

FAQ for List Owners/Moderators

This FAQ is intended as a quick reference for Sympa list owners and moderators. It is only a supplement to the full built-in Sympa documentation available via the “Support” tab within the Sympa web interface:

[Administration \(Campus\) site](http://lists.montclair.edu/sympa/help): <http://lists.montclair.edu/sympa/help>

Colleges & Schools sites: <http://<sitename>-lists.montclair.edu/sympa/help>

Your site administrator (List Master) should provide you with the correct site name for your list.

1. As a list owner what changes I am authorized to make on a list?

As a list owner, you can make changes to the list relating to areas such as:

- configuration
- subscription management
- list archive management
- message bouncing
- list rename and removal

To see these options, log into the Sympa interface with your NetID and password. Click on the **My Lists** icon. This will display a list of all the lists you are subscribed to or you own. You will see an Owner link displayed next to each list you own. Click the Owner link for a list to see the options for modifying that list.

2. How I can choose the right configuration options for my list?

Sympa uses *authorization scenarios* (predefined sets of rules) to determine whether or not a given user can perform a certain action. Some examples of when scenarios are used (and the names of the scenario classes used) are:

- Sending messages to lists (*send*)
- Subscribing to a list (*subscribe*)
- Unsubscribing from a list (*unsubscribe*)
- Whether or not the list is shown in the main index of lists (*visibility*)
- Requesting a new list (*request_list*)
- Viewing who's subscribed to a list (*review*) There are different choices available for each class of scenario.

3. How can I set a “send” scenario to specify who can post to the list?

To change which *send* scenario is being used for your list, select the list under **My Lists**, then click Admin -->Edit List Config -->Sending/Reception. The *send* scenario choices are in the drop down of the first section, named **Who can send messages**.

Available choices include:

- **closed**

No one may send to the list. Can be handy if you need to temporarily shut off list traffic due to an overly aggressive spammer.

- **editorkey**

Anyone may send to the list, but the messages get flagged for moderation. List moderators may send straight to the list, bypassing the message approval queues.

- **editorkeyonly**

Anyone may send to the list, but the messages get flagged for moderation. This also applies to moderators.

- **editorkeyonlyauth**

Anyone may send to the list, and his messages get flagged for moderation. List moderators, however, are sent back a confirmation request when they send messages to the list, asking them to confirm the message before it gets sent out.

- **newsletter**

Only list moderators may send messages to the list. This is most useful for announcement-style lists, where only a select group should be able to broadcast messages out to all list members, without anyone else being able to post to the list.

- **newsletterkeyonly**

Similar to the *newsletter send* scenario, this allows only moderators to post to the list, but it sends a confirmation message back to the moderators asking them to confirm that they want to send that message to the list. It also prevents people from being able to falsify messages to the list by setting their mail client up to claim to be one of the moderators.

- **owner**

Only list owners may send messages to the list.

- **private**

Only list owners, moderators, and subscribers may send messages to the list. This is the standard default for non-public lists as it prevents spammers from getting messages out to the list. You may find that subscribers who try to send messages to the list with alternate addresses are having their messages rejected, since the list only accepts posts from e-mails subscribed to the list.

- **private_smime**

Only list owners, moderators, and subscribers may send to the list, but they all require valid S/MIME signatures. S/MIME signatures are specialized attachments that verify, through the use of a trusted third party, the sender's identity as being authentic and the message as being unaltered. This is the most secure setting for your list, but all the users on the list must have valid S/MIME signatures.

- **privateandeditorkey**

Only subscribers and moderators may send messages to the list; subscribers' messages must be moderated but moderators' messages go straight through. Similar to the *editorkey* option, but only allows subscribers to submit messages for approval rather than anyone.

- **privateandnomultipartoreditorkey**

Moderators can send straight to the list, as well as subscribers. However, all the messages with attachments will be flagged for approval by the moderators.

- **privatekey**

Only subscribers may send to the list, and they will need to confirm every message by replying to a confirmation message Sympa sends them before the message will go through to the list.

- **privatekeyandeditorkeyonly**

Only subscribers and moderators may send to the list. They'll both be asked to confirm their messages, and subscribers' messages will get put into the moderation queue (moderators' messages will go straight out).

- **privateoreditorkey**

Subscribers and moderators may send messages straight out to the list. Non-subscribers' messages will be flagged for moderation. This can be useful for allowing users who are not subscribers to submit messages while still letting the moderators keep spam away from the list's population.

- **privateorpublickey**

Subscribers may send messages to the list, as may users whose S/MIME signatures can be verified. Everyone else must confirm their messages by replying to a confirmation message Sympa sends them before the message gets resent on to the list. This is useful for reducing spam without increasing the list moderators' workload as spamming systems are usually automated and are very, very rarely — if ever — sophisticated enough or watched well enough to approve the message.

