



**Effective:** Oct. 15, 2019  
**Last Revised:** Sept. 15, 2019

**Responsible University Office:**  
*Enrollment Management and Marketing*

**Responsible University Administrator:**  
*Vice Chancellor, Enrollment Management and Marketing*

**Policy Contact:**  
*Kelly Bartling, VC, Enrollment Management and Marketing*

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## SMS/MMS (Text-Messaging) Policy

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### Scope

The University of Nebraska at Kearney understands and values students' preferences in receiving information and messages. This includes messages to mobile devices via SMS (short message service) and MMS (multimedia messaging service) - also known as text-messaging. This policy will cover the use of texting by university offices and units to communicate valuable information to prospective and current students, including the university's responsibility for student confidentiality and privacy.

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### Policy Statement

Messages and official information intended for the campus community are best communicated by University of Nebraska at Kearney email, through unk.edu, on portals MyBlue and Canvas, through regular U.S. Mail, or printed materials such as posters and postcards. Emergency messaging is carried out through UNK Alert (which includes abilities to call to landline and cellular numbers, to email, page, fax or SMS). This policy is for non-emergency messaging that includes notifications and information from the authorized offices of Admissions, Student Engagement, Financial Aid, Academic Advising and Career Development, First Year Program, Communications and Marketing,

Registrar, Business Office/Student Accounts, Housing/Residence Life and Office of the Chancellor.

Nothing in this policy should prohibit individual faculty, staff, coaches, advisors or others from text-messaging students individually or as groups for university or personal communication, providing the recipient has agreed to receive texts.

Information privacy: UNK does not redistribute or sell personal information collected through its websites, mobile applications, or third-party vendors or applications. UNK complies with all applicable state and federal privacy statutes, including the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Nebraska Public Records Law, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Policy for Responsible Use of University Computers and Information Systems, and UNK Data Security Guidelines. UNK also adheres to ethical standards established by the National Association for Colleges Admission Counseling and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. As a requirement for accreditation under Higher Learning Commission, UNK is required to comply with the HLC Student Consumer Protection Policy.

All entities and personnel of the University of Nebraska at Kearney are required to comply with this policy.

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## Reason for Policy

This policy is intended to establish text-messaging as a method to relay time-sensitive information to promote student success. It also outlines processes and best practices to assure messages are relevant and appropriate. This policy establishes the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Marketing as authority for approving and facilitating text-message use. Any other use of text-messaging by unauthorized units or personnel is prohibited.

UNK is obligated to protect students' personally identifiable data and contact information that is not public directory information as defined under Board of Regents policy.

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## Procedures

Students must opt in through the student portal (MyBLUE) to receive text messages from authorized UNK units. Under leadership by the VCEMM a text-messaging channel, portal or platform will be maintained and a plan developed to utilize text-messaging for student recruitment and success. Authorized users will be trained and will adhere to the text-messaging plan developed. Recipients will be informed of their ability opt out of receiving messages. The engagement plan will focus on student success and will outline the goals and performance metrics for evaluation and the timeline for continual

development and refinement. The plan will be revised annually and will be provided upon request.

At no time will messages contain personally sensitive or confidential information. Messages will be identified clearly with an appropriate identifier so recipients will know who is sending. Messages should be concise and direct recipients to further information or deadlines.

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## Definitions

Personally Identifiable Information: Personal information means either of the following:

1. Board of Regents definition: A Nebraska resident's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following data elements that relate to the resident if either the name or the data elements are not encrypted, redacted, or otherwise altered by any method or technology in such a manner that the name or data elements are unreadable:
  1. Social security number;
  2. Motor vehicle operator's license number or state identification card number;
  3. Account number or credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password that would permit access to a resident's financial account;
  4. Unique electronic identification number or routing code, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password; or
  5. Unique biometric data, such as a fingerprint, voice print, or retina or iris image, or other unique physical representation; or
2. A user name or email address, in combination with a password or security question and answer, that would permit access to an online account.

Personal information does not include publicly available information that is lawfully made available to the general public from federal, state, or local government records

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## Related information

[Higher Education Opportunity Act](#)

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)

[University of Nebraska Board of Regents Policy for Responsible Use of University Computers and Information Systems](#)

[UNK IT](#) and data security and use policies

[National Association for College Admission Counseling Code of Ethics](#)

[American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Ethics and Practices](#)

[HLC Student Consumer Protection Policy \(effective Sept. 1, 2019\)](#)

[FTC consumer information on online privacy](#)

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## History

New policy published September 2019.