



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Electronic Mail & Messaging Services Policy

1. Introduction

In accordance with its broader strategic objectives, The University of the West Indies (the UWI) promotes the use of electronic mail services to share information, improve communication, and to exchange ideas.

1.1 **Purpose**

This policy is prepared for the direction and use of all users of the UWI's electronic messaging services. It is intended to ensure that:

- Rules and guidelines are established for the UWI's electronic messaging services;
- The UWI community is informed about the rules governing e-mail derived from or entering the UWI's electronic messaging system.

Users of electronic messaging services are informed of their responsibility for compliance with these rules and regulations.

1.2 **Scope**

This policy outlines the requirements for the use of electronic messages (e-mail) and adheres to best practices as far as is practical. It applies to:

- All electronic mail systems and services provisioned or owned by the UWI;
- All users, holders, and uses of the UWI electronic messaging services; and
- All UWI e-mail records in the possession of UWI employees or other authorized users of electronic messaging services provided by the UWI.

2. Ownership and Responsibilities

Electronic messaging services are provided by the UWI to support the operational and administrative functions of the UWI - teaching, learning, research, and the management of the UWI's business. It is intended to be used primarily as a business tool.

2.1 General

The UWI electronic mail systems and services are university facilities. All e-mail addresses and accounts maintained by the system are the property of The University of the West Indies.

2.2 Copyright Laws and License Agreements

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the UWI shall respect the provisions of its Policy on Intellectual Property and the users of the system shall observe this Policy and all applicable copyright laws and license agreements.

2.3 Responsibilities

- a) The respective Campus Information Technology Services departments are responsible for all aspects of the design, implementation and maintenance of the electronic messaging system and its operation.
- b) Senior Management and Heads of Departments are responsible for enforcing the application of the electronic messaging policies throughout the organization.
- c) Users of the services are responsible for managing their messages and complying with Campus and University policies as well as related national and international laws. Persons found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Authorized Users

Users of University Electronic Messaging Services are to be limited to UWI students, faculty, staff and other approved persons, for purposes that advance the objectives of teaching, learning, research, outreach and administration.

4. Use of Email Accounts

All email accounts shall conform to the information security procedures defined and implemented from time to time and managed by campus ICT support organizations. Passwords should not be given to other persons. Access to university electronic mail services, when provided, is a privilege that may be wholly or partially restricted by order of the Competent University Authority without prior notice and without the consent of the e-mail user when there is substantiated reason to believe that violations of policy or law have taken place. Such restriction as applied is subject to review by the appropriate superior university authority.

5. Email Content

The content of electronic messages qualifies as recorded material and is subject to the same rules and regulations as any other type of record created, used, or received and retained by the University throughout the course of business.

5.1 Creation of Messages

The same rules governing good sociable behaviour applying to face-to-face communication or to traditional written communication, apply also to electronic communication. Messages should reflect careful, professional and courteous drafting, particularly since they are easily forwarded to others. It is advised that every user of university email systems assume that others than the addressee[s] may read a message.

5.2 University Records

Messages sent or received on behalf of the University and which provide evidence of an activity, transaction or event must be regarded as official University records. Such records must be retained in an official repository. Their disposal must be in accordance with approved retention and disposition schedules.

Records relative to matters subject to on-going or threatened legal action or any investigation must be retained and should not be disposed of, even if the retention period has been met on the records retention schedule, except as advised by the University Legal Counsel.

5.3 Offensive Electronic Content

It is strictly prohibited to send harassing, abusive, intimidating, discriminatory or other offensive electronic messages. It is a misuse of the facilities, and may in certain cases, be illegal for a user to receive, transmit, display or store such offensive material using University equipment. Such misuse may result in disciplinary or legal action being taken against those responsible.

6. Responsible Use

Users of university electronic messaging systems are expected to exercise sound judgment and caution when distributing e-mail messages. We recommend to all users the guidelines accompanying these policies as a model to be followed for responsible use. Users should immediately report misuse or security breaches detected to their department heads and/or to campus ICT support organization. Heads of Departments shall address reported breaches or refer these to the Chief Information Officer.

6.1 Restrictions

The Electronic messaging services may not be used for:

- Unlawful activities or those that cause interference with other users; [See "**University of the West Indies, Acceptable Use Policy – Information and Communication Technology**"]
- Commercial purposes not under the auspices of the University;
- Personal financial gain, except as permitted by the University;
- Personal use inconsistent with Campus and University policies;
- Uses that violate other University and Campus policies or guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, policies and guidelines regarding intellectual property, or policies regarding harassment in any form.

6.2 Misrepresentation

- E-mail users shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the University or any unit of the University unless appropriately authorized (explicitly or implicitly) to do so. Where appropriate, an explicit disclaimer shall be included unless it is clear from the context that the author is not representing the University. [See "**University of the West Indies, Acceptable Use Policy – Information and Communication Technology**"]

6.3 Personal Use

Although the University's electronic messaging system is meant for university business use, the University shall allow the reasonable use of its electronic messaging systems for personal use if certain guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal use of the electronic messaging system should not interfere with work.
- Personal emails must conform to these policies and accompanying guidelines.
- Personal emails are advisedly kept in a separate folder and deleted regularly.
- Users should restrict the number of personal emails sent within working hours.
- Mass mailing is not allowed.

7.0 Security and Confidentiality

Operators of University electronic mail services are expected to follow sound professional practices in providing for the security of the electronic messaging system under their jurisdiction. Since such professional practices and protections are not foolproof however, the security and confidentiality of electronic mail cannot be guaranteed.

Users should therefore be aware that confidentiality may be compromised, by applicability of law or policy, including this Policy, by unintended redistribution, or because of inadequacy of current technologies to protect against unauthorized access. **Consequently, extreme caution should be exercised in using email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters.**

7.1 Privacy

The university reserves the right to monitor ALL electronic messages and to protect itself from any liability due to the unlawful use of the services provided. Further, users should be aware that during the performance of their duties, network and computer operations personnel and system administrators, may need to, periodically, observe certain transactional addressing information to ensure proper functioning of the university e-mail services, and on these and other occasions may inadvertently see the contents of email messages. They are not permitted to see or read the contents intentionally; to read transactional information where not germane to the technology purpose; or to disclose or otherwise use what they may have seen, except in instances where there is indication of a breach of the provisions of this policy.

7.2 Security Protection

The University attempts to provide e-mail services which are as secure and reliable as practical and as the technology allows. Users are required to assist in the security of their files by employing good password management and usage practices as described in the guidelines accompanying this document.

DECLARATION

I have read, understood and now acknowledge receipt of the E-mail policy. I will comply with the provisions of, and accompanying guidelines to, this policy; and understand that failure to do so might result in disciplinary or legal action being taken against me by the University of the West Indies.

Signature:

Date:

Printed Name:

Campus/Department/Faculty/Unit: