



LUND
UNIVERSITY

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Corporate Communications

Checklist for writing newsletters

Background

A newsletter is a regularly distributed publication, usually via email, which deals with topics of interest to the newsletter's subscribers.

There are quite a few newsletters at the University. Sometimes, there is too much confidence in what can be achieved with newsletters. It may seem efficient to send out an email packed with information to many people, when in fact more, and sometimes other, forms of communication may be needed to reach out. So it's best to stop and think for a minute before you get started.

However, under the right circumstances and with well-crafted material, newsletters can serve as an excellent information channel.

The tips below are suitable for simple newsletters intended to provide information.

1. Strategic considerations to be made in advance

Who do you want to reach? Your target group should have a defined and delimited need for information, and preferably also an interest in receiving information about a certain subject. We encourage you to test your idea on a few possible recipients first.

What do you want to achieve? What is in it for the readers? Regardless of the answer, remember that a good newsletter does not simply stack information; as the author of a newsletter, you have a duty to the reader to make sure that you truly understand the content of the material, and to summarise the most important aspects.

Worth remembering is that newsletters are a **one-way form of communication**. If you want to create understanding, commitment and interaction, you may need to take a different approach. If the information is complex and requires further explanation, other types of communication channels may be needed (as well).

Short description of the newsletter: Write a few explanatory lines so that the reader can quickly understand what the newsletter is about. For example:

"The xx newsletter reports about xx/what is going on within xx/the xx project, which may be of interest to you as an employee at xx. It is sent out by xx every xx weeks. Please contact editor xx if you want to contribute with material." This type of text is a way to pinpoint the newsletter's elevator pitch, and is preferably to be placed at the end of the newsletter.

Evaluate your newsletter on a regular basis, both by checking the opening frequency (if you have access to it) and by contacting a selection of readers for feedback.

2. Layout and structure

It should be easy to get an **overview** of the content. Few people read everything in a newsletter. A quick glance at the screen should be sufficient to identify any topics of interest, allowing the reader to focus on them.

Therefore, provide a **brief description** of each information item of no more than three to four lines. Provide links to more information if needed. “Read more about xx at the Faculty of Medicine’s website” is better than “Read more here” (i.e. avoid “here”).

Use **headings** that summarise the content, either above each paragraph and/or with a comprehensive subject heading before several paragraphs. The heading is to refer directly to what the text is about.

You could also use **bold to highlight keywords**. (Be mindful that it doesn’t become messy!).

Good images attract attention. Images can also complement the text, e.g. by showing the face of a new employee. However, do not use images, photographs and graphic elements just for the sake of it; by doing so there’s a risk that they instead become a **distraction in the communication**.

The **subject line of the email should contain a clear description**. It is important that the recipient immediately understands that it is your particular newsletter. You may also want to add something that makes the recipient want to read the current issue.

In the sender field, write the role of the person behind the newsletter rather than just their name (e.g. “Head of Department xx” rather than “Kalle Persson”). Otherwise, you could write the title of the newsletter (e.g. “LUM”).

Experiment with the subject line and sender field to make sure that they mix well – as the reader will see both at the same time.

One possibility is to list the headings in the introduction as an index.

Avoid attachments! It is better to link to websites.

3. Writing tips

Keep it short and simple! It should be possible to read the newsletter quickly.

When you’re done, read the text aloud to yourself and preferably someone else. You are guaranteed to discover things that can be improved.

4. Lund University’s graphic profile

If you want to design the newsletter into something other than a regular email, you must comply with Lund University’s graphic profile: www.staff.lu.se/graphic-profile

If you need help creating a template for your newsletter, contact any of LU’s procured agencies, or your own supplier if you use an external system. However, you should first consider what you want to achieve by using a template instead of a regular email.

Feel free to contact one of the contact persons in the link above or send an email to grafiskprofil@kommunikation.lu.se for advice and questions regarding the graphic profile.

5. Email or newsletter system?

A newsletter is sometimes just a regular email. It can also be made via a special newsletter system. The advantage of a system - if it is user-friendly - is that it makes it possible to retrieve statistics on how many people actually open the newsletter and click the links, and it enables you to add an opt-out option. Additionally, it may facilitate managing long lists of subscribers as the system can help filter addresses that bounce or are inactive in some other way. If you want to use a graphic template, it may be easier to work in a system.

Lund University does not have a procured supplier of newsletter systems. Therefore, you are free to choose among different suppliers. This also means that the service does not include templates drawn up in accordance with LU's graphic profile. But there is a lot of newsletters systems in the organisation and maybe you can help from other's experiences.

[See the list of internal university-wide newsletters on the Staff Pages](#)

(Including contact details for each newsletter)

If you are considering using an external system, please contact the Purchasing and Procurement office at inkop@eken.lu.se for any questions about purchasing and/or direct procurement.

If you have questions about email please contact LDC, +46 46 222 90 00, servicedesk@lu.se