



**ADMINISTRATIVE  
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE**

**OM: 4-115**

**Page 1 of 14 (08/15/2012)**

*Distribution:*  
All Department of Education  
Employees

*Approved by:* \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Winona H. Varnon  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Management  
Delegated the Authority to Perform  
the Functions and Duties of the  
Assistant Secretary for Management

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**Mail Management Program**

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Supersedes OM:4-115 "Mail Management" dated 11/16/2007.

For technical questions, please contact Management Services at (202) 401-2905.

## **I. Purpose**

This directive establishes the policy, procedures, and responsibilities of the Mail Management Program for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and sets forth its purpose, responsibilities, and concepts of operations for mail management.

## **II. Policy**

ED promotes a Mail Management Program with established procedures that achieve maximum efficiency, uniformity, and cost-effective methods, in an effort to provide a framework of outstanding customer service; while reducing overall postage costs within ED. ED cooperates with the United States Postal Service (USPS) and the General Services Administration (GSA) in administering ED's Mail Management Program.

The following are all applicable objectives of the Mail Management Program:

1. Provide efficient, timely and accurate delivery of mail throughout ED as economically as possible;
2. Ensure uniform practices and standards;
3. Provide staff assistance to headquarters and regional locations in the area of postal operations and service; and
4. Control ED's official mail costs through proper and cost-effective use of the USPS and private carriers.

## **III. Authorization**

- A. Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), United States Postal Service (USPS), which provides regulations for domestic mail entering the USPS system.
- B. Title 39 U.S.C., Part IV, Chapter 32, "Penalty and Franked Mail," which provides for use of penalty and franked mail by executive agencies.
- C. Title 18 U.S.C., Section 1719, "Franking Privilege," which provides penalties for the misuse of Government mail.
- D. International Mail Manual (IMM), USPS, which provides guidance for preparation and postage costs for International Mail.
- E. Federal Property Management Regulation Federal Mail Management, 41 CFR, Part 102-192.

## IV. Applicability

This policy applies to all ED employees and contractors.

## V. Definitions

For the purpose of this directive, mail is defined as letters, memoranda, post cards, documents, publications, packages, and other written or printed communications received for distribution or dispatch by the USPS and express delivery services. Please refer to the definitions below regarding the mail classes, services, and systems involved with mail operations:

1. **Accountable Mail** means express, certified, registered, and/or insured mail that incorporates a system of receipts to monitor its movement from point-to-point.
2. **Business Reply Mail** includes postage paid return envelopes and labels.
3. **Certified mail** provides a record of mailing to the sender and a record of delivery at the post office of delivery. The carrier delivering the item obtains a signature from the addressee on a postal receipt, which is kept at the post office for 2 years. For an additional fee, a return receipt will be sent to the mailer. Although certified mail can provide a return receipt when requested, it is more economical to include a receipt inside the piece of mail and to request the addressee to complete the receipt and return it to the sender.
4. **Express Delivery Services** means expeditious delivery services by a carrier with varying degrees of delivery timelines, e.g., FedEx, UPS, and USPS express.
5. **Express Mail or Overnight Mail** is an expedited, guaranteed delivery class of mail providing overnight service to designated locations. This class of mail is particularly designed for time-sensitive materials or letters and should only be used for items that positively must arrive the next day. The Department has a separate contract vehicle in place with the United Parcel Service (UPS) to provide express mail services. Employees should contact [UPS.Shipping@ed.gov](mailto:UPS.Shipping@ed.gov) for more information regarding this service.
6. **First Class Mail** consists of mailable postal cards, matter wholly or partially in writing or machine produced, matter closed against inspection, bills, and statements of accounts. Official Mail weighing 11 ounces or less will automatically receive first-class service UNLESS a lower class of mail is indicated on the items. First class is the highest priority for processing mail and is given precedence over other classes of mail by the USPS. First class mail over 11 ounces is Priority Mail. This endorsement should not be used on mail weighing less than 11 ounces. Nonstandard first class mail is

any first class piece weighing 1 ounce or less which exceeds 11.5 inches in length and 6 inches in height or ¼ inch in thickness. Such items are subject to a surcharge.

