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What's happening and why?

Watermark is upgrading the email service provider used to send email communications for Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT) in order to improve email reliability, and provide a service that can scale and evolve with the ever-changing landscape of email security.

As one of the key drivers of survey engagement and response rates, the reliability, security and deliverability of email communications are extremely important. By moving from a homegrown email system to an AWS-based solution, we will be able to meet these needs more effectively and more efficiently. Specifically, this upgrade will:

- Improve email deliverability.
- Ensure our email-sending practices conform to the latest security requirements and best practices, and aid us in evolving as these requirements change.
- Enable Watermark to scale to ensure strong email reliability as product usage grows.



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When is this happening? *(Edited Jan 25, 2022)*

We will switch over to the new email service provider during the month of February 2022. We set a soft deadline of January 31 to complete preparation steps to help your institution plan accordingly.

Why is now the right time to transition?

While there is no perfect time to make this type of change, improving email reliability is urgent and important, so we looked for the earliest possible window to bring you these benefits soon, while minimizing disruption and providing you with a reasonable amount of advanced notice. We selected February 2022 for its historically low survey activity in between Fall and Spring terms.

What's changing and what do I have to do?

This upgrade involves three key changes related to email receipt/deliverability:

1. [Emails will be sent with a new default "from" address.](#)
2. [Emails will come from new servers.](#)
3. [There's a new way to authorize Watermark to send "from" a campus email domain.](#)

As a result, this upgrade may impact your users' ability to **receive** emails sent from Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT), and may require your IT team to update safelisting settings they've configured to ensure course evaluation and survey emails reach your users (e.g., email or IP address safelisting).

If any of the following are true, please share this FAQ with your IT team as soon as possible and work with them to determine and make any necessary changes before January 31, 2022:

1. Your institution configures automated email communications for any course evaluations or general survey projects.
2. Your institution uses the "direct-to-user" email tools to send one-off messages to individual users outside of survey projects.
3. You override the default "from" address (e.g., spoof a campus email address) to send any emails from Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT).

Otherwise please simply make note of the following changes for your own administrative awareness.



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Emails will be sent with a new *default* “from” address.

When we upgrade to the new email service provider, the default address used to send outgoing email communications from Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT) will **change to notifications@watermarkinsights.com**, from an “evaluationkit.com” address.

Please review your email safelist settings with your campus IT team before January 31, 2022. It will depend on your email vendor, but you may need to configure safelisting and/or SPF to ensure the highest level of email deliverability.

- If you’ve safelisted the “evaluationkit.com” domain, please add the “watermarkinsights.com” domain to your safelist settings to ensure users can receive emails from both domains.
- If your organization leverages Sender Policy Framework (SPF), please also ensure that the following entry is included in your SPF record:
spf.watermarkinsights.com

It is likely that you already added this as part of preparing for the migration of Course Evaluations & Surveys to AWS earlier this year, but it’s a good thing to check again now for good measure.

- If you’ve safelisted a specific list of IP addresses, we highly recommend that you **add** safelisting for the “watermarkinsights.com” domain.

Emails will come from new servers. (*Edited Jan 25, 2022*)

After the upgrade we’ll send all Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT) email communications from a new set of servers. Previously we recommended that you safelist specific IP addresses, but thanks to a suite of new AWS features we’ll be leveraging, we’ll be able to improve email deliverability *without* requiring you to safelist IP addresses.

If you previously added Watermark or EvaluationKIT IP addresses in your email safelist, we highly recommend that you:

- **Add** safelisting for the “watermarkinsights.com” domain (see [above](#) for details).
- **Keep** your current IP address safelist settings in place until you receive notice that this upgrade is complete. After the upgrade is complete in February 2022 you’ll be able to remove them.

Please note that we will **not** be providing IP addresses for safelisting in the future as they are subject to change quite frequently.

