Outlook 2010: Out of office auto-reply message
IT Services Documentation Team, July 2013 (Reviewed August 2015)

Outlook’s Automatic Reply feature (in previous versions of Outlook, this was called Out of Office Assistant), sends an automatic reply to email messages you receive while you are away from the office, or otherwise unable to respond. The Automatic Reply can be activated via Outlook or the OWA web interface.

Your auto-reply settings are stored on the server. This means that you can turn on, turn off, or modify your messages using either Outlook, or OWA 365, or a combination of both.

**Set up an auto-reply message in Outlook**

1. Select the **Mail** button in Outlook’s **Navigation Pane**
   - Click Outlook’s **File tab**
   - Select **Automatic replies**
2. In the Automatic Replies dialog, click on the **Send automatic replies** radio button
   - Choose category of sender
   - Under the **Automatically reply once for each sender with the following messages** heading choose what category of sender to send auto replies to:
     - You can choose to send to senders **Inside My Organization**, **Outside My Organization**, or to both.
     - When sending a message to External senders, you can choose to send to only those senders who are listed in your Contacts list, or to all senders.
3. Type your message(s)
   - Type your auto-reply message(s) into the relevant text box(es), for example:
     
     "I will be out of the office until Monday 23 April. If you have a query about IT training, please contact tad@abdn.ac.uk."
   - You can send a different message to each category of sender.
   **Note:** Your signature text is not automatically appended to this message. If you want to add a signature, you will need to type it in at the end of your message.
   **Tip:** Where possible, provide a very general message, as in the example above. Although unlikely, disclosing too many details of your absence could leave your home vulnerable to theft or break in. If you include alternative contact details in your message, e.g. you recommend that urgent enquiries are directed to a colleague in your absence, please ensure that your colleague is aware of this arrangement.
4. Schedule specific out of office time periods (optional)
   - If you want, tick the **Only send during this time range** checkbox to schedule when your out of office replies are active.
   - From the **Start time** and **End time** drop-down lists, select the date and time range as appropriate.
5. Save your settings
   - Click **OK**

Your auto-reply message is now active. The mail server keeps track of who it replies to and your message will be sent once only to each sender.

Your auto-reply message will be sent until you turn it off, or until the date/time you specified in step 4 above.
Turn off auto-reply in Outlook

If you login to Outlook while the Automatic Reply is still active, you will be asked if you would like to turn it off.

If you have scheduled a Start and End time for your auto-reply messages, as in step 4 above, you can ignore this prompt – your auto-reply messages will automatically be turned off at the End time you specified. Click the cross in the right corner to hide the prompt.

Otherwise, click the Turn off button to turn off your Automatic Reply.

Set up an auto-reply message in Outlook Web App (Office 365)

1. Launch OWA 365
   - From the Settings option (the cog icon) on the top right of OWA’s Navigation Bar, select Set automatic replies.
2. In the new screen, click the Send automatic replies radio button.
   - You can choose to send a message to Internal senders, or to both Internal and External senders
   - When sending a message to External senders, you can choose to send to only those senders who are listed in your Contacts list, or to all senders
3. Type your Out of Office message(s) into the relevant text box(es), for example:
   - “I will be out of the office until Monday 23 April. If you have a query about IT training, please contact tad@abdn.ac.uk.”
   - You can send a different message to each category of sender.
4. If you wish, tick the Send replies only during this time period checkbox to schedule when your out of office replies are active.
   - From the Start time and End time drop-down lists, select the desired date and time range
5. Click on the Save

Turn off auto-reply in OWA 365

The first time you login to OWA 365 on your return, you will be prompted to turn off your automatic replies.

If you have scheduled a Start and End time for your out of office messages, you can ignore this prompt – your auto replies will automatically be turned off at the End time you specified.

Otherwise, to manually turn it off, click Yes on the prompt.

Further information and help

Use MyIT to log calls with the IT Service Desk: https://myit.abdn.ac.uk
For IT training materials, see www.abdn.ac.uk/tad