

Email Signature Policy

Approved By: Northeastern State University Executive Cabinet	History: Adopted April 7, 2026 Related Policies:
Responsible Official: Vice President for University Relations and External Affairs	Additional References: Forms: NONE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to publish clear guidelines on the use of email signatures across the institution that are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Email signatures shall be regarded as an extension of official university communications and must reflect the professionalism and accessibility expected in all institutional correspondence.

Disclosure Statement

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA, serve as the recognized technical standard for ensuring accessibility of web content and mobile applications developed or maintained by state and local governments. Compliance with this standard is essential to meet existing obligations under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

WCAG outlines specific criteria to make digital content accessible to individuals with a wide range of disabilities such as providing captions for video content. WCAG is developed and maintained by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the leading international standards organization for the internet. Adherence to WCAG 2.1 Level AA not only fulfills legal requirements but also reflects the institution's commitment to inclusivity, usability, and equitable access for all users.

POLICY

Under this policy, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that email and email signatures meet accessibility standards and procedures listed below.

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PROCEDURES

Guidelines:

- Use sans-serif fonts (such as Arial, Verdana, or Calibri) at a minimum of “normal” font size.
- Be concise. Include only relevant information. This is especially helpful to those reading on mobile devices.
- Email signatures should not be created as single images because they are inaccessible and violate the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Images, when needed, must be made accessible by adding descriptive ALT tags (alternative text) to each image.
- If you are adding URLs to your signature line, make sure to use a descriptive link text and avoid pasting raw (full) URLs as a link text. Screen readers will read every character of a long URL, so instead of “<https://www.nsuok.edu/admissions/apply.html>”, use: “Apply for Admission” and link your URL.
- If you choose to use an image in your signature line, alt text must be utilized. Instructions for adding Alt Text in Gmail is listed below:
 - Instructions for adding alt image description in Gmail signature lines
 1. **Create a Google Doc:** Open a new Google Doc where you can insert your image.
 2. **Insert the Image:** Add the image to the document (e.g., by copying and pasting or uploading it).
 3. **Add Alt Text:** Right-click on the image and select "Alt text." Enter a descriptive and concise explanation of the image.
 4. **Copy and Paste:** Copy the image from the Google Doc.
 5. **Access Gmail Settings:** Open your Gmail settings (gear icon) and go to "See all settings".
 6. **Locate Signature Settings:** Scroll down to the "Signature" section.
 7. **Edit or Create Signature:** Either edit your existing signature or create a new one.
 8. **Paste the Image:** Paste the image into the signature text box.
 - a. **Save Changes:** Scroll to the bottom and click "Save Changes".

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COMPLIANCE

If you have questions regarding email signature compliance, please address them to adacompliance@nsuok.edu.

ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.