


GLOBAL INITIATIVE

Background

The GI-TOC strives to be a reasonable and responsive employer promoting staff well-being across all areas to ensure the continued growth and development of both the individual and the organisation.

To this end, we believe that it is imperative to maintain a healthy work-life balance based on the following guidelines.

Instant Messaging (IMs)

Considering the consensus that WhatsApp tends to blur the lines between professional and personal communication that can often be intrusive, the GI-TOC uses  **Signal** as the primary means of IM communication.

Signal offers enhanced security with better end-to-end encryption and privacy services.

The application is [available for download both as a mobile- and desktop application](#) and is free of charge. It offers the same functionalities as WhatsApp such as group messaging, group calling, voice and video calls, but Signal has the added functionality of 'disappearing' messages. This is advised for more secure topics, though probably unnecessary for the majority of communication across the GI.

The GI-TOC contact list is available on request.

IMs outside working hours or weekends should be limited to matters of a necessary and urgent nature. Unless it is truly time sensitive and important, use e-mail instead. If you are a senior staff member, or if you perform critical core functions (e.g., finance or external relations functions) we would expect you to be contactable by IM at all times.

While individuals should not be abusing this arrangement with non-urgent communication, the nature of our work requires that some individuals will have to be on call in case of emergency. Work devices cannot be ignored for extended periods of time. Please reach out to your supervisor for further clarification and to put in writing if you have such a responsibility.

Respectful Working Hours

This policy is intended to respond to the concerns around work-life balance and the pressures that come with managing an organisation that is dispersed across so many time zones.

While there is nothing that can be done to ameliorate this challenge entirely, the following guidelines are to be applied :

Communication Triage

Select a communication channel appropriate to the level of urgency and availability of the individual you are communicating with.

E-Mail *The most formal way of communication, but least time-sensitive*

Signal *Most time-sensitive*

Slack

Responding to Mails

The GI-TOC expects you to answer your e-mails in a timely manner. The general practice is that e-mails should be acknowledged within one working even if it is not possible to address the relevant issue straight away. To prevent clutter, e-mail should not be used for back-and forth exchanges.

'Normal' Working Hours

Mindful of the GI-TOC's substantial global expansion over recent years we have identified a need to introduce a greater degree of predictability and standardisation to ensure reasonable ways of working without losing the flexibility we appreciate.

Regardless of location, staff are required to keep core working hours. You are contractually required to work for 8 hours per day and individuals should normally be available for communication, meetings etc. within the hours of 10:00 am and 16:00.

The remaining hours offer greater flexibility, but we consider it reasonable to receive and engage in communication between 08:00 and 18:00 in your local destination.



We realize that for individuals working in different time zones it might not always be possible or practical in terms of scheduling and we appreciate the accommodations made to meet with others. The GI-TOC will continue to rotate time zones to share the burden of unsociable hours.

We encourage staff to make use of scheduling tools to avoid sending non-time sensitive communication outside of the sociable hours of others. A few options are :

Proton mail – Schedule Send

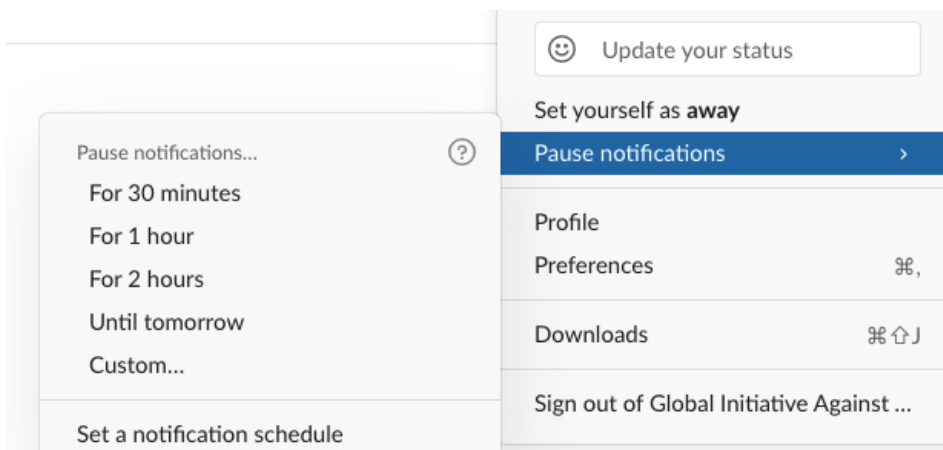
Schedule send
When do you want your message to be sent?

Tomorrow	August 9th at 08:00
Monday	August 14th at 08:00
Custom	

Not saved  Send 

Please use this when sending out of hours emails to colleagues in a different time zone.

Slack Notifications



Set yourself as away and pause notifications to refrain from receiving messages outside normal working hours.

Slack

While we are of the opinion that Slack is easily replaceable by the group chat functionality of Signal, we do understand the teambuilding benefits of having virtual social spaces. For the moment therefore, the decision to remove Slack as a communication channel is on hold.