MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**Unit-level Policy**

# Grad Link Maintenance & List Management

| Authority Title and Review Information: | Name and Date |
|---|---|
| **Approval Authority:** | Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs |
| **Responsible Executive:** | Senior Director, Communications |
| **Responsible Office:** | Communications |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Communications Coordinator |
| **Policy Category:** | Unit-Level Policy |
| **Effective Date:** | August 18, 2026 |
| **Last Review Date:** | November 4, 2026 |
| **Next Review Date:** | January 2030 |

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy outlines the process and timeline for updating the recipient list(s) for Grad Link, the regular communications for all MSU College of Education graduate students and faculty/staff who choose to subscribe to the publication.

## II. SCOPE

This document outlines policies, timelines and procedures for the Office of Academic & Student Affairs and the data and analytics and communications teams.

While mailing lists reach broader audiences, they do not directly influence this policy.

## III. POLICY

The Grad Link mailing list will be updated several times annually in MailChimp:

- Adding Names:
  - August/September: Enrollment for Fall Semester
  - May/June: Enrollment for Summer Semester
  - January/February: Enrollment for Spring Semester

- Removing Names Upon Graduation:
    - August: Removing May/August graduates
    - February: Removing December graduates

In the summer (roughly May – August), send Grad Link to spring *and* summer students.

*The months above are general timelines; specificities may vary due to calendar and academic year variations.*

The MailChimp lists will be updated using the files provided to the Academic & Student Affairs and Communications teams via the Data & Analytics team via the EDUC-DTS Teams channel ("CED Listsrv Dropoff").

**Students**
All students, regardless of degree type (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) and modality (online or in person), will be added to the mailing list within MailChimp via their MSU email address. For inclusion, individuals earning a graduate certificate will also be subscribed, whether they are pursuing the certificate alongside their degree program or as a standalone certificate program. As this is an internal, informational email about happenings within the institution, FERPA regulations do not apply; all students will be added.

Graduates are removed from the list upon conferral of their postsecondary degree. If a Spartan chooses to re-enroll in a subsequent degree-granting program, they will be re-added to the Grad Link mailing list via the same method as below (*see "Policy Procedures > IVa. Adding Students to the Mailing List"*).

Individuals who enroll in micro-credentials but not in a degree- or certificate-granting program will not receive Grad Link. However, they may optionally sign up to receive Grad Link via their MSU mailing address.

**Faculty/Staff**
Associate deans; department chairs; associate chairs; graduate program directors, advisors, coordinators; and academic program coordinators and select staff from the Academic & Student Affairs team (Assistant Director for Graduate Student Affairs and the Coordinator for Academic/Graduate Student Affairs) are added to the list on an annual basis; retrieve the list from the Coordinator for Academic/Graduate Student Affairs in August annually.

The Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs may forward an issue of Grad Link to the faculty listserv (ED-FAC-R-U) at any time and encourage faculty to sign up via MailChimp.

Faculty and staff throughout MSU may optionally sign up to receive Grad Link via their MSU mailing address. Sign up via MailChimp.

**Unsubscribing/Removing from List**
Due to federal regulations, an unsubscribe or an opt-out option will be provided to all subscribers in all email communications from Grad Link. In some cases, MailChimp administrators (Communications team) may be able to re-add an individual as a subscriber; please contact the director.

## IV. POLICY PROCEDURES

### IVa. Adding Students to the Mailing List (Fall and Spring)

1. Download the appropriate file provided by Data & Analytics during the Enrollment period (via FileTransfer). Use this file instead of the one provided after the enrollment period closes to share information as broadly as possible.
2. If necessary: Rearrange the data in the Data & Analytics Excel output to align with MailChimp data organization:
    a. Email
    b. First Name
    c. Last Name
    d. Academic Plan (Degree name)
3. Log into MailChimp.
4. Select Audience.
5. Under the "Contacts" dropdown, select "Grad Link – MSU College of Education."
6. Under the "Add Contacts" dropdown, select "Import Contacts." Select an option that meets your preferred file needs.
7. Check the box for "Update any existing contacts" and click "Continue."
8. Create a new tag following this formula: "Grad Link - [Semester][Year] Students."
    a. Example 1: Grad Link – FS26 Students
    b. Example 2: Grad Link – SS26 Students
9. Ensure the columns match the outputs MailChimp provides.
10. Click Import; it may take time for the list to populate. MailChimp will email coemedia@msu.edu once the upload is complete.

*Optionally* update the list again once the Data and Analytics team sends a list of all graduate students by program breakdown; include this information in MailChimp to provide more robust data of the audience list(s) using tagging, grouping or other features provided by MailChimp.

### IVb. Removing Names Upon Degree Conferral

1. Download the appropriate file provided by Data & Analytics following the Degree Conferral period.
2. If necessary: Rearrange the data to align with MailChimp data organization:
    a. Email
    b. First Name
    c. Last Name
    d. Academic Plan (Degree name)
3. Log into MailChimp.
4. Select Audience.
5. Under the "Contacts" dropdown, select "Grad Link – MSU College of Education."
6. Under the "Add Contacts" dropdown, select "Import Contacts." Select an option that meets your preferred file needs.
7. Check the box for "Update any existing contacts" and click "Continue."
8. Create a new tag following this formula: "Grad Link – Graduates [Semester][Year]"
    a. Example 1: Grad Link – Graduates - FS26
    b. Example 2: Grad Link – Graduates - SS26
    c. This naming convention is intentionally different from adding names to create clear delineations.
9. Ensure the columns match the outputs MailChimp provides.
10. ; it may take time for the list to populate. MailChimp will email coemedia@msu.edu once the upload is complete.
11. Create a segment by selecting the tag of the graduating class you just uploaded. Save.
12. From the segment preview, check the box in the header to select all contacts in the segment. (If prompted, select all contacts beyond what is visible on the screen.)

It is permissible and does not impact FERPA considerations to send an email to these individuals congratulating them on earning their degree and encouraging them to stay in touch by subscribing to Review(ED), the external newsletter for the college with news; Inspir(ED), the external giving- and human-interest piece newsletter run by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations; and/or to update their contact information with the MSU Alumni Office. Send this email **prior to** archiving the graduates. Then, move on with the steps below.

13. Click "Actions," then click "Archive."
14. In the pop-up, type ARCHIVE and click Archive. A success message confirms how many contacts were archived.

Per MailChimp, archiving is preferred over deleting. This keeps the information accessible but does not count toward billing. It also allows easy restoration if needed/if a student re-enrolls.

## V. VIOLATIONS

N/A

## VI. RELATED INFORMATION AND ATTACHMENTS

N/A.

## VII. HISTORY

Created by the Communications team in 2026 to document and streamline efforts. Reviewed by the Data & Analytics team in 2026. Approved by the Associate Dean in 2026.

| Action | Description |
|---|---|
| Issued: | 1. Senior Director of Communications Lauren Knapp (August 2026) |
| Approved by: | 1. Associate Dean Kristine L. Bowman (August 2026) |
| Revised: | 1. N/A - New policy/procedure |