



Frequently Asked Questions about SMS Text Messaging

OPT-IN/OUT PROCESS (Recipient's Perspective)

Question:

What happens if I provide a phone number to receive text messages?

Answer:

We will input your text-enabled phone number into the system, and the Blackboard Connect service will automatically send a text message to your mobile phone to confirm your request.

Question:

From what number will these text messages originate?

Answer:

All confirmation text messages and subsequent alerts will come from **23177 or 63079**. Please save this number and program it as (Location Name) so you can quickly recognize this number as the official source of our messages.

Question:

What will the confirmation message say?

Answer:

The confirmation message will read the following:

[AbbrevName]: You are now confirmed to receive alerts from us. More info text reply "HELP" or "STOP *[Account Code]*" to opt-out

Question:

How do I opt-out to receive text messages from Blackboard Connect?

Answer:

When you receive the confirmation, please text reply back with STOP and your Account Code.

The confirmation message will read the following:

[AbbrevName]: You are now confirmed to stop receiving messages from *[Account Code]*. More info text reply "HELP" or go to www.blackboardconnect.com/sms

If you no longer have that message on your phone, please contact us at 877-684-4468 or sms@blackboard.com to provide your text-enabled phone number and opt out request.



Question:

What happens if I text reply "HELP"?

Answer:

If you text reply HELP, you will receive the following message:

*Bb Connect notifications. Users receive relevant alerts. For more info
www.blackboardconnect.com/sms, sms@blackboard.com. To opt-out text STOP*

Question:

I did not receive a confirmation message. What happened?

Answer:

Check with your provider to see if text messaging has been enabled since you will need to be subscribed to a text messaging plan in order to receive or reply to text messages. You should also ask your mobile phone provider if your device accepts premium text messages.

Question:

I did not receive a confirmation message because my phone wasn't text enabled. I have since contacted my mobile phone provider to enable it. Do I need another confirmation message sent?

Answer:

No. If your SMS phone was already submitted to our database, you should be confirmed to receive SMS alerts. However, you can check if you are opted-in by texting the word "SUBSCRIBE" to **23177 or 63079** and you will receive the following reply:

[AbbrevName]: This phone number has already been opted in. More info text reply "HELP" or "STOP [Account Code]" to opt-out

Question:

What if I opted-out but later decide I would like to opt-in again?

Answer:

You may request to begin receiving text messages by texting "SUBSCRIBE [Account Code]" to **23177 or 63079**.

Question:

If I change mobile phone providers but keep the same number, do I need to opt-in again?

Answer:

No. Once your phone number has been opted-in, it stays registered within the system.

OPT-IN/OUT PROCESS (Client's Perspective)

Question:

What is the difference between SMS text messages and SMTP text messages? Why do I want to activate SMS messaging with Blackboard Connect?

Answer:

SMTP - Simple Mail Transport Protocol. SMTP is the standard internet email format and it's over 25 years old. Most cell phones are able to receive text messages in this format. Basically it is an email transmission and the message delivered to the phone as 5555551234@mycarrier.com.

SMS – Short Message Service. SMS is a message system designed for cellular phones. Unlike email, SMS messages are sent to phone numbers, not addresses. They are routed through a gateway, which connects directly to the carrier's network. SMS is also identified as SMPP - Short Message Peer to Peer Protocol.

SMS is the preferred method for a number of reasons:

1. An SMS message is sent via a gateway directly to the cell phone carrier, while an SMTP message, like any other email, can bounce from server to server before it arrives.
2. SMS messages travel over a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and are thus secure, while SMTP messages travel unencrypted around the Internet.
3. Cell phone carriers deliver SMTP messages for free, while a plan is necessary for SMS messages. That said, carriers have a greater incentive to make sure SMS messages are delivered in a timely fashion.

Question:

When do the confirmation messages go out?

Answer:

When your account is first activated for SMS messages, the confirmations will go out immediately, so please plan a date and time with your Client Care representative. As subsequent numbers are imported, the messages will go out between 10am and 7pm your local time. If a person has not been confirmed in yet, any messages sent will not be delivered to them.

Question:

A contact has indicated that they have opted-in to receive Blackboard Connect text messages but hasn't received a confirmation or any other messages. What should I ask?

Answer:

You should verify that the SMS Phone number is correct within your Blackboard Connect account. If it is incorrect, update the information and a confirmation message will be sent during the 10am to 7pm time window. You may also want to ask if the cell phone in question is text enabled. If it is, you can ask the contact to send a text message with the word "SUBSCRIBE" to **23177 or 63079** to obtain more information.



The following message will be sent if the phone number is present in the system:

[AbbrevName]: This phone number has already been opted in. More info text reply "HELP" or "STOP *[Account Code]*" to opt-out

Question:

What if a contact wants to temporarily opt-out of receiving text messages for a period of time?

Answer:

A recipient may opt-out at any time by texting "STOP *[Account Code]*" or "QUIT *[Account Code]*" to **23177 or 63079**.

Question:

What if the client is opted in, removed from our import for a length of time, and then added back? Will they have to receive another confirmation message?

Answer:

Not necessarily. Numbers stay opted in for at least 350 days on via Blackboard Connect no matter how often you take them in and out of your import. If it has been longer than 350 days, then yes, they will receive another confirmation message.

Question:

What can we do if a contact has previously opted out, and wants to opt-in now?

Answer:

You may have the person send a text message with the word "SUBSCRIBE *[Account Code]*" to **23177 or 63079**.

Question:

Can we disable the automatic confirmation messages sent to subscribers? If not, why?

Answer:

No, the confirmation message is a legal requirement of the carriers for Blackboard Connect to be able to send SMS text messages. It acknowledges that the mobile phone number is loaded into your Blackboard Connect account and that the recipient has agreed they want to receive these notifications via text at a possible additional charge. Also, it provides opt-out information for the recipient to stop receiving future text messages if necessary.



Question:

Will I receive a report of who opted-out?

Answer:

Yes, there is a report available in your Blackboard Connect account that will provide the status of all contacts that have provided an SMS Phone. This will tell you which contacts have a status of “Opted-In” or “Opted-Out”.

Question:

Do you generally see a high opt out rate?

Answer:

No. Text messaging has become a preferred method of communication and with unlimited pricing plans we usually see less than 10% opt out rate on average.

Question:

Will I receive a report showing who was sent a text message after sending out my notification?

Answer:

Yes, after your Blackboard Connect message goes out, you can check the log summary to see who the text message was sent to. We currently do not provide information regarding actual delivery, just whether or not the message was sent. If the message was not received this may be due to contacts whose SMS Phone number has a status of “Opted Out.”

Question:

What if someone receives a Blackboard Connect text message in error and replies to it?

Answer:

If a reply comes in with an unrecognized request, an automated text message will be sent directing the recipient to Blackboard Connect’s HELP pages.

Question:

Can I customize the SMS delivery ID so that recipients know it came from me?

Answer:

No, all text messages are sent from the Blackboard Connect 5-digit short code, **23177 or 63079**. It is highly recommended that you inform recipients who the text message is coming from (e.g. - start your text message with “(Location Name) Alert ...”). You may also instruct recipients to save **23177 or 63079** and program it as your Location’s name on their text-enabled device so they can quickly recognize this number as the official source of your messages.