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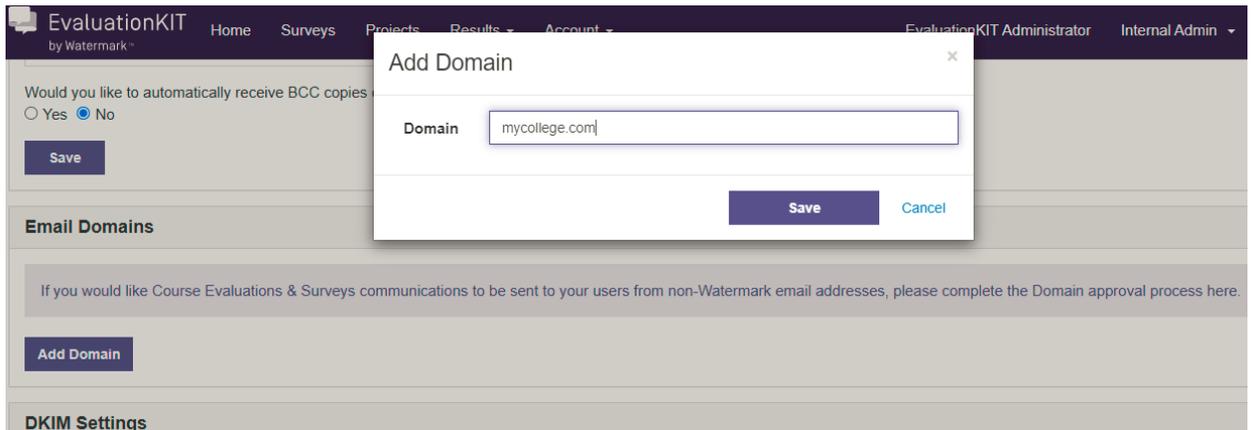
There's a new way to authorize Watermark to send "from" a campus email domain. *(Edited Jan 25, 2022)*

As noted above, after this upgrade, all emails will default to send from `notifications@watermarkinsights.com`. If you're accustomed to sending email communications "from" a campus email address *instead of* the system default, you'll need to use a new set of self-service tools to configure and authorize Watermark to send from your preferred campus email domain(s) before January 31, 2022.

This is a collaborative process involving some steps by the EvaluationKIT Administrator and some on the part of your campus IT team:

1. Determine what university "from" address you want to use for your course evaluation and survey email communications.
2. As the Course Evaluations & Surveys (EvaluationKIT) Administrator, configure the email domain for that address using the new "Email Domains" area in Account > Outgoing Email Settings.

By verifying a domain, you will be able to send email from any subdomain or email address of the verified domain without verifying each one individually. In other words, authorizing "institution.edu" means that you will also be authorized to send from emails that use "mail.institution.edu" or other subdomains.



The screenshot shows the 'Add Domain' dialog box in the EvaluationKIT interface. The dialog box has a title bar with 'Add Domain' and a close button. It contains a 'Domain' label and a text input field with the value 'mycollege.com'. Below the input field are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. The background page shows the 'Email Domains' section with a 'Save' button and an 'Add Domain' button. The page also includes a notification: 'If you would like Course Evaluations & Surveys communications to be sent to your users from non-Watermark email addresses, please complete the Domain approval process here.'

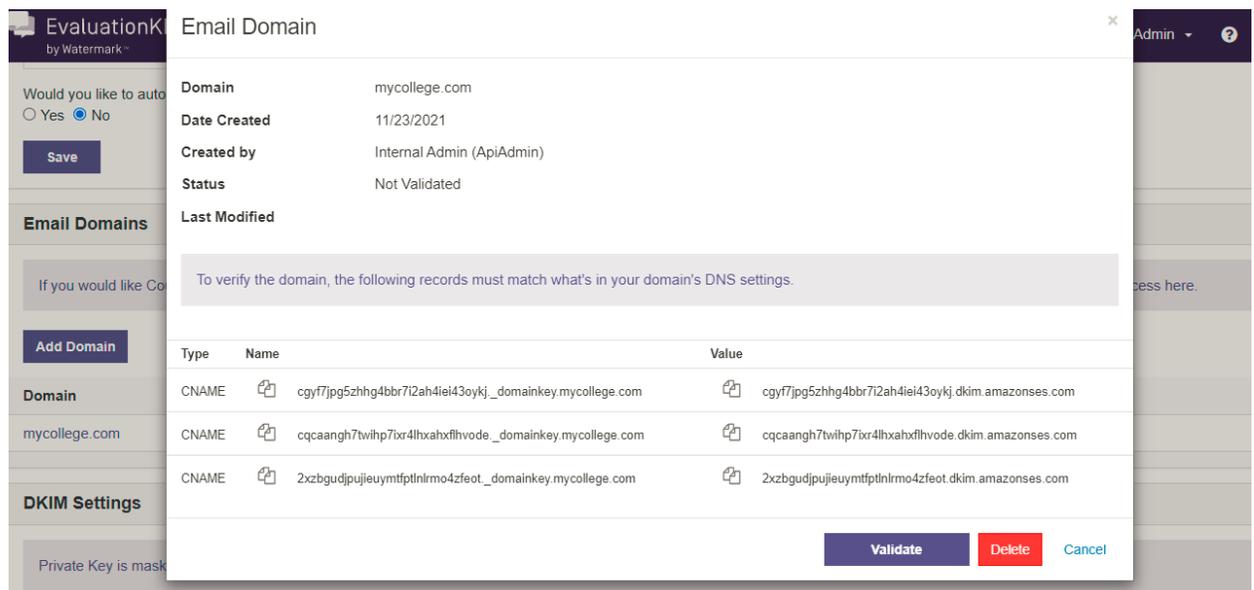
Note: If your institution has multiple Course Evaluations & Surveys subaccounts and you need to send from a campus email domain for all/multiple of them, you will need to add that

