

Appendix 10

Guidelines for academic staff

Flaming mail management

Hostile, provocative ('flaming') e-mail including abusive, inappropriate language and/or accusations should be dealt with as soon as possible (ie, within 24 hours).

For a first time offender:

1. Rule of Thumb: The student is not angry at you, but at failing administrative and technical processes. You are his or her lifeline.
2. Address student formally in your response. Role model respectful communication, regardless of the circumstances. This already often softens student's tone ('Dear Valerie....If you have further inquiries...Regards...') Offer additional telephone number/office hours to sort problem out.
3. Apologise for any inconvenience caused. Be sympathetic. First time online learners are at great risk to drop out the very instant things go wrong. Probe further, what exactly is the problem? It may have been blown out of proportion in a panic attack.
4. In a polite but firm tone point out that despite the inconvenience caused, the tone of the sender's mail is inappropriate and unacceptable according to academic conduct policy and the netiquette guidelines posted in your module. Should it be repeated, academic misconduct procedures may have to take effect.
5. Remind students that only emails sent from Edinburgh Napier e-mail accounts (**matricnumber@napier.ac.uk**) can be accepted for reasons of security.
6. Keep a record of all correspondence with the student.