

**WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE POLICY MANUAL**

Executive Policy #36
Revision Approve January 20, 2017

Text Messaging Policy

POLICY

WSU values communicating with current students promptly and efficiently using communication processes which engage students, without overwhelming them. Text messaging is an additional method of communication WSU uses to communicate directly with students, and is conducted only in accordance with this policy.

Text messages must support either health and safety or critical student success initiatives.

This policy applies to mass/systematic texting of currently-enrolled students and currently-employed faculty and staff. The policy does not apply to text messaging for recruitment or research purposes.

APPROVED TO SEND TEXT MESSAGES

Specific University entities are approved to send the following types of text messages:

Health and Safety

Health and Wellness Services and WSU Public Safety offices may send information related to student/staff/faculty welfare and/or information related to appointments/services by text message.

Academic Success

The following University entities may use text messaging to send information critical to student academic success, limited to critical academic calendar dates, academic advising notifications, academic standing notices, information related to Access Center Services, and financial aid notifications:

- Advisors
- Tutors
- Office of Student Financial Services
- Campus career services offices
- Access Center

Mission-Critical

Other mission-critical text messages may be sent as determined by the President, Chancellor, Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Athletic Training Services within Intercollegiate Athletics, or their designees.

MESSAGING TOOLS AND PROCESSES

Any systematic process or tool used to communicate with WSU current students through text messaging must be approved by the Provost's Office prior to adoption. To request approval, complete the online Text Messaging Approval form:

provost.wsu.edu/text-messaging/

The Provost's Office maintains a list of units/entities/tools approved for delivering text messages.

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Privacy

Student cellular telephone numbers are not shared with any WSU entity without Provost's Office approval.

Opt-In and Opt-Out

Accessible, clear opt-in and opt-out processes must be in place for each tool/entity so that students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to opt in or out on an ongoing basis.

Any opt-in/opt-out form created must include the following information:

- What recipients can expect,
- Who may send text messages,
- When and why texting may occur, and
- A contact for abuse or annoyance, e.g., provost.social@wsu.edu.

For systems or tools where the Enterprise Systems Group (ESG) is asked to provide data (student cellular telephone numbers) to a third party, students opt in at registration, each term for which they register, and may opt out at any time.

Accessibility

Text messages must be accessible for all intended recipients (e.g., recipients with disabilities, non-English speakers).

RECORDS RETENTION

University business-related text messages are considered public records whether a WSU system/tool or personal telephone/system/tool is used for texting. The sender is responsible for retention of text messages sent to multiple recipients. Text messages are to be managed by message content. See *Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM) 90.03*. The sender is also responsible for providing any responsive text message records if requested under the Public Records Act. See *BPPM 90.05*.

BEST PRACTICES

Message Content

Senders should adhere to the following message content best practices:

- Use texting to communicate short, individually targeted messages, such as:
 - Emergency notifications
 - Upcoming deadlines (e.g., financial aid)
 - Appointment reminders

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BEST PRACTICES (cont.)

Message Contents (cont.)

- Use a different format for texts related to emergencies, to differentiate the texts from academic and financial aid related messages.
- Clearly identify the originator of the message
- Ensure that the content is appropriate and the circulation list is correct
- Limit the message length to 160 characters
- Avoid "text speak" (abbreviations and slang)
- Be professional and polite
- Ensure that embedded links are short and clearly identified as connected with WSU or other valid partners

Multiple Means of Communication

Texting should not be used as the only system through which a message is communicated. The message should be duplicated with email, phone, or other acceptable means of communication.