

What is Junk Mail?

Junk mail is mail that arrives in your mailbox unsolicited and unconnected to your normal sphere of correspondence, e.g. hoax virus warnings, financial scams (phishing), product advertising, chain mail, etc. Usually the same message is sent simultaneously to a large number of users (spamming).

Common types of malicious junk email include:

- hoax virus warnings
- financial scams (e.g. Banks and on-line payment service scams, Lottery scams, Bogus orders)
- phone this number

Sometimes the content of junk mail makes you think you've been personally targeted in some way. Regardless of its content, even if your name is present in the message, it is at least 99.9% certain that a junk mail message is not directed at you personally. Your address just happens to be on a list of addresses that the junk mail sender has obtained.

Why do I get junk mail?

While it is true that some junk email does get through to your Inbox, far more is intercepted and dealt with on your behalf.

Our mail filters scan all incoming email as it arrives on the University mail servers and give it a **score** based upon keywords, patterns and blacklists.

Any message that has an attachment with a file extension type recognised as having the potential to carry virus infections is rejected – see [list of blocked file extensions](#).

Email with a high score is automatically rejected and is not delivered to your Inbox. This highly effective system routinely intercepts and blocks many thousands of spam email messages per day.

However, detection is not an exact science and some junk mail will always slip through; after all, one person's junk could be another person's legitimate correspondence. In addition, the senders of junk mail are constantly devising new ways to outsmart the filters.

To deal with this, we direct low scoring email directly to your **Junk Email** folder in Outlook and add ****SPAM**** to the Subject field. This makes it easy for you to check for any valid mail that might have been put there by mistake.

Do I need to do anything?

Yes. You should check your **Junk Email** folder every day to check for legitimate messages that may have been incorrectly classified as spam.

Messages in the Junk Email folder are converted to plain text – links and other functionality are disabled. If you spot a message that you know *absolutely* is not spam and you want to act on it, drag it to your Inbox, or right-click on it and select **Move > Inbox** from the pop-up menu. **If in any doubt about any message's authenticity, delete it.**

Tip! You may want to add your Junk Email folder to the **Favorites** section at the top left of Outlook's navigation pane where it is easier to access. Simply right-click on the Junk Email folder and select **Add to Favourites** from the pop-up menu.

This action creates a handy shortcut to the Junk Email folder at the top of Outlook's navigation pane.

What's the best way to deal with junk mail?

The best way to deal with junk mail is to delete it quickly. Don't waste time reading it or trying to work out why you received it - just press the delete key!

- Don't respond to an email from an unrecognized sender or source.
- If you receive an email message from someone other than the University Service Desk warning you about a potential virus, then the message is almost certainly a hoax. Delete it!
- Be suspicious of any email that requests confidential personal or financial information such as online passwords or credit card details. No reputable institution or organization, including the University of Aberdeen, will ever ask you for such details by email. Delete it!
- If it's chain mail, don't be tempted to pass the message on to other users. Either delete it or forward the message to the Service Desk - servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk, saying why you have chosen to forward it, e.g. it's come from another University user, is particularly unpleasant, or you've received it many times before.

Note: The circulation of chain email is a breach of the University of Aberdeen's *Conditions for using IT Facilities*¹ and could result in the withdrawal of your access to computing facilities.

- Never give in to the temptation to take the law into your own hands and respond with aggressive tactics like mail-bombing (sending large amounts of junk to the mailbox you think the junk came from). Whatever the circumstances, this is an abuse of the network and will be treated as such.

¹ IT Policies are published in the Policy Zone on StaffNet – see www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/.