7. **Insured Mail** is mail insured for protection against loss or damage by purchasing special insurance; however, it is the general policy of the Federal Government to self-insure all risks of monetary loss. Therefore, postal insurance should not be purchased for official mail.
8. **International Mail** includes letters, packages, printed matter and parcels destined for foreign countries. Mail sent to Army-Air Force (APO) and Navy (FPO) post offices is not considered international mail. Employees should consult their PO for the best way to ship their particular international needs. There are a variety of shipping services for international mail and the most efficient depends upon size and time of delivery required.
9. **Mail Center** means a facility or office where ED mail operations are performed by a mail services contractor.
10. **Mail Center Security Plan** means written and established procedures that define preparation and preventive measures to take before, after, or during a security breach involving the mail center.
11. **Mail System** means all the components (equipment, software, employees, etc.) primarily dedicated to the collection, distribution, and delivery of hard copy mail items, including methods for capturing and reporting data on Principal Office (PO) mail usage, volumes, and costs.
12. **Official Mail** includes any mail relating exclusively to the business of the Federal Government, and for the purpose of this Directive, official business of ED.
13. **Parcel Post** is a service for delivering materials typically weighing 16 ounces to 70 pounds and not exceeding 108 inches in length and girth. This service may take up to eight days delivery, depending upon transportation availability. It is the best way to send boxes and larger items that do not require short delivery times.
14. **Personal Mail** means private mail of ED employees not dealing with the business of the Federal Government.
15. **Priority Mail** means mail that weighs between 11 ounces and 70 pounds. It must not exceed 108 inches in combined length and girth and must be endorsed with a Priority Mail label. Priority mail is generally twice the rate for parcel post. Before mailing, the sender should determine if the speed of delivery is more important than cost. Employees are reminded to mail early to avoid overnight delivery charges.

16. **Registered Mail** is a service in which a receipt is issued to the sender of a mail and the mail's destination address is recorded in a register. Upon its delivery, the recipient's signatures are taken on a form as proof of delivery to the specified addressee. In case the addressee is not found, the mail is returned to the sender. It provides added protection for valuable and other important mail. For an additional fee, a return receipt will be sent to the mailer. This service is being replaced by delivery confirmation where barcode readers monitor each step of the mailing process and the sender's PC can monitor delivery progress. Anything mailed First Class or Priority can be registered. A receipt is issued at the point of mailing.
17. **Special Services** are extra services offered by the USPS to guarantee delivery, provide indemnity, and expedite delivery of mail. This includes registered mail, certified mail, insured mail, express mail, and international mail.
18. **Standard Mail** typically includes publications, circulars, photographs, or catalogs weighing less than a pound (lb.). This mail can be opened by the USPS for inspection.
19. **Mass Mailing** is mailing of 250 or more pieces of identical mail going to the same address or different addresses.

## VI. Responsibilities

- A. The Mail Manager, Management Services, Support Services Division, Office of Management (OM), is responsible for managing ED's Mail Management Program and shall:
  1. Develop and evaluate mail management policies and procedures;
  2. Promote an ongoing official mail cost-control program to ensure that ED uses the most economical class and type of mail services available, consistent with operational needs;
  3. Establish and maintain effective communications with ED officials and employees who receive mail services;
  4. Provide quarterly reports on volume, types of mail processed, and postage costs incurred by each Principal Office (PO);
  5. Serve as a liaison with USPS and ED officials to comply with established rules, regulations, and practices to ensure correct and efficient movement of ED's mail in the postal system; and
  6. Provide guidelines during mail management disruptions

**B. OM Security Services shall:**

Receive, x-ray, and screen all items for suspicious markings or packaging. Items deemed safe will be provided to the mailroom staff for processing.

**C. The Mail Center Staff shall:**

1. Receive all incoming and outgoing mail for ED;
2. Further screen all incoming mail for suspicious markings or packaging
  - a. Excessive postage;
  - b. Handwritten or poorly typed addresses;
  - c. Incorrect titles;
  - d. Misspellings of common words;
  - e. Oily stains, discoloration, or odor;
  - f. No return address;
  - g. Protruding wires; and
  - f. Other distractions.
3. Isolate suspicious items and report them to the OM Security Services office for further screening and disposition;
4. Deliver to mail recipients while ensuring integrity of all mail from the time received from the USPS or internal mail delivery points to the time of delivery to the USPS or addressee. Special attention will be given to accountable mail, overnight mail, negotiable instruments, items of value, and confidential or sensitive information to prevent mishandling, loss, or theft;
5. Meter all outgoing Postal Mail; and
6. Track and report all Accountable Mail.