- **public**

Anyone in the world may send to the list. This is really only suitable and recommended for contact addresses where there really is no other way to allow anyone who may need to send to the address the ability to do so.

- **public_nobcc**

Anyone may send to the list, but messages with Bcc (blind carbon copy) recipients are rejected. This can help prevent some spam, though most spammers no longer use Bcc headers for recipients.

- **publickey**

Anyone may send to the list, provided they approve their own message by appropriately replying to the confirmation message Sympa sends them.

- **publicnoattachment**

Anyone may send to the list. Messages with attachments are flagged for moderation.

- **publicnomultipart**

Anyone may send to the list. Messages with attachments are simply rejected.

4. How can I set a “subscribe” scenario to specify who can subscribe to the list?

To change which *subscribe* scenario is being used for your list, select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin -->Edit List Config -->Privileges. The *subscribe* scenario choices are in the drop down of the second section, named **Who can subscribe to the list (subscribe)**.

Available choices include:

- **auth**

Only authenticated users can subscribe to the list.

- **auth_notify**

Only authenticated users can subscribe to the list. Owner receives an e-mail notification when someone subscribes to the list.

- **auth_owner**

Only authenticated users can post a request to subscribe to the list. All requests need to be approved by the owner.

- **closed**

No one can subscribe to the list. Only the list owner can manage subscribers using the interface. No subscribe commands sent through e-mail will be accepted.

- **msu_only**

Only users with a valid MSU NetID account can subscribe to the list (all e-mail addresses matching @mail.montclair.edu or @montclair.edu). Users can connect from on campus as well as from off campus. They don't have to be connecting from the local domain.

- **open**

Anyone can subscribe to the list.

- **open_notify**

Anyone can subscribe to the list. Owner receives an e-mail notification when someone subscribes to the list.

- **open_quiet**

Anyone can subscribe to the list. No welcome message is sent to the subscriber.

- **owner**

Only the owner of the list can add subscribers. Existing subscribers may send e-mail address change requests.

- **smime**

Only users requesting subscription through e-mails in mime format and signed can subscribe.

- **smimeorowner**

Only users requesting subscription through e-mail in mime format and signed can subscribe. Subscribers may also be added to the list by the owner.

5. How do I add a subscriber to my list?

Select the list under **Home->My Lists** then click Admin -->View or Manage Subscribers. A page with current subscribers as well as add and search capabilities will open. In the **Add a user** field type in the e-mail address of the user you want to add. If you do not want your user to receive a welcome notification message, then check the *quiet* box. Click the **Add** button to add the user.

6. How do I check if a user is already subscribed to my list?

To check if the user is already subscribed to the list, you can search the list. This capability is available on the same page where you add subscribers. In the **Search for a user by e- mail** field type in the user e-mail and click Search.

7. How do I add several subscribers at once?

On the same page where you add subscribers click the **Multiple add** button. On the **Multiple add** page you'll see a text box with some example addresses and names in it. If you do not want the users to receive welcome notification messages, then check the *quiet* box. While users generally prefer to receive a welcome message, in some cases it may not be desirable such as if you're migrating users from an old list. Click the **Add Subscribers** button to add the users.

8. How do I add or remove a moderator/editor?

Adding or removing a list moderator requires you to be the owner of the list. Select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin -->Edit List Config -->Users-->Moderators. The current moderators of the list are listed here along with an empty set of entry fields where you can add a new one. To add a new moderator, fill out the empty set of entry fields in this section. Only the email address is required, though you may want to put their name in so that users see it instead of their address.

The **private information field** is for whatever information you'd like to put in there, such as a telephone number, and is only visible to other list owners. Removing a moderator is simply a matter of deleting their email address, name, and private information.

Once you've made your changes, click the Update button on the bottom of the page to save the new settings.

9. How can I create new topic for a list?

Topics can only be created by the Sympa administrators or list master of the site. You will have to send a request to the list master for a new topic to be created.

10. How can I change the subject of my list?

To change the subject of a list, select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin -->Edit List Config-->List Definition. The subject field is on the very top of the page. Type in the new subject and click the **Apply modification** button on the bottom of the page to save the new setting.

11. Why can't some users see my list on the Index of lists?

The list "visibility" attribute determines if the list will be listed on the Index of Lists page and who will have access to view the list information. To change the "visibility" attribute of a list, select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin ----->Edit List Config----->List Definition. Go to the section named **Visibility of the List (visibility)**. The options are:

- **conceal**

No one can view the list information except the subscribers of the list.

