

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

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Adapted from *University of Portsmouth Staff Communications Policy, September 2010*.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the foundation on which organizational success is built. Communication is also critical in engaging our people in the strategic direction of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Pharm Sci/the Faculty) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) while simultaneously contributing to the formation of a healthy, productive and enjoyable workplace culture.

There are many channels of communication available to Pharm Sci within the broader context of UBC. This document outlines the responsibilities of the Faculty in maintaining good internal communication practice, the main internal communication channels available, and how and when they might be used.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This document is based on the following guiding principles:

- Ensure the Faculty is fully informed of all relevant and important Pharm Sci and UBC activity.
- Cultivate a productive, positive and professional workplace environment by providing easy access to essential, useful and engaging information.
- Provide effective methods of communicating during an emergency.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

### Management

*Dean, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, Directors at all levels, Managers, Supervisors or equivalent*

- To ensure relevant information is made available in a timely manner via appropriate channels.
- To communicate regularly with their teams to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the applicable unit and working environment.
- To ensure they and their staff (or equivalent) are maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this document.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments from all members of the Faculty.

### All Faculty

*Faculty members, staff, students, postdoctoral fellows, other appointments or equivalent*

- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support the strategic direction of Pharm Sci and UBC.
- To ensure they are maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this document.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep colleagues informed.

## **Committees, Working Groups, Task Forces, Associations**

- To ensure agendas, minutes and other relevant information are made available in a timely manner via appropriate channels.

## **Dean's Office (Director, Communications & Marketing)**

- To regularly review and update this document.
- To assist with the dissemination of information to Pharm Sci via all appropriate channels.
- To support Pharm Sci in maintaining good communication practice in accordance with this document.

## **CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION**

Different types of information will require different channels of communication. The main categories of information at Pharm Sci are as follows:

### **Pharm Sci and UBC Management and Strategic Direction**

This includes information regarding the overall management and strategic direction of Pharm Sci and UBC. Examples include announcements regarding senior management decisions and UBC policy changes.

### **Day-to-Day, Work-Related Information**

This includes information required to carry out day-to-day work, roles and responsibilities. Examples include project documents, meeting agendas, forms and other related information.

### **Faculty-Wide Notices**

This includes non-urgent information that everyone may benefit from. Examples include event invitations and newsletters.

### **Serious Incidents**

Serious incidents constitute risks to health and safety.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The following is a summary of the primary and secondary internal communication channels.

### Primary Channels

Primary channels are the preferred methods of communicating important information to all Faculty.

#### Face-to-Face\*

Communicating in person with colleagues is considered to be the most beneficial method of ensuring information is conveyed. Conversations allow for greater understanding of message context and encourage reflection, questioning and feedback. There are many instances where face-to-face communication is necessary, such as employee performance reviews.

Everyone is encouraged as often as possible to meet with colleagues rather than relying on email or printed material. While it is important to manage the amount of time spent in meetings, well-managed discussions are an effective way of sharing knowledge, solving problems and ensuring common understanding and appreciation of issues.

*\*For the purposes of this document, face-to-face communication includes phone, video and web conferencing, and other similar methods of communication.*

#### Email

Email is one of the most common methods of communicating. It is also considered one of the most overused. Faculty are reminded that general email communication remains the subject of UBC and UBC IT policies, which provide details of appropriate use, email management, security and confidentiality.

Internal email communication at UBC Pharm Sci is facilitated predominantly via listservs and group distribution lists. A listserv is:

*An automatic mailing list server developed by Eric Thomas for BITNET in 1986. When email is addressed to a LISTSERV mailing list, it is automatically broadcast to everyone on the list. The result is similar to a newsgroup or forum, except that the messages are transmitted as email and are therefore available only to individuals on the list. LISTSERV is currently a commercial product marketed by L-Soft International. Although LISTSERV refers to a specific mailing list server, the term is sometimes used incorrectly to refer to any mailing list server.*

**Source:** [webopedia.com/TERM/L/Listserv](http://webopedia.com/TERM/L/Listserv)

Both listservs and group distribution lists are organized based on audience. Information shared is selected by listserv and group owners in accordance with this document.