**D. Each PO shall:**

1. Ensure compliance with this directive;
2. Provide chargebacks to the OM Executive Office, as requested; and

3. Provide a written request to the OM Executive Office in order to analyze and respond to discrepancies in quarterly mail metered reports.

E. Executive Office

Analyze reports on volume, types of mail processed, and postage costs for each PO as provided by the Mail Manager to determine and request the appropriate chargebacks for each PO.

## VII. Procedures and Requirements

All ED employees and contractors must:

- A. Use the attached Mail Center Schedules and User Guides to address and send mail (see Attachments 1 - 3);
- B. Request mail stop numbers or reassignment through ED's Mail Manager by completing the Mail Stop Request form (see Attachment 4);
- C. Request distribution of reproduced materials through the ED Copy Centers by completing a Request for Distribution of Reproduced Materials form (see Attachment 5); and
- D. Request envelopes and letterhead through the Mail Manager.

**Note:** Regional employees should follow the pickup and delivery schedule established in their respective Regions.

### Attachment 1: Mail Center Schedules

This guide is provided to help all Headquarter employees meet their mailing needs by offering a list of established mail center locations, hours, delivery and pick-up schedules.

#### Mail Center Locations and Hours:

Building	Address	Phone	Hours
LBJ	400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room BC102 Washington, DC 20202	(202) 401-0969 (202) 401-0966	7:00 am – 5:30 pm
UCP	830 1 <sup>st</sup> Street N.E., Room 1200 Washington, DC 20202	(202) 377-3341 (202) 377-3342	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
K Street	1990 K Street, N.W., Room 7159 Washington, DC 20006	(202) 502-7595	7:30 am – 4:30 pm
PCP	550 12 <sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room P210 Washington, DC 20202	(202) 245-7670	8:00 am – 5:00 pm

#### Mail Center Delivery Schedules:

Mail Driver 1			
Building	Departing	Building	Arriving
LBJ	9:30	PCP	10:00
PCP	10:10	I Street	10:35
K Street	10:45	K Street	11:10
North Capitol St.	11:20	LBJ	11:45
Mail Driver 2			
Building	Departing	Building	Arriving
LBJ	9:30	L'Enfant Plaza	9:45
L'Enfant Plaza	9:55	CAP	10:15
CAP	10:30	UCP	10:50
UCP	11:00	LBJ	11:25

## **Attachment 2: U.S. Department of Education Mail Users' Guide**

This guide is provided to help employees send and receive mail faster and more accurately by providing information and instructions for specific types of mail handled through ED's mail centers.

### **A. Mail Types**

The following types of mail are processed through each of the mail centers:

1. First Class Mail
2. Priority Mail
3. Parcel Post
4. Accountable Mail (Express/Registered/Certified/Insured);
5. International Mail
6. Business Reply Mail
7. Return Receipt
8. Internal Mail Packaging and Distribution
9. Regional Mail

### **B. Mail Addressing**

The following instructions are provided to assist employees in properly addressing mail:

1. Create machine-produced addresses in capital letters to enable the USPS mail equipment to read the addresses better and avoid mistakes;
2. Ensure that all handwritten addresses are legible to avoid delay in delivery;
3. Apply the recipient's ZIP Code plus 4 Code (9 digits) as part of the address for accurate delivery by the USPS. Go to [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com): Find a Zip Code;
4. Double-check the address for accuracy;
5. Use inter-office envelopes and mail stop codes when sending internal mail;

6. Ensure that individuals sending you mail use your name, address, and mail stop;

**NOTE: The Post Office reads mail from the bottom up.** The City, State, and Zip Code should always be at the bottom, preceded by the Street Address;

7. Send your mail to the appropriate mail center by noon to guarantee same day pickup from USPS;
8. Use plastic or nylon reinforced tape to seal a box or envelope that has staples in it.

### **C. Mail Fulfillment or Mass Mailings**

The following information applies for mass mailings:

1. Submit a written request for a mailing of 250 or more pieces of identical mail going to the same address or different addresses;
2. Provide a complete list of the mailing addresses to the Mail Centers on disk and in word format;
3. Mail Centers will process the items for mailing by collating, inserting the materials, and affixing the address labels; and
4. Mail Centers will save POs time and labor by preparing items for shipment.

