

Florida Association of College Test Administrators Listserv User Guide

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Listserve Basics

What is a listserv?

Correct spelling of listserv(e)?

Although there are differing opinions, "listserv" seems appropriate when generically referencing an electronic email list. In contrast, "LISTSERV" (without the ending 'e') is a company that provides our listserv software. So, in this document, "listserv" will be used except when referencing the listserv software we use, in which case "LISTSERV" must be used.

As one of many Internet services available to postsecondary educators, a listserv is an automated system for maintaining academic discussions among people who have subscribed and want to network through email with others who share a common interest. Several thousand listserves are available on academic topics, and most are research oriented. Listserves promote collaboration with distant colleagues and distribute news quickly through the academic community. Listserves provide alternatives to expensive telephone conversations and time-consuming letter writing.

What is the FACTA-L listserve?

The FACTA listserve, started in 2008, was created in order to provide postsecondary testing practitioners a way to share information via email. It is intended to provide a convenient communication avenue for members of the Florida Association of College Test Administrators. The listserve manager is Winifred B. Cooke (wcooke@ufl.edu), Assistant Director of the Office of Academic Technology at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

How do I subscribe to or unsubscribe from FACTA-L?

The FACTA-L list does not allow open subscription. If you would like to join this list, please have your Institutional Test Administrator (ITA) email your **name, preferred email address, institution, and job title** to the FACTA Registrar. (See the "FACTA Council" link at www.factatesting.org/association-information.html.)

Unsubscribing from FACTA-L

You can unsubscribe from FACTA-L at anytime by doing the following:

1. Go to the FACTA-L web page at <http://lists.ufl.edu/archives/facta-l.html> (new window)
2. Click on the **Leave the list** link
3. Type in your email address where asked. (The name entry can be left blank.)
4. Click the **Leave FACTA-L** button.
5. An email will be sent (usually within a minute) requesting you to verify your wish to leave the FACTA-L listserve. Follow the instructions in that email message to finish canceling your subscription.

How do I participate in FACTA-L discussions?

It is often beneficial, though certainly not required, to "lurk" (an Internet word for someone who reads listserve messages without participating in the discussion) for a short period of time in order to orient yourself to the group's questions and concerns. It is also a good idea to familiarize yourself with listserve etiquette: a brief overview can be found below (or [click here to skip to listserve etiquette](#)). However, you can send messages immediately to initiate a discussion as well as respond to questions or concerns you see on FACTA-L.

If you see a topic on which you wish to comment, reply to the listserve by using the normal "Reply" feature of your email program; if you wish to talk about a topic not currently being discussed, write a new message to facta-l@lists.ufl.edu. In either case, we encourage you to become an active member of FACTA-L by sharing your knowledge, experience, and

thoughts with your colleagues. Each of us has much to contribute to FACTA-L; you are not alone with a problem or a question.

Discussion of political issues germane to education and the discussion of political implications of educational issues are appropriate for this listserve; however, messages with obvious political content which are not explicitly linked to education would be deemed "out of bounds." The person posting to the list is responsible for making the relevance of any message apparent to the group. Also, discussion of the relative advantages or disadvantages of products by users is encouraged; but the posting of advertisements for commercial products to FACTA-L by business partners should be avoided. Business partners are encouraged to provide updates on issues of a technical nature or other information that is relevant to the membership of FACTA, and it is acceptable for a business partner to refer to a product in direct response to a request posted to the list. Disparaging attacks on any individual are always unacceptable.

Can I reply directly to the individual sending the message rather than the listserve?

Not only can you reply directly to the individual, but [listserve etiquette](#) requires that you do so when the message is only useful or intended for a single person. Otherwise, your personal response will be read by all subscribers to the FACTA-L listserve. This could not only be embarrassing, but your message would also clog the listserve unnecessarily. Remember that FACTA-L, like most other academic listserves, are public forums for discussion of issues that are of professional interest, not a "chat" service.

To write a message to the individual who sent a message to the listserve, do not use the "reply" feature of your email program. Instead, look at the "from" line which should contain the individual's email address. (Some programs allow you to directly click on this person's email address to open a new message, while others will only give you the text to copy.) Copy this email address, open a new email message, and type in the individual's email address.

How do I access past FACTA-L messages?

Sorting by Topic

If you choose to view archived messages by month, messages can be sorted by date, author, or topic. If topic is selected, any messages with the same subject (or Re: in front of the same subject) will be grouped and then ordered by date, keeping the entire discussion together for perusal.

You can access the FACTA-L archives by going to the FACTA-L webpage at <http://lists.ufl.edu/archives/facta-l.html> (new window). After you have reached the web page, you should see a list of months and years in which messages were sent. You can also use the advanced search below the list to locate email by subject, author, words in the message, or dates in which the message was sent.

Personalizing Your Listserve

What are my choices?

When subscribed to the FACTA-L listserve, you can change your subscription type, mail header style, how you receive acknowledgements of messages you send, your visibility in the list, and whether or not to temporarily stop receiving mail from the list.

Subscription Type

Subscription type determines whether you receive messages immediately or receive a daily compilation of messages. The type also determines the format of your mail. The results of selecting a particular subscription type follow:

1. **Regular:** You will receive each individual message as soon as it is sent to the listserve, including attachments.
2. **Digest:** You will receive a daily compilation of all messages sent to the listserve. More than one message may be received per day in digest mode if the listserve has a large number of messages sent within the same day. Within digest mode are the following options:
 - Traditional: No attachments or HTML.
 - MIME format (recommended): Attachments are allowed, but not HTML.
 - HTML format: Attachments and HTML are allowed.
3. **Index:** This mode is like the digest mode except you will receive only the subjects of all email for a given day. You must go to the archives to access the body of the messages or their attachments.
 - Traditional: Message is sent in plain text, with instructions on how to retrieve only the messages you want. (This mode is not recommended except for users who lack HTML-enabled email programs.)
 - HTML format: You can click on any message you want to read and be taken directly to the archives.

