

Overview

The University recognises that electronic mail and other forms of electronic communication have the potential to improve communications between staff, students and external organisations. As an efficient and convenient communication tool, electronic mail can be a means of intellectual, cultural, and social growth. The University encourages the responsible use of electronic mail to share information, to improve communication, and to exchange ideas.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy Electronic mail (email) includes, where applicable, a range of digital tools used for one to one, one to many and many to many communications in both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous modes. These may include electronic mail, listservers, bulletin boards, chat, online learning environments, Web conferencing tools, Short Message Service (SMS) messaging, multimedia message (MMS), instant messaging (IM) and other electronic communication systems.

A business email is any email created or received while carrying out the business of the University. Sending or receiving a business-related email message is a business transaction and this is a public record subject to legislation and to legal processes.

Broadcast email refers to the distribution of messages to multiple recipients that may include all staff and students or a selected group (eg staff within a faculty).

SPAM is defined in the SPAM Act 2003 as unsolicited commercial electronic messages.

Clients of the email service includes University staff and students, and approved organisations and individuals located on the University campus who may be granted an account to facilitate communication with the University (eg Student Guild, Australian Health Promotion Association, etc)

A generic email account is an email account that has been created for a functional role (eg careers@usc.edu.au).

Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The University's electronic mail service is made available to authorised members of the University community (clients) to facilitate communication in relation to legitimate University purposes including teaching, research, scholarship and administration. Any incidental personal use should be consistent with other University policy including the Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy and the Student Conduct - Governing Policy.

1.2 All electronic messages, inbound and outbound, business and personal, are the property of the University.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Designated Officer is responsible for managing the University's email system and approving the technical components of that system that will support University business.

2.2 Cost Centre managers are responsible for the approval of generic email accounts and email accounts granted to external organisations and individuals for which they are responsible. Where an external organisations or individual cannot be attributed to a Cost Centre, approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is required.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice-Chancellor and President

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Information Technology

FIRST APPROVED

3 February 1998

LAST AMENDED

24 August 2018

EFFECTIVE START DATE

13 August 2014

REVIEW DATE

1 December 2018

STATUS

Active

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources - Governing Policy

Adopting Cloud-based Services - Procedures

Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment (Staff) - Governing Policy

Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment (Students) - Governing Policy

Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Bullying and Harassment (Students) - Procedures

Conversion to a Fixed-term Pre-Retirement Contract - Procedures

Copyright - Governing Policy

Copyright - Procedures

Copyright Infringement/Takedown Notice - Procedures

ICT Security - Managerial Policy

Information System Operations - Procedures

Intellectual Property - Governing Policy

Sexual Harassment Prevention (Students) - Governing Policy

Social Media - Managerial Policy

Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy

Student Conduct - Governing Policy

Student General Misconduct - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)

Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)

SPAM Act 2003

2.3 Each client is responsible for their own electronic email account and the use of that account. Generic email accounts (eg careers@usc.edu.au) will have an assigned individual responsible for the account.

2.4 Cost Centre Managers are authorised to grant permission for messages that relate to the business of the University to be broadcast by their staff or students to University clients.

2.5 The Director, Human Resources is authorised and may broadcast messages to University staff where the request to distribute a message originates from an external organisation or individual. The Director, Human Resources is also authorised to grant permission for messages where such permission has not been granted under clause 2.4 (e.g. where the request is from a staff member and of a personal nature).

2.6 The Director, Student Services and Engagement or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is authorised and may broadcast messages to University students where the request to distribute a message originates from an external organisation or individual. (e.g. from the Student Guild).

2.7 The Director, Marketing and External Engagement is authorised to grant permission for the distribution of messages to individuals external to the University that are considered to be commercial in nature.

3. Acceptable use

3.1 Only the designated University email system and its approved components should be used in the course of sending and receiving email messages for University business. Specifically, freely available Internet email systems (eg Hotmail) should not be used for sending confidential University related material.

3.2 Electronic mail may only be used in a manner consistent with other University policy (eg electronic mail may not be used in a manner which would be considered bullying or harassment). It must not be used to send and/or intentionally receive material that violates State or Commonwealth law.

3.3 The University may, at its discretion use electronic mail as a formal means of communication with clients for legitimate University purposes.

3.4 Electronic mail may only be broadcast to clients under circumstances where it is a normal part of work practice (e.g. a lecturer emails his or her students) or where authorisation from the Cost Centre Manager has been received.

3.5 Commercial messages (e.g. advertising or sponsorship) are not permitted except where such activity is clearly related to, or supports the mission of the University, and is permitted under law and by other University policies. Any electronic message that is commercial in nature must conform to the SPAM Act 2003 and be authorised by the Cost Centre manager. Where the electronic message is directed to individuals who are not clients (eg external individuals) the message is to be authorised by the Director, Marketing and External Engagement.

3.6 Clients must not use the electronic mail system to:

- knowingly promulgate software viruses or similar contaminant software nor take any action that would lead to denial or impairment of access to, or effective use of, any information technology resource, e.g. flooding the mail system with junk mail
- take any action that would or might lead to circumventing or compromising security of any of the University's information technology resources, or
- perpetuate chain letters, virus warnings or hoax messages.

4. Records management

4.1 Business email messages remain the property of the University regardless of custody or location and must be managed as per the Information Management Framework – Governing Policy and the Information and Records Management - Procedures.

4.2 Electronic messages are to be treated as 'documents' as defined in section 12 of the Right to Information Act 2009 and may be subject to applications under the same Act.

4.3 Business emails are captured, stored, and managed in the University's recordkeeping system. Email messages are potential evidence in civil and criminal cases and may be required to be presented in a court of law.

4.4 Business mail messages must be retained for as long as they are required for legislative, accountability, business and cultural purposes as specified in the Queensland University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule and the General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 Due to limitations in electronic mail systems generally and the ability of messages to be readily redistributed, electronic mail cannot be kept confidential with absolute certainty. Therefore, clients should not use electronic mail for transmitting confidential information, particularly where it is being sent outside the University's email system.

5.2 Clients should not forward messages to third parties without appropriate authority, or the express or implied consent of the originator. Where the client does not wish a message they send to be forwarded on or read by other than the intended recipient(s), a disclaimer should be included, e.g. this communication is intended for the recipient only and should not be forwarded, distributed or further communicated without express permission. Furthermore, clients must not violate confidentiality by accessing, intercepting or disclosing messages that they are not authorised to access.

5.3 Clients should avoid sending messages that could cause competitive or legal exposure to the University based on its content, e.g. information about financial matters (including corporate credit card details), business strategies, client lists, databases, operational details, or any other information that may be regarded as confidential.

5.4 As University property, all messages are subject to examination by authorised officers. In particular, a client's Cost Centre Manager may be granted access to a client's messages for administrative purposes or if there is reason to suspect any wrongdoing.

6. Representation

6.1 Clients should formally identify themselves and their position within the University, particularly for all business email that is sent external to the University.

6.2 Clients must be aware that the correspondence and discussion into which they enter when using the University's electronic mail system may be construed to be representative of the University's position. Where the client is expressing their personal view, any 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.

6.3 Clients must not impersonate or masquerade as another person, misrepresent themselves nor conceal their identity in any way.

6.4 As electronic mail can be sent fraudulently, clients should scrutinise the authenticity of received mail.

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