POLICY 1.45 – Email Policy

Policy Category: General
Effective Date: May 1, 2008
Revised: (NEW)

PURPOSE

1.0 The purpose of this Policy is to define the acceptable use of electronic mail (hereinafter "e-mail") as a method of communication at The University of Western Ontario (hereinafter the "University"), to outline responsibilities involving e-mail, and to provide guidelines for effective practices and processes.

SCOPE

2.0 This e-mail Policy applies to faculty, staff, students, alumni, retirees, visiting faculty, and other third parties who may be associated with the University, or who have access to a University-assigned e-mail account.

PRINCIPLES

3.0 The University e-mail system is a vital part of the University's information technology services infrastructure. It is a service provided to support necessary communication in conducting and administering the business of the University, including teaching, research and scholarly activities.

4.0 The use of the University e-mail system, like the use of any other University provided resource, and like any other University activity, is subject to the normal requirements of legal and ethical behaviour within the University community.

GENERAL

5.0 The University will normally provide an e-mail account to all faculty, staff and students, to be used in conjunction with their duties or activities at the University. The University may also provide an e-mail account for alumni, retirees, and visiting faculty, as well as others not affiliated with the University. These accounts, signified by an @uwo.ca address, are referred to in this Policy as centrally administered e-mail accounts.

6.0 In addition, faculty, staff and students may also be provided with an e-mail account by a faculty or administrative unit. The term "e-mail account", when used in this Policy, refers to all e-mail accounts and associated e-mail addresses assigned to a user by the University or any faculty or administrative unit within the University.

7.0 All e-mail accounts and associated addresses are the property of the University.
8.0 The centrally administered e-mail account will be considered the individual's official University e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received at his/her official University address is attended to in a timely manner.

9.0 Faculties or administrative units that establish their own e-mail accounts for the use of faculty, staff or students, shall work with Information Technology Services (hereinafter ITS”) to ensure that mail directed to a user’s centrally administered e-mail account is properly managed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS

10.0 All users have a responsibility to ensure that they conduct e-mail exchanges with professionalism and courtesy, and manage their e-mail responsibly.

11.0 Users shall ensure that they use and manage their University e-mail account in accordance with other University policies, including but not limited to Policy 1.13, Code of Behavior for Use of Computing Resources and Corporate Data.

12.0 It is the account holder’s responsibility to retain any e-mail message or attachment that is required for ongoing purposes and to dispose of any e-mail message that is no longer required. Users should refer to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the University’s Freedom of Information and Privacy Office for further information regarding e-mail and privacy issues.

13.0 Since the e-mail bears identification marks of the University, users are expected to ensure that all communication is carried on in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner. Users shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the University unless appropriately authorized to do so.

14.0 In using e-mail, users must comply with all applicable federal and provincial laws and all applicable University rules and policies. Examples of such laws, rules and policies include, but are not limited to, the laws relating to libel, privacy, copyright, trademark, obscenity, and child pornography; the University’s Code of Student Conduct; and the University’s Non Discrimination/Harassment Policy. Users who engage in communications with persons in other jurisdictions should be aware that they may also be subject to the laws of those other jurisdictions.

15.0 The unauthorized use of invalid or forged “From” addresses in an attempt to misrepresent the identity of the sender is prohibited.

16.0 Inappropriate or offensive e-mail, or e-mail that is fraudulent, harassing or obscene, must not be sent or forwarded, except as requested in making a complaint of inappropriate or offensive e-mail.

17.0 If a user receives harassing or threatening e-mail, he or she should refer to Policy 1.35, Non-Discrimination/Harassment and Policy 1.20, Computing Resources Security.

18.0 E-mail account holders may use their e-mail account for incidental personal purposes provided that such use does not: (1) directly or indirectly interfere with the operation of computing facilities or e-mail services, (2) burden the University with noticeable incremental cost, (3) interfere with the e-mail account holder's employment or other obligation to the University, or (4) contravene this or any other University policy. E-mail records arising from such personal use may be subject to access as described in the Access and Privacy section of this Policy. E-mail users should assess the implications of the Access and Privacy section of this Policy in deciding whether to use University e-mail services for personal purposes.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

19.0 The e-mail accounts provided on University servers are institutional property, and those responsible for maintaining these servers are responsible for ensuring that institutional standards for security, user authentication and access control are appropriately applied. However, the security and confidentiality of e-mail cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore, operators of e-mail services have no control over the security of e-mail that has been downloaded to a user's computer. E-mail users should employ whatever protections (e.g., passwords) that are available to them as a deterrent to potential intruders and the misuse of e-mail.

20.0 The e-mail address provided by the University is the property of the University. Searchable electronic address directories—some public, some private—may be maintained and populated from the e-mail addresses provided by the University. The contents of such e-mail address directories are institutional data. Faculty and staff may, in special circumstances, request not to be included in public directories.

21.0 The University reserves the right to reject any e-mail that could compromise the University network and any systems connected to it. ITS will maintain reasonable processes to deal with e-mail containing viruses, to reject e-mail from known SPAM sites, and to scan incoming e-mail for SPAM, but the University cannot guarantee the success of such processes, and the user must accept the risk inherent in the use of the technology.

22.0 E-mail is backed up for purposes of disaster recovery only and not for recovery of specific items of deleted e-mail or other requests. There is no central back-up for archival purposes. Individual users are responsible for backing up any e-mail they require for ongoing purposes. The University is not responsible or liable for the content created, sent, forwarded, contained or stored in an e-mail account.

ACCESS AND PRIVACY

23.0 Users should be aware that the confidentiality of e-mail may be compromised by the applicability of law or policy, by unintended redistribution, or because of the inadequacy of current technologies to protect against unauthorized access. Users should exercise extreme caution in using e-mail to communicate confidential or sensitive matters.

24.0 The University reserves the right to access e-mail records, including those which have been deleted by the account holder but which may not yet have been deleted centrally, in accordance with paragraph 16.00 of Policy 1.20, Computing Resources Security. In addition, the University reserves the right to access e-mail records where there are reasonable grounds to believe that those records contain information necessary to the proper functioning of the University’s business. Such circumstances would include the absence of an employee where it is not reasonable to obtain the employee’s consent. Wherever practical, employees will be notified promptly when their e-mail records have been accessed.

ENFORCEMENT

25.0 Violation of this Policy, or associated guidelines or standards established by the University, may result in the temporary or permanent loss of e-mail privileges. Violations of other policies, laws or terms of employment which may occur through the use of University provided e-mail services are subject to all sanctions applicable under such policies, laws or terms of employment.