### **D. USPS Mail**

The following information applies for USPS mail:

1. Mail Centers are responsible for processing all outgoing mail for pick-up by USPS; and
2. USPS delivers and picks-up mail 2 times daily from ED's Central Mail Facility located in the LBJ Building.

### **E. Overnight Mail (UPS)**

The information listed below applies for overnight mail (UPS):

1. Use only when necessary for mail that must be received by the next day; and
2. See respective PO Executive Officer for UPS shipping privileges.

**F. Alternative Delivery Services**

The information listed below applies for alternative delivery services:

1. Delivery of publications is offered by ED's fulfillment contractor (ED Pubs);
2. Pick up from and delivery to specific rooms or buildings is available upon request; and
3. Consolidated mail delivery is offered for the Regions.

**G. Other Optional Services**

Other optional services available upon request through the Mail Centers as listed below:

1. Strapping tape to wrap packages; and
2. Accountable mail tracking.

**H. Personal Mail**

The Department strongly discourages sending and receiving personal mail through ED's Mail Centers. ED will not be responsible for lost, stolen, damaged, or undelivered personal mail. Private and personal use of official government mail envelopes are prohibited.

POs should send all questions or concerns regarding this Mail User's Guide to [OMMSSupportServices@ed.gov](mailto:OMMSSupportServices@ed.gov).

### **Attachment 3: Mail Cost-Savings Guidance**

This guidance on techniques is provided to help ED employees send official mail using the most cost effective means.

#### **A. Reduce Size and Weight of Mail**

1. Fold material to the smallest practical size and use smallest envelope possible;
2. Avoid the use of 9 x 12 (Flat) envelopes for mailing less than 10 pages of correspondence;
3. Use lightweight packaging material;
4. Prepare packages accordingly for Parcel Post requirements;
5. When possible, reduce the weight of material by using 2-sided copies; and
6. Use flats rather than padded envelopes when suitable.

#### **B. Use Lower Mail Classifications**

1. Send letter correspondence by First Class;
2. Send publications and bulk materials by Parcel Post;
3. Anticipate deadlines to avoid the necessity of using Priority, Express Mail, or UPS; and
4. Do not use overnight delivery on Friday.

#### **C. Use Special Services**

1. Use special services only when necessary; and
2. Use when the cost justifies the benefits to be achieved by the service because most of these are costly.

#### **D. Reduce Mail Volume**

1. Consolidate daily or weekly mail to the same locations such as the Regions or contract locations;
2. Update mailing lists and correct addresses every six months; and
3. Always ask mail center personnel for information and help with items being mailed.



### Attachment 5: Request for Distribution of Reproduced Materials

MAIL MANAGEMENT REQUEST FOR DISTRIBUTION OF REPRODUCED MATERIALS			
REQUEST DATE:		REQUESTING OFFICE:	
CONTACT PERSON:		TELEPHONE:	
BUILDING:		ROOM NUMBER:	
NAME OF DISTRIBUTION:		NUMBER OF COPIES:	
INSTRUCTIONS TO MAILROOM:			
DISTRIBUTION TO BE MADE BY:		DATE:	TIME:
ARE LABELS REQUIRED:		YES	NO
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:		ATTACHED	
DISTRIBUTION TO LOCATIONS:			
HEADQUARTERS (ALL)		LBJ	PCP
CAP		UCP	K STREET
L'ENFANT PLAZA		800 N. Capitol St.	REGIONS
OTHER:			
AUDIENCE:			
EACH MAIL STOP		DESK-TO-DESK	OTHER:
BULK DELIVERY TO:			
RECEIPT LEDGER:			
COPY CENTER – RECEIVED FOR DUPLICATING			
_____		_____	_____
SIGNATURE		DATE	TIME
MAIL CLERK – RECEIVED FROM COPY CENTER/REQUESTOR			
_____		_____	_____
SIGNATURE		DATE	TIME
ADDRESSEE – RECEIVED FROM MAIL CLERK			
_____		_____	_____
SIGNATURE		DATE	TIME
MAILROOM SUPERVISOR – COMPLETED DISTRIBUTION/RETURNED COPY TO MMS			
_____		_____	_____
SIGNATURE		DATE	TIME