

Concord University

Email Policy

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Policy:

This policy establishes the applicability of law and other Concord University policies relating to electronic mail. The University recognizes that principles of academic freedom and shared governance, freedom of speech, and privacy of information hold important implications for electronic mail and electronic mail services. The University affords electronic mail privacy protections comparable to that which it traditionally affords paper mail and telephone communications.

The University encourages the use of electronic mail and respects the privacy of users. It does not routinely inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic mail without the holder's consent. Nonetheless, subject to the requirements for authorization, notification, and other conditions specified in this policy, the University may deny access to its electronic mail services and may inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic mail when required by and consistent with the law. The University will not attempt to regulate the content of your electronic mail and accepts no responsibility for the content of electronic mail.

Although it is impossible to ensure the confidentiality of any electronic message stored or communicated through the computing facilities, this policy articulates the procedures adopted to provide users with a secure mail environment. Electronic mail is a privileged communication between the parties involved and will be subjected to the same protection afforded traditional paper mail.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe (1) Qualifications for Email, (2) Postmaster Responsibilities, (3) Undelivered Email, (4) Email Violations, (5) Discovery of Illegal Activity, (6) File Backup, (7) Email Maintenance, (8) Email Violations Procedure, and (9) General Information and Definitions.

(1) Qualification for Email:

All Concord University faculty, staff, students, and alumni qualify to receive an email account. Email accounts will be automatically created for any person who is an entering student. Information about these accounts is attainable through the University Computing Services department on the second floor of the Rahall Technology Center. Accounts are issued to persons having a valid Concord ID and/or driver license.

(2) Postmaster Responsibilities:

The postmaster is the person assigned responsibility for dealing with email related issues at Concord University. It may be necessary at times for the postmaster to read an electronic mail header which has failed to reach its destination to determine, if possible, the intended

addressee and redirect the message to the correct address. However, it is not the practice of the postmaster to read or to discuss the content of any message.

The postmaster is a staff member of Concord University Computer Services department. The postmaster will read the mail only to the extent necessary to assist in proper mail delivery. Copies of the messages will not be retained after successful redirection, nor will the postmaster discuss the contents of the messages with others.

(3) Undeliverable Mail:

The computer system automatically forwards all undeliverable mail to the designated postmaster and/or returns it to the sender. This is a standard feature of many mail systems. Typically, the postmaster checks the address and, where appropriate, re-sends the message to the correct address. In general, incorrectly addressed outgoing mail is ignored, while incoming email is redirected to its intended recipient.

(4) Email Violations:

In general, policies and restrictions outlined in state (Electronic Mail Protection Act, [West Virginia Statute, House Bill 2627](#)) and federal laws and the Faculty, Classified Staff or Student Handbooks are applicable when using electronic mail. Specific examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- Forged Mail - It is a violation of this policy to forge an electronic mail signature or to make it appear as though it originated from a different person.
- Intimidation - It is a violation of this policy to send electronic mail that is abusive or threatens an individual's safety. The use of electronic mail for sexual, ethnic, religious, or other minority harassment is also prohibited. Known threats to personal safety will be reported to Public Safety.
- Harassment - It is a violation of this policy to use electronic mail to harass an individual. This includes sending or forwarding chain letters, deliberately flooding a user's mailbox with automatically generated mail, inappropriate e-mail messages, and sending mail that is deliberately designed to interfere with proper mail delivery or access.
- Unauthorized Access - It is a violation of this policy to attempt to gain access to another person's mail files regardless of whether the access was successful or whether or not the messages accessed involved personal information.
- Illegal Use of Mail Services - It is not only a violation of this policy to send copyrighted materials electronically - it is a federal offense. All violations will be dealt with severely. Any other illegal use of electronic mail will also be dealt with severely and/or reported to the proper authorities.
- Chain Letters/Junk Email - It is a violation of University policy to send chain letters and junk email. A chain letter is a letter sent originally through national and international mail services and now through networks such as the Internet. The original intent was for young people, mostly students, to meet peers of the world. Writers shared such things as their community environment, their schools, their friends, and many times about their family life. Junk email is email sent as commercial transactions, personal business, and other non-university activities. The negative side to chain letters and junk email on the Internet, or any other network,

is that it fills the net and the mail servers with useless junk at the expense of the subscribers that use the Internet mail legitimately.