Frequency of emails is dependent on the amount and nature of information to be shared. All Faculty receive internal communications via listservs dedicated to faculty, staff, MSc students, PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, other appointments and retirees.

The following is a list of the main email communications sent:

- **Pharm Sci Daily:** The Faculty's internal e-bulletin intended for faculty members, staff, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, other appointments and retirees. It is distributed daily and contains general information (mainly pertaining to the Faculty and UBC) that is non-urgent.
- **From the Dean:** Messages from the Dean that contain important information regarding Faculty operations, initiatives and other topics. From the Dean emails are distributed as required.
- **Announcements:** Messages that contain important and/or time-sensitive information requiring special consideration. Examples include messages from the Associate Deans, health and safety, and human resources. Announcement messages are distributed as required.

Anyone from the Faculty wishing to share information via the identified listservs is asked to visit [pharmsci.ubc.ca/communications](http://pharmsci.ubc.ca/communications).

Pharm Sci Daily messages are sent on the next business day from when requests are received, during regular office hours (Monday–Friday, 8:00–4:00 pm). Announcement messages are sent on the same day they are received where possible, during regular office hours.

All other information specific to a particular audience is to be shared via the appropriate listserv or group distribution list, and at the discretion of the listserv/group distribution list owner. Anyone seeking more information about listservs and group distribution lists at UBC Pharm Sci is asked to email [pharmsci.communications@ubc.ca](mailto:pharmsci.communications@ubc.ca).

Special attention must be given by all listserv and group distribution owners to email duplication. Multiple emails on the same subject, either from the same sender or different senders, causes inbox clutter and frustration on the part of the email recipient.

## Secondary Channels

Secondary channels are a supplement to primary channels and have varying degrees of effectiveness. As such, they should not be used to relay important information.

### Digital Signage

The Faculty, UBC Brand and Marketing, and UBC AV IT operate the digital signage system. Day-to-day operations are managed by the Faculty's Communications & Marketing Team, in the Office of the Dean. Digital signage can be used by any member of UBC and—specific to the Faculty—any member of UBC Pharm Sci (faculty member, staff, student, postdoctoral fellow). For more information, please refer to the Faculty's Digital Signage Guidelines.

### Printed Materials

Printed materials such as brochures and posters are occasionally needed to communicate information internally. Printed materials are **not to be affixed to any building surfaces** using tape, pins, or by any other means. Doing so creates damage that is very costly to repair. Please use the provided bulletin boards and wall-mounted Plexiglas sleeves installed throughout the building.

### **Shared Drives and Cloud Computing**

Shared drives and cloud computing offer the Faculty a method for sharing documents, files and other digital media electronically. There are UBC- and FIPPA-approved shared drive and cloud computing solutions available, and others that are still under development. Faculty are asked to contact [UBC IT](#) for more information.

### **Instant Messaging and Online Collaboration Software**

There are many software applications on the market today that provide instant messaging and online collaboration solutions. It is important that you are compliant with FIPPA when using these applications. Contact [UBC IT](#) for more information.

## **A NOTE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is an important method for communicating information. Due to its public nature and lack of confidentiality, social media is not recommended for internal communications of any kind. For more information about social media and UBC, visit [brand.ubc.ca/brand-toolkit/social-media](http://brand.ubc.ca/brand-toolkit/social-media).

## **PROFESSIONALISM IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

In all internal communications, everyone is reminded that communication undertaken on behalf of Pharm Sci and UBC is subject to the policies of Pharm Sci and UBC. During absence, everyone should provide appropriate out-of-office replies.

## **QUESTIONS**

For more information, please email [pharmsci.communications@ubc.ca](mailto:pharmsci.communications@ubc.ca).