Mail header style

The mail header style determines how your email will be received and interpreted by your email program. The following are your options for various styles:

1. **Normal LISTSERV-style header (recommended)** sends the usual parameters that allow attachments and HTML to function properly.
2. **LISTSERV-style, with list name in subject (recommended)** is exactly the same as the normal header except that each of your messages' subject lines is prefaced with [FACTA-L] (which allows you to see at a glance what messages are from the listserve and even move those messages to their own folder if your mail program supports that feature).
3. **LISTSERV-style, short** is for email programs that don't function correctly with other headers, this may be the only option. However, HTML and attachments will be garbled in messages you receive from FACTA-L.
4. **"Dual" (second header in mail body)** is sometimes useful if you are receiving email on multiple computers and email programs, some of which do not support full headers. This style will usually cause problems with attachments and HTML.
5. **Sendmail-style** is an advanced option that duplicates the email header and then adds a 'Received' and 'Sender' field.

Acknowledgements

It can be reassuring to receive an acknowledgement that a message you just sent was indeed delivered to the listserve, though some find this feature less than helpful. Whether you receive an acknowledgement (and if so what type of acknowledgement) can be set by choosing one of three options:

1. **No acknowledgements** -- You will not be notified if your message was successfully sent to FACTA-L.
2. **Short message confirming receipt** -- Sends back a small message indicating that the message was successfully sent to FACTA-L.
3. **Receive copy of own postings** -- You will receive a full copy of any message you send out to FACTA-L.

Mail delivery temporarily disabled

You may want to stop receiving email from FACTA-L temporarily. For example, if you are going on vacation for a month, you may not want to have listserve messages filling up your inbox while you are away. When you return from vacation, you can then resume receiving email from FACTA-L and check the archives for any discussions you may have missed.

Concealing your address

On some listserves, a review feature exists to allow any user to see a list of other subscribers. Although that feature is not currently active for FACTA-L, if you wish to conceal your address so that it would not appear on such a list, activate this option.

How do I make changes?

To see your subscription configuration or to make changes to any of the above options, go to the FACTA-L webpage at <http://lists.ufl.edu/archives/facta-l.html> ([new window](#)) and follow the directions below. (You must be subscribed to FACTA-L first; if you are not, [click here](#) for instructions on how to subscribe.)

Getting a University of Florida LISTSERV password

If you already have a UFL LISTSERV password, skip down to the [changing options section](#) below. Otherwise, you should obtain a LISTSERV password by following these instructions:

1. Click on **Get a University of Florida LISTSERV password**.
2. Type in the email address you used to subscribe to FACTA-L.
3. Type in your new password.
4. Retype your new password in the box labeled *verification*.
5. Click on **Register Password**. When you see a screen labeled "Confirmation emailed", you may close the window.
6. Click on the confirmation link sent in an email to your account. This should take you to a page that states, "Your new password was registered successfully." That window can now be closed and the email deleted.

Changing Options

To change your FACTA-L options, make sure you are at <http://lists.ufl.edu/archives/facta-l.html> ([new window](#)) and then follow the instructions below:

1. Click on **Change your settings**.
2. To login, type in the email address you used when you subscribed to FACTA-L (this is the address on the "To" line of your email header) and your UFL LISTSERV password. See [Getting a University of Florida LISTSERV password](#) above if you do not have a password.
3. You should see your previous options selected on this page. Make any changes you want and then click **Update Options**. You may then close the window.

Listserve Etiquette

Think before sending

There are many situations when a quick reply can have adverse effects on the listserve's effectiveness. Perhaps you just wanted to chime in with a "me too" or a "that's a great

idea", or maybe someone has just insulted you and you have a few words to say in return. In any event, here are some tips to follow when replying to a message:

1. After you click reply, stop! Check to see to whom your message is addressed and ask yourself, "Do I want this message to go to the entire listserve (which will happen if you select "reply" to a FACTA-L message) or do I want this message to go to the individual who sent the message to the listserve?" Many people embarrass themselves by sending a private message to the whole list when they meant to send it to their friend who just contributed to the listserve.
2. Ask yourself if your reply will add anything of value to the discussion. A message that merely repeats what others have said or strays too far off topic may not be useful to anyone.
3. Before replying, make sure you've read all messages previously sent concerning that particular topic (generally referred to as a *thread*). If you haven't checked your messages in a few days, replying to one of the first messages you read may duplicate an already sent response. Most email programs provide a way to sort by subject (or thread) in order to quickly see related messages.
4. Avoid heated arguments. Like road-rage, the partial feeling of anonymity of a listserve environment can bring about heated-discussions amongst otherwise fairly calm people. Make sure whatever you post furthers the discussion and is not intended to insult another user.

Avoid unnecessary email backgrounds, pictures, icons, and other attachments

Distracting graphics and backgrounds intended to make your email attractive are also likely to irritate other users due to the extra file size and problems associated with these items. Similarly, attachments that are very large, saved in a hard to use format, or otherwise not related to the topic at hand should not be sent. If you wish to send a large attachment (e.g., one megabyte or larger), it is better to link to the file (if it is online or can be put there), compress the file, or let others know how to contact you personally to obtain the file in a private email.

Include a limited quote of the original email message in a reply

Quoting the original message helps others know what you are referring to. However, be careful to limit the quote to as few words as possible. Although it may take a little longer to delete unneeded parts of a message, doing so is better for all users of the listserve.

Use an email signature

Using an email signature (including name and email address) at end of your message helps others identify your messages.

* Permission is granted to disseminate this document as long as credit is given as listed above.

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