

Cabarrus College of Health Sciences  
Communication Protocol  
June 18, 2022

Introduction

Communication plays a key role in creating and fostering strong, positive relationships between and among students, faculty, staff, and administration. Communication is bidirectional and includes the effective delivery of information as well as the ability and willingness to receive information and respond to the other.

A communication protocol is a set of guidelines for routine communications and problem solving within an organization. This communication protocol is intended to describe the Cabarrus College expectations which promote respectful communication and effective issue resolution among students, staff, faculty, and administration.

Modes of Communication

Communication can take place in a variety of formats. The message content and the purpose of the communication can help determine which format is most appropriate. Generally, the more complex and detailed the information is, the more direct the communication channel chosen should be.

Communication channels include:

- Synchronous Communication
  - Face-to-Face: classroom interactions; individual meetings
  - Telephone or virtual conversations (via Zoom or Teams)
- Asynchronous Communication
  - Written Communication: letters, papers, flyers
  - Electronic Communication: email, learning management system, text message (**by permission only**)
  - Social Media Communication: is a unidirectional communication tool unless otherwise explicitly expressed

When the communication requires a dialogue, such as bringing forward a question or concern or when a discussion is required on a particular topic, the preferred channels of communication are **synchronous communications**, ones that allow for an immediate and ongoing interaction between the individuals involved. The best format for this kind of communication is **synchronous conversations**.

Students and college personnel are encouraged to use synchronous channels of communication when a topic is complex or requires a dialogue. These more direct forms of communication also help to establish a personal connection, which helps build relationships not obtained in other forms of communication.

Email communication may be preferred when a few (three or fewer) pieces of information are being requested or communicated. As a rule of thumb, if an email exchange takes more than two messages to communicate the intended information, individuals should communicate synchronously to complete the discussion.

### Students Addressing Academic Questions and Concerns

If students have a question or concern regarding something related to a course or is academic in nature, the student is encouraged to bring the concern forward in a timely manner directly to the appropriate person. These discussions should take place in the following order:

1. Discuss the course-related question or concern with the individual instructor (didactic, lab, clinical, or simulation) to determine if the question or issue can be resolved at the course level; or the faculty advisor to determine if the advising related question or issue can be resolved at the advising level.
2. If the course question or concern cannot be resolved with the lab, clinical or simulation instructor (if applicable), bring it forward to the didactic instructor (lead instructor/course coordinator).
3. If the course or advising question or concern cannot be resolved at the course or advising level, bring it forward for discussion with the Program Chair.
4. If the question or concern cannot be resolved at the Program Chair level, elevate the discussion to the Dean of Nursing or the Dean of Allied Health, as appropriate.
5. If the question or concern cannot be resolved by the Academic Dean, elevate the discussion to the Provost.
6. If the question or concern cannot be resolved by the Provost, elevate the discussion to the President.

Any level of the above discussions may be initiated by telephone or email, but may evolve into a synchronous meeting, which allows for the best and most collaborative discussion to take place.



### Students, Faculty, and Staff Addressing Administrative Questions and Concerns

If any member of the college community seeks service or information from an administrative department, discussions should take place in the following order:

1. Discuss the question or concern with the staff member to determine if the question or issue can be resolved at the service level.
2. If this question or concern cannot be resolved at the service level, bring it forward for discussion with the Director\* of the Department.
3. If the question or concern cannot be resolved at the Director level, elevate the discussion to the Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, or the Dean of Administrative and Financial Services, as appropriate.
4. If the question or concern cannot be resolved at the Dean level, elevate the discussion to the President.



\*Some service units do not have a Director, but rather a Manager or Coordinator.

Any level of the above discussions may be initiated by telephone or email, but may evolve into a synchronous meeting, which allows for the best and most collaborative discussion to take place.

#### Out of Office Messages

College employees are expected to record and utilize an up-to-date voicemail. Out of office messages for voicemail and email should be utilized if the employee will be away from office for more than one business day.

#### Response Time Frames

Every effort should be made to respond in a timely manner, regardless of the requester and respondent. Generally, requesters should expect a response in two business days.

The College, students, faculty, or staff members may choose to utilize a communication channel that lends itself well to rapid, asynchronous communication (i.e., email or text), however, it does not mean a response can always be offered as quickly as that format allows. Further, while college personnel may routinely reply outside of business hours, on evenings, and on weekends, there should be no expectation for a response outside of college business hours.

#### Contact Timing and Communication Channel Protocol

1. **Initial Outreach to Respondent** – Requester contacts respondent by email, telephone, or text message (if respondent has granted permission to utilize personal text messaging).
2. **Second Outreach to Respondent** – If there was no out of office message or response **after two business days**, requestor follows up by [cabarruscollege.edu](mailto:cabarruscollege.edu) or [atriumhealth.org](mailto:atriumhealth.org) email to same respondent.
3. **Third Outreach Attempt to Respondent (Team Teaching Situation)** – In the case of a student requester and a course with co-instructors; or different didactic, simulation, and clinical instructors; if no response **after three business days** from original outreach, requestor follows up by [cabarruscollege.edu](mailto:cabarruscollege.edu) email to original respondent and appropriate faculty co-worker such as co-instructor, or lead instructor.
4. If no response **after four business days** from original outreach, requestor follows up by [cabarruscollege.edu](mailto:cabarruscollege.edu) email to original respondent and the respondent's supervisor.

A response does not necessarily mean a resolution. At times, an issue may require additional thought. In this case, the respondent will communicate this and provide a timeline in which the decision will be communicated.

#### Student Responses to Faculty and Staff

Students too, should be held accountable to be responsive to communications from faculty and staff. The response time frames identified about are also applicable to students. Consequently, college personnel too, should expect a response in two business days.

## Glossary of Terms

**Academic Department** – A group of college faculty who provide instruction in a particular discipline.

**Administrative Department** – A group of college staff who provide services in a particular administrative function to other members of the college community.

**Asynchronous Communication** – Communication between two or more people in which information can be exchanged independent of time.

**Business Day** – The days in which instruction and student services are typically provided. At Cabarrus College, the business days are Monday through Friday.

**Business Hours** – The times during a day in which a business typically serves customers. At Cabarrus College the business hours are generally 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

**Director** – An appointed leader of an administrative department.

**Organizational Hierarchy** – A group of persons organized into successive levels with each level subordinate to the one above. The Cabarrus College Organizational Chart (attached) describes the organizational hierarchy for Cabarrus College.

**Program Chair** – An appointed leader of an academic department.

**Requester** – The person who asks for something, seeks information, or who makes a request.

**Respondent** – The person who is providing service, assistance, or information.

**Response** – Acknowledgement of receipt of communication. Does not always include resolution.

**Synchronous Communication** - Communication between two or more people in which information exchange can only occur in real time.

**Timely Manner** – Preferably within one business day, but no later than two business days

## Cabarrus College Organizational Chart

Insert up to date organizational chart here, or refer to the page number of the chart in the bulletin.