UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST

ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY

Introduction

The University recognises that electronic mail has the potential to improve communications between staff, students and external organisations. As a very efficient and convenient communication tool, it can be a means of intellectual, cultural, and social growth, but it can also be a means of harassment and destructiveness. Problems can also arise when electronic mail is used carelessly. Unlike face-to-face or telephone conversations, electronic mail messages lack the visual and contextual cues, such as facial expression or tone of voice, that may modify what is actually said. Messages should be worded with this in mind to avoid miscommunications. The University encourages the use of electronic mail to share information, to improve communication, and to exchange ideas.

Policy Statement

University electronic mail services are University facilities and should be used only for legitimate University purposes including teaching, research, and scholarship.

This policy endeavours to recognise the benefits of this service while providing guidelines for appropriate use. While specifically directed towards the use of electronic mail, much of this policy equally pertains to other electronic communication.

Authorisation to use electronic mail services

Each staff member and student (client) may be authorised to use an electronic mail account on one of the University's computer systems. The University reserves the right to withdraw the service from any client who abuses this service.

A standard environment for electronic mail

A standard operating environment for electronic mail is adopted across the University to allow optimum conditions for the convenient transmission of information. This environment is managed by Information Technology Services and standards are periodically reviewed to ensure the ongoing needs of the University are met. Clients using alternative environments may not be supported.

Electronic mail directories

A directory of staff and student electronic mail addresses are maintained to allow convenient addressing of mail between on campus clients.

Confidentiality

Due to limitations in electronic mail systems generally, electronic mail cannot be kept confidential with absolute certainty and can be readily redistributed. Therefore, clients should not use electronic mail for transmitting confidential information and should scrutinise the authenticity of received mail.

Representation

Clients must be aware that the correspondence and discussion into which they enter when using the University network and the Internet may be construed to be representative of the University's position.

Where the client is expressing their personal view, such correspondence should imply or clearly state that the opinion expressed is that of the writer, and not necessarily that of the University, e.g., *The views expressed herein are personal and may not be representative of the University of the Sunshine Coast College.*

Unless individual clients formally identify themselves and their position within the University, their views will not be taken to be those of the University.

Broadcast messages

Public electronic mail groups have been established to allow for convenient distribution of communication to the University community. The use of these groups is for the purpose of official University activities only. Electronic mail messages may only be broadcast to large numbers of registered clients under the circumstances where the:

- message is an official notification of the University relevant to the majority of addressees,
- sender and other persons form a group with a common interest for the dissemination of relevant electronic communications, or
- message is for the purposes of maintaining the effective operations of the electronic mail service

Local newsgroups have been established to provide a suitable option for broadcasting messages. Electronic mail services may not be used for personal business or personal gain, except as permitted by other University policies. Clients may only post personal advertising material, e.g., personal items for sale such as cars, computers, etc., using newsgroups that have been established for this purpose. The sending of chain letters is expressly prohibited.

Commercial advertising or sponsorship is not permitted except where such activity is clearly related to, or supports the mission of the University, and is permitted by other University policies.

Records Management

Management of the University's records must effectively support the decision making processes employed within the University and external statutory requirements.. Consequently, all significant electronic mail communications should be electronically filed or filedin hard copy form in approved University record keeping systems.   Electronic records are subject to the statutory requirements of the Libraries and Archives Act 1988. The retention and disposal of electronic documents will be subject to the provisions of the University's Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Associated policies and regulations

Clients are expected to observe the laws of the State and the Commonwealth, and the statutes, rules and policies of the University including, but not limited to, the Code of Conduct , Student Conduct and Discipline Statute, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy, and harassment policies that may be applicable within the context of providing and using electronic mail services.

Activities considered to violate University policy with respect to the use of electronic mail include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the sending of messages which a reasonable individual would consider to be defaming, harassing or otherwise abusive or obscene
- making unauthorised broadcasts or other mass mailing or the sending of chain letters
- violating intellectual property or copyright laws
- committing a fraudulent act, forging messages or any other misrepresentation
- violation of confidentiality by accessing, intercepting or disclosing messages that you are not authorised to access
- promulgating software viruses or similar contaminant software
- taking any action that would or might lead to denial or impairment of access to, or effective use of, any information technology resource, e.g., spamming or otherwise flooding the mail system with junk mail
- taking any action that would or might lead to circumventing or compromising security of any of the University's information technology resources
- sharing of accounts or making known your password
- use for commercial gain or other than incidental private use
- the use of electronic mail to violate any other University policy or regulation
- the use of electronic mail to violate any State or Commonwealth law

Discipline

The corrective action for any violation of this policy will depend upon the nature of the offence. Information Technology Services administrative staff will determine an offense as either minor or major. Minor violations will normally be dealt with by the Information Technology Services staff and will result in an information email message sent to the offender. For continuing or more serious violations, any client may have his/her electronic mail account terminated or suspended for breach of any of the terms of this policy or related policies as determined by the Code of Conduct and the Student Conduct and Discipline Statute. The University reserves the right to take whatever action may be warranted in accordance with the laws of the State and the Commonwealth, and the statutes, rules and policies of the University.

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