

# Be clear.

The Waterloo community includes highly engaged people who are always on the go. Demonstrate respect for their time by being as direct and concise as possible. Use the fastest and simplest way to communicate the purpose and content of your message.

### Instead of saying:

"The University of Waterloo Police Services would like to inform the University of Waterloo community of the latest email fraud that has come to our attention."

### Try saying:

"A new email fraud regarding e-transfers is targeting the University of Waterloo."

### Writing tips:

- Use active voice, instead of passive voice.
- Write simple and short sentences.
- Avoid superlative or non-essential language.
- Lead with the most important point.

### After you finish writing, ask:

- Can I shorten it?
- Will students understand what I am asking them to do?

# Be constructive.

Waterloo students are entrepreneurial, ambitious, and imaginative. We should write in ways that encourage these qualities. Our writing should inspire, and not discourage, the community who brings the Waterloo spirit to life.

### Instead of saying:

"Unemployed and starting exams?"

### Try saying:

"Tips for finding your co-op job."

### Writing tips:

- Write in positives, rather than negatives.
- Avoid extreme language, like "never" or "always."
- Include solutions or next steps.

### After you finish writing, ask:

- Is this message solution-oriented?
- Do I feel motivated to act after reading this?

# Be approachable.

Students want to talk to people, not bureaucracies. Shorten institutional distance by using familiar and personal language. We need to show students that we will meet them where they're at, and that we're here alongside them in their journey through the university. We are a partner in their success.

### Instead of saying:

"Our goal is to ensure that students are aware and feel free to access the training, supports, and services available to them. These services include..."

### Try saying:

"Here are some resources we've prepared for you to help you...."

### Writing tips:

- Avoid institutional jargon and self-referential language.
- When jargon is necessary, unpack it for your reader.
- Speak directly to students using "you" instead of referring to them as "the students."
- Use gender neutral language.

### After you finish writing, ask:

- Am I using language in students' everyday vocabulary?
- Does this sound like I am talking with students, and not at them?

# Communications Checklist

**Who am I speaking to?**

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**What is their current mindset? How are they feeling?**

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**Who might also be communicating a similar message?**

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**Is there an opportunity to coordinate with them?**

**What's the goal of this message?**

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**What's the benefit to students?**

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**What channel(s) will this message be sent through?**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email        | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Screen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enewsletter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Print          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website      | <input type="checkbox"/> WaterlooWorks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portal       |   |

**What action do we want them to take?**

**Understand**

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**Connect**

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**Take Action**

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**Participate**

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**Language and Tone**

**Be clear**

- Is this as short as I can make it?
- Will students understand what I am asking them to do?

**Be constructive**

- Is this message solution-oriented?
- Do I feel motivated to act after reading this?

**Be approachable**

- Am I using language in a student's everyday vocabulary?
- Does this sound like I am talking with students, and not at them?

# Channel Ecosystem

Channel	Purpose	Best For
Need to Know Emails	A way to communicate information that will have a significant impact on a student's success at Waterloo	Best for spurring action regarding consequential matters that will impact student experience and success
Want to Know Enewsletters	A way to share supplementary and promotional information	Best for generating awareness around initiatives/news that enrich the student experience and build belonging and pride
Social Media	A platform for conversation and real-time updates	Best for relationship building and targeting groups with timely information
Website	A repository for Waterloo's most detailed and definitive information/updates/actionable forms/contact info	Best for extensive information, lengthy instructions, forms, applications, etc.
Portal	A personalized digital assistant for students	Best for keeping students informed of campus services, events, and news and to provide tailored information in one platform
Learn	A digital learning space dedicated to the delivery and administration of academic courses	Best for course-related information