP email account and use Microsoft 365 as their email system. In order for ICMP to comply fully with data protection legislation, all correspondence with students will be sent to ICMP email accounts only during term time. Outside of termtime, students will be communicated with via personal email accounts when required.

5.2.2. Broadcast messaging, sent via the Marketing email channel, is required to carry an unsubscribe option on all messages. To avoid missing key messages and opportunities, students are encouraged not to unsubscribe. Marketing are unable to re-instate subscriptions, students are required to opt-back-in to marketing comms via My.ICMP

5.2.3. Staff will not collect or use personal email accounts for correspondence. However, key/critical messages may be required to be sent to personal email accounts outside of term-time.

5.2.4. This practice will provide one effective channel for email messages. Staff can use Quercus to email either individual or groups of students.

5.2.5. All users of email are reminded that this is a legal communication and therefore subject to ICMP's code of conduct as outlined in the student handbook.

5.3. **VLE**

5.3.1. The ICMP's VLE is a channel for learning and teaching material. It is mainly used for learning and teaching messages, as detailed in section 3 but is also a resource for student information as well as providing course specific learning support.

5.4. **My ICMP**

5.4.1. My ICMP is an internal website that contains resources, information and guidance for staff and students.

5.5 **ICMP Website**

5.5.1 Critical situations may also be temporarily communicated via the homepage of the website. Eg. unexpected closure.

5.5.2 Student events and opportunities will also be hosted on the ICMP website, particularly where it's appropriate to showcase these to an external/applicant audience

6. Secondary channels

The secondary channels listed here are a supplement to the primary channels listed above. These channels have varying degrees of popularity and effectiveness as they are not consistently used across ICMP. Therefore, they should not be relied upon to relay important information. Rather they should be used as a back-up to the primary channels and for raising awareness only.

The principles of this Policy apply in particular to secondary channels – to reduce the burden on students to regularly maintain multiple channels.

6.1. **Television screens**
6.1.1. The screens are managed by Marketing and display a range of messages from operational level items such as safety messages to global messages such as promoting the NSS or upcoming events. Screens can also be used during a serious incident.

6.2. **Internal Notice boards**
6.2.1. There are many notice boards displaying information for students. Staff with responsibility for the maintenance of notice boards should ensure that information is advertised in a timely manner and, importantly, is removed when out of date.

6.3. **Printed material**
6.3.1. This includes printed material, other than learning and teaching material, that departments and services need to produce for use by students, such as posters, leaflets and flyers.

6.4. **Text messaging**
6.4.1. ICMP has a text messaging system which may be used during serious incidents or emergencies and is managed by the Data Team.
6.4.2. Staff are discouraged from using text messaging to communicate with individual students under normal operations and should avoid SMS messaging from a personal mobile device.
6.4.3. If you have any concerns regarding appropriate use of student mobile phone numbers, please contact ICMP's Data Protection Officer.

6.5. **Quercus Gateway**
6.5.1. The Quercus portal is the central area for a range of information for students including exam results and to amend personal data. Formal communications from ICMP can be reviewed by students here.

6.6. **Social media and external websites**
6.6.1. Social media channels, and any other websites external to the main ICMP site, are used to communicate news and stories about events and activities.
6.6.2. Social media may also be used to communicate key messages to ensure increased exposure and timely dissemination of critical messages.
6.6.3. The VLE is designed to communicate with students during their studies in a similar manner to social networking sites, including email, chat, forums and whiteboards as effective teaching and networking tools. Any communication needs of this kind are to be managed within the VLE.
6.6.4. ICMP maintains a range of social media platforms, however these are secondary channels.

7. Feedback channels

7.1. There are numerous mechanisms to allow formal and informal feedback from students. Day-to-day contact and conversations with students should encourage feedback to maintain and improve the student experience.
7.2. On a more formal basis, the following channels are available:

Channel	Responsible
Programme Committee Meetings	Programme Leader
Student Senate meetings	Student President
Module Reviews	Data Team
Student Satisfaction Surveys	Data Team
Comment boxes	Facilities
Student President Meetings	Student President
Complaint Reporting	Quality Team

8. Professionalism in communication

8.1. In all communications staff are reminded of their responsibility to serve the interests of ICMP and ensure appropriate content at all times. Communication is undertaken on behalf of ICMP, therefore is subject to our Code of Conduct, the principles being respect and dignity in all correspondence.

8.2. Staff will ensure appropriate response times are adhered to when communicating with students. A fair judgement should be made regarding the nature of the issue at hand, with all communications receiving an acknowledgement within one working day and a substantive response within three working days.

8.3. During absence or when staff will not be able to respond in a reasonable time, staff should provide an autoreply to their emails with details of an alternative contact.