

Purpose

Fitchburg State University values communicating with students and its constituents efficiently without overwhelming them. Text messaging is a supplementary form of communication that may allow for more timely communication and acts as a “push” mechanism to highlight information. Accordingly, text communications should only be made by university personnel and systems following the guidelines set herein.

Text messaging is considered a secondary method of communication and no text should be sent without an accompanying email message. Email remains the official communication method of Fitchburg State.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and systems affiliated with or acting on behalf of the university for all text messages sent to multiple people.

Text messaging is defined as sending SMS messages to users’ cell phones. This policy does not cover other forms of messaging, such as Discord groups or WhatsApp messages, but users should be mindful of the principles of this policy when utilizing alternative services.

This policy only concerns group text communication with students or others officially affiliated with Fitchburg State and does not apply to individual text messages with whom the sender is in regular, direct personal contact.

Policy

Message Types Permitted

Only certain types of messages may be sent:

- * Health and Safety. The Office of Student Affairs and University Police Department may send texts to students relating to welfare or emergency situations. This is usually transmitted through SSC, the Maxient system, or RAVE.
- * Student Success. The following entities or applications may use text messaging to send information:
 - * Accuplacer testing
 - * Advising
 - * Financial Aid
 - * Student Accounts
 - * Student Affairs for Maxient Student Conduct communication
 - * Student Development (to denote canceled classes)
 - * Tutoring Center

Message Types Prohibited

Text messaging may not be used to communicate:

- * Without an accompanying email message.
- * Routine reminders of campus events that have been previously shared through university email.
- * Personal matters.
- * To promote the sale of non-University products or services.
- * Personal or confidential information such as SSNs, passwords, financial information, or other protected information. Text messages are sent in plain text across the network and are considered unsecure.

Implementation Guidelines

1. Text messages should be identified as coming from Fitchburg State in the title.
2. Text messages should not be the sole method of communication and should always be accompanied by an email message.
3. The procedure to Opt-out of further messages should be included in the text message when possible or identified on the university website.
4. Informational messages should not be sent from 9 PM to 8 AM EST. University closure messages should not be sent between the hours of 10 PM and 5:49 AM. Emergency messages can be sent anytime.

5. Messages should be 170 characters or less.

Role

All Users: Understand and adhere to this policy. Use FSU resources in only those methods, which have been identified as acceptable by this policy.

IT Staff: Ensure that new systems and software that can send SMS messages are implemented in accordance with this policy.

Enforcement

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of access rights and/or termination of employment under adherence to their respective collective bargaining agreement. Students found to have violated this policy may have their access removed and may have additional actions taken as directed by the Student Code of Conduct.

Security Level Public