- **Spam** – It is a violation of University policy for anyone to “Spam” from University mail servers. Spam is exploiting servers or similar broadcast systems for purposes beyond their intended scope.
- **Hoaxes** – It is a violation of University policy to distribute an email hoax with the intention to mislead or trick other into believing or accepting or doing something, so as to bring about the belief in or acceptance of what is actually false.
- **Attachments** – Attachments are any items added in addition to the original email being created. Attachments must adhere to the section on illegal use of the mail services above. Attachments have a direct affect on all mail servers and recipients, so an attachment should not exceed 10 MB. Large attachments should never be sent in mass mailing.

(5) Discovery of Illegal Activity:

Any messages whose content is clearly illegal should be reported to the “University Computing Services Help Desk”, appropriate campus official(s) or to the Public Safety Office. Such items might be discovered as part of normal Postmaster activity, dead letter processing, contact from local/state/government agencies or other tasks. Examples might include messages containing illegally obtained credit card numbers, telephone authorization codes, grade reports, criminal conspiracy, illegal transmission of copyrighted materials, or similar items. Users will be held accountable for all actions performed with their email account, including those actions performed by other individuals as a result of user negligence.

(6) File Backup:

Mail files are copied as a routine aspect of system backups. This is an automatic process that does not involve any human reading of the files copied. Such practices are not considered a violation of privacy.

(7) Email Maintenance:

Accumulating old email is similar to saving your old letters in order to re-read them in the future. Storage of electronic email requires disk storage on a server or the user’s computer. The user controls storing email on their computer, but email stored on the University server is subject to the Email Postmaster, and the Postmaster retains the right to delete items from any mailbox and/or the trash folder that are older than 6 months. This does not affect Microsoft Outlook, Eudora, or other POP3 users.

(8) Email Violations Procedure:

Guidelines for handling violations to this policy are the same as those outlined in the “Acceptable Use” policy.

The University reserves the right to authorize disconnecting a user's account if the user represents a threat to system or mail integrity. As part of an investigation, the University may examine mail files, logs, and any other appropriate documents or testimony. The

appropriate Faculty, Staff or Student Handbook, local, state or federal law, shall determine any necessary disciplinary action.

If any provision of this policy is ruled invalid under law, it shall be deemed modified or omitted to the extent necessary, and the remainder of the policy shall continue in full force and effect.

(9) General Information and Definitions:

What Is Electronic Mail?

Electronic mail (email) is a computer-based system for exchange of messages and other information, which may include textual and numeric data, computer programs, and graphics. Email is one of the most common applications of time-shared computers, mainframe computer networks, and local area networks of microcomputers. Email also fulfills a widespread need for rapid, easy, inexpensive communication with individuals and groups.

How Does Electronic Mail Work?

Electronic mail applications vary across many software and hardware environments, but in essence, is a computer-enhanced memorandum that usually includes the following:

- To – The “To” is the email address of the person or person(s) receiving the email. This is normally in the form of a user account, the “@” sign, and the machine name of the email server (e.g. username@Concord.edu). The email address is similar to a number and street address used for sending a letter via the U. S. Post Office.
- From – The “From” is the email address of the sending the email. Similar to the “To” address above.
- Date - The “Date” is automatically included by the system.
- Subject - The “Subject” line is usually a few key words typed by the sender.
- Body – The “Body” is the content of the memorandum is entered either from the keyboard or by including a previously composed file (such as from a word processor). The completed memorandum is sent to the recipient(s), who at some later time can issue a command to read, reply, delete, print, forward, or file.

Email Uses:

- Day-to-day communication traditionally accomplished by phone, postal service, and overnight courier is probably the most common use of email. Electronic mail is timely and convenient, and provides inexpensive access to colleagues.
- List serves - subscribing to interest-group lists is yet another email application.

Email Access:

To use electronic mail at Concord University, it is necessary to have an email account, which is unique for each user. This prevents anonymous email and establishes the electronic address for each email user to which electronic mail can be received from other email users on or off campus. Each email account is protected, in part, from unauthorized access by requiring the use of a unique password to identify the legitimate user.

Administrators, faculty, and staff may request an email account. While Concord University does not prohibit the use of email for personal reasons, users should be aware that the

primary intention of providing email service is to support the educational mission and conduct the daily business of the University.