- **noconceal**

The list information is visible to everybody. It is fully visible.

- **secret**

The list is only visible to the owner and the moderators. It is not listed on the list of lists even for subscribers.

12. Can I archive the e-mail correspondence of my list?

You can choose to archive the e-mail correspondence of a list depending on the purpose of the list and the time frame for which the list will remain active. Some lists are created per semester or per class and so you may choose not to archive them or to set the archive for a short period of time (ex: 3 months). Select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin ----->Edit List Config----->Archives. In the section named **Web archives (web_archive)** you can enable a list archive accessible through the web. You can specify access rights, quota, and how many months of archives to keep. (There may be global limits on these settings defined by the sympy administrators.)

To manage an existing archive for a list select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin ----->Manage Archives. On this page you can download the archive in a zip file. You can choose one month or a set of months. The messages will be archived in separate files zipped together. All the messages will be downloaded including the full headers. On this page you can also delete archived messages by month. Use caution with this action since it is irreversible.

13. What should I do if some of the subscribers to my list bounce (return as undeliverable) too many messages?

Sympa has default options set of how to deal with e-mail addresses that cause too much bouncing of posted messages. Based on the number of errors and on the traffic on the list, bouncing subscribers are either notified, unsubscribed, or their score is reset to zero when their address stops bouncing. To view the Bounce settings of a list, select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin ----->Edit List Config----->Bounces. We recommend using the default values for these settings. When there are problems with subscribers' email addresses (obsolete email addresses, addresses temporarily unavailable when messages were sent, inbox quota exceeded, etc.), the percentage of bouncing addresses is shown in the left menu as the **Error rate**. To check the bouncing addresses, go to Admin----->Bounces.

To reset the bounce count of users, select them by checking their boxes and click on the **Reset errors for selected users** button. If the e-mail addresses continue to bounce messages you may want to unsubscribe those users and remove their e-mail addresses from the list.

14. Can I create or customize templates for my list?

There are few files/messages used as part of the communication with list users:

- welcome message: this message is the notice sent to people when they are first subscribed. It can be customized to provide more details for your list and all the startup items for your subscribers.
- unsubscribe message: this message is sent to people unsubscribing from the list.
- deletion message: this message is sent to people you unsubscribe from the list (DEL command), unless you hit the *quiet* button.
- remind message: this message is sent to subscribers as a personalized reminder when using the REMIND command. It's very useful to help people who are confused about their own subscription e-mails or people who are not able to unsubscribe themselves.
- subscribing invitation message: this message is sent to people you invite to subscribe to the list using the INVITE command.
- notice of message rejected by the moderator: this message is sent to the sender of a message rejected by the moderator.
- notice of message rejected because of a virus: this message is sent to the sender of a message in which a virus was found.
- List homepage: HTML text to describe the list. It is printed on the right-hand side of the main list page. (The default is the list description.)
- List description: This text is sent as an answer to the mail command INFO. It can also be included in the *Welcome message*.
- Message header: If this file is not empty, it is added as a MIME attachment at the beginning of each message distributed to the list.
- Message footer: same as *Message header*, but attached at the end of the message.

To view or edit any of these templates for a list, select the list under My **Lists** then click Admin->Edit List Config->Message templates.

15. How can I approve posted subscription requests for my list?

You can approve posted subscription requests either by e-mail, by clicking on the provided link that the Sympa system will generate for you, or by logging into the interface. Select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin --> Moderate --> Subscriptions. This will allow you to select the e-mail address and approve or reject the subscription request.

16. How can I moderate posted messages to my list?

To be able to moderate posted messages to a list, the “send” setting of the list must specify that the list is moderated and you must be defined as a moderator of the list. Being an owner of a list does not authorize you for this action unless there are no moderators assigned. The moderator role is separate from the owner role. Every time a message is posted to a moderated list the moderator(s) are notified. A moderator can approve the message by replying to the received notification or by logging into the interface. Select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin-->Moderate-->Messages. All posted messages will be displayed. To see the message you can click on the Subject. There are 3 options you can choose from: authorize message distribution, reject the message and reject the message and notify the sender. The last two options are only available through the Sympa interface. You cannot reject a message through an e-mail. If there is more than one moderator and two of them used the e-mail approve action, the message will be approved only once. The second moderator will receive an e-mail from Sympa indicating that the message has already been processed.

17. How can I make sure there are no postings from a certain address to my list?

You can place e-mail addresses on a blacklist. Select the list under **My Lists** then click Admin-->Blocklist. Enter one e-mail address per line in the provided input box under BlockList Management. To block all users from a certain domain you can use the * wildcard operator (ex: *@somename.com).