

## 1. Emails are important!

We communicate in many different ways, and while social media has led to the reduced popularity of emails, emails are still the main way in which many people—including university staff, governing body officials, and other important people in our wider support network—pass on important information. Irrespective of your personal communication preference, you need to find a way for emails to work for you.

## 2. Deal with things now

Delete unwanted emails when you see them. Respond to emails that require a response straight away – you’re going to have to respond anyway, so why not do it now. If you don’t have time to respond, then why are you even checking your emails right now? Find some times in the day where you can check your emails, delete unwanted ones, and respond where appropriate. At other times, they can just be ignored!

## 3. Reduce the junk

Promotional newsletters from people like booking.com, other travel sites, online retailers, etc, are the biggest contributor to unread emails. They are emails which you never will, or never have to, read. Reducing or getting rid of this sort of email is a good starting point. As you receive promotional emails that you don’t want, simply scroll through the email until you find the [unsubscribe](#) link. Unsubscribing from a company’s promotional emails should not stop you from receiving receipts and booking confirmations. When buying online in the future, make sure that you untick the box to receive further promotional information from these suppliers.

## 4. Reduce social media alerts

Social media alerts are another big contributor to unread emails. All social media platforms will give you the option to select what alerts you receive. In most cases you will only need to know when someone has sent you a direct message that you may need to respond to. You don’t need to know that Jonny responded to Mary’s post or that Paddy liked Jimmy’s picture. When you get an email about something on social media, it should be a prompt to check that social media platform and respond accordingly, though given how often you check your social media accounts, you probably don’t even need those reminders!

## 5. Junk is not always junk

Occasionally, important emails can end up in your junk email. Emails from senders you don’t respond to, or emails sent to multiple recipients are at particular risk of inadvertently ending up in the spam folder alongside the offers of money from Nigerian princes, and the phishing emails from fake Paypal accounts. Check your junk folder from time to time and make sure that genuine mails are not ending up in there, and if they are, take time to mark them as safe.

*And sure while you’re at it:*

## 7. Get over the FOMO

We probably all suffer a bit from the fear of missing out. But while we’re so busy making sure that we’re not missing out on social media conversations and updates, we’re actually missing out on what’s going on around us. Yes, the internet can help you stay in touch with friends, help you punch in time while on a bus or waiting in a queue, and be an important source of information, but you should not be living your entire life via social media. Decide what alerts you need to receive on your phone (you don’t need your phone to ‘ding’ every time someone shares a rabbit-eared selfie of themselves) and what you really need the internet for, and then get busy living your real life. Give the real world your full attention.

## 8. Reduce study time distractions

Many students say they can’t study at home. That there are too many distractions. That the only place they can study is in the library. And that getting to the library takes up too much time. Realising that your phone is the biggest distraction, and learning to put it away during study time, can revolutionise your productivity. Unless you’re waiting for an important call, you don’t need your phone while you’re studying. Be disciplined. Put it away. And if you do need the internet to get additional information, make a list of things you need to look up after a productive hour or two. If you are working on a laptop, PC or tablet, make sure that you don’t have email or social media notifications popping up in the corner, distracting you from what you should be doing.

***Taking these easy steps will help you live the life you want to live, not somebody else’s fake social media life.***