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email domain in each subaccount, *but* you only need to complete steps 3-4 with your DNS administrator *once*.

- Once you configure that domain, the “Email Domain” area of the system will provide you with a table of values. Send that table of values - including Type, Name and Value - to your DNS administrator.



Type	Name	Value
CNAME	cgyf7jpg5zhhg4bbr7i2ah4iei43oykj_domainkey.mycollege.com	cgyf7jpg5zhhg4bbr7i2ah4iei43oykj_dkim.amazonses.com
CNAME	cqcaangh7twihp7xr4lhxahxflhvode_domainkey.mycollege.com	cqcaangh7twihp7xr4lhxahxflhvode.dkim.amazonses.com
CNAME	2xzbjudjpujieuymtfptnlrmo4zfeot_domainkey.mycollege.com	2xzbjudjpujieuymtfptnlrmo4zfeot.dkim.amazonses.com

- Your DNS Administrator must add these values to the DNS zone that supports the email domain that you’re validating.

How to do this depends on which DNS provider you use, so we can’t provide many specifics on this part. But you may find the resource table under Step 3 of “To verify a domain identity configured with Easy DKIM (console)” in this [AWS article](#) helpful.

- Once you receive confirmation from the DNS administrator that they’ve added that table of values, please go back to your entry in the “Email Domain” area of Course Evaluations & Surveys and click “Validate”.
- Once the email domain successfully validates, the system is officially authorized to send “from” any email address that uses that email domain, and you can use your preferred “from” email address in any automated and direct-to-user emails from that point forward.



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Important: The system will begin requiring and using this domain validation to send emails from custom addresses after the email service upgrade in February 2022. If you're accustomed to sending "from" a campus email address today, please make sure you use this process to validate the corresponding email domain before January 31, 2022.

By when must I take action?

If you need to adjust your campus email settings or validate a new email domain ahead of this upgrade, please do so **by January 31, 2022**. This will ensure we're able to effectively test before the upgrade and are able to successfully deliver email communications for your spring surveys and course evaluations afterward.

What about DKIM?

Good news! Our new email service uses DKIM for **all** emails we send. Outgoing email communications will be sent using DKIM and a default email address of notifications@watermarkinsights.com, and the [new domain validation process](#) uses Easy DKIM, which means that once a given domain is validated/authorized, any emails sent from that domain will automatically use DKIM. If you are using our current DKIM functionality (i.e. with your own private key), this will no longer be needed once the email service upgrade is complete in February.

NOTE: This response was revised on January 6th, 2022 to correct the original answer, which indicated this upgrade will not affect our existing DKIM functionality.

Will this affect the "Email From Address" I've configured under Account > Outgoing Email Settings?

No, if you've configured a from email address under Account > Outgoing Email Settings to, this will remain in place and will not be affected.

Will there be downtime during the transition?

No, this transition does not involve any downtime for you and your users, and any emails scheduled to send during the transition will not be disrupted as long as you've completed the [steps above](#) that apply to your institution's setup.

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What happens if I don't take action? *(Added Jan 25, 2022)*

Emails will continue to be sent from Course Evaluations & Surveys, but if you don't take action, email deliverability may be affected.