



Policy V. 4.4.2.0

Responsible Official: Vice  
President for Finance and  
Administration

Effective Date:

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## **Electronic Mail - Interim**

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### **Policy Statement**

The University's electronic mail (e-mail) system shall be available to all authorized persons for their primary use in connection with University-related programs, activities and operations.

Institutional policy regarding e-mail system use shall be consistent with and applied in furtherance of the principles of free expression and exchange of ideas. E-mail communication may not, however, in its content or dissemination unreasonably interfere with the conduct of University business or system performance or violate applicable law.

### **Reason for the Policy**

This Policy is designed to establish general expectations and requirements concerning the use of the University e-mail system.

### **Strategic Direction**

This Policy is designed to establish general expectations and requirements concerning the use of the University e-mail system, which is a communications vehicle in service to the institutional mission as expressed in the University's Strategic Action Plan.

### **Applicability of the Policy**

This Policy applies to all persons who use the University's e-mail system, including faculty, staff, students, and others with authorized access. The Policy applies whether the system is accessed remotely or through the use of a University-owned or network-

connected computer. It is an elaboration of the University Computer and Network Use Policy, and shall be interpreted and applied consistently therewith.

## **Policy Elaboration**

### **General Principle**

E-mail is a communication vehicle the use of which is primarily designed to serve University programs, activities and operations and thus to promote fulfillment of the institutional mission. Other uses are secondary and permissible only insofar and they do not unreasonably interfere with the primary intended use. Violations of this Policy shall be addressed in the manner described in the Computer Use Policy and/or applicable disciplinary procedures.

### **Allowed Uses**

#### 1 Authorized Users

University faculty, staff, students, and other persons who have received permission under appropriate University authority are authorized users of the University's e-mail systems and associated resources. Such authorization is subject to suspension in the event of violation of institutional rules for computer and network or e-mail use.

#### 2 Permissible Uses

Users are given access to and use of the e-mail system to facilitate performance of their faculty, staff or student work. Personal use of the e-mail system is ancillary and permitted only insofar as such use does not (i) unreasonably interfere with the individual's professional or educational responsibilities and performance ; (ii) significantly and adversely impact system operation; or (iii) violate University policy or law.

#### 3 Prohibited Uses

a) Use of e-mail to engage in unlawful activities is strictly prohibited. Unlawful use may include without limitation obscenity, child pornography, defamation, unlawful threats or harassment, theft, and copyright or trademark infringement.

b) Failure to follow legal requirements with regard to the preservation and production of e-mail records may lead to disciplinary action as well as civil or criminal charges against culpable individuals. Individuals should seek the advice of University legal counsel if they have questions regarding rules applicable to the preservation or production of e-mail records.

c) The following acts are expressly prohibited: attempts to gain unauthorized access to data or accounts; breach of security measures on any electronic communications system; interception of electronic communication transmissions without proper authority; altering

e-mail system software or hardware configurations; and allowing others to use one's University e-mail account except as otherwise permitted.

d) University e-mail services may not be used for commercial or business activities in the absence of prior written approval by a duly authorized University official.

e) In the content of e-mail communications, e-mail system users must distinguish personal views from those that they are authorized to express on behalf of the University, its programs, activities or operations. When offering personal views, a disclaimer such as the following shall be included: "The opinions or statements expressed herein are my own and do not represent a position, opinion, or endorsement of the University of Vermont." Guidance as to when such disclaimer is necessary or desirable may be obtained from the Office of the Senior Vice President or the Office of the General Counsel.

f) Faculty and staff engaged in professional communications are expected to adhere to the same standards of professionalism when using the medium of e-mail as they would when using traditional paper-based media. Use of "embedded messages", quotations or "taglines" in signatures on communications relating to University business is expressly discouraged insofar as it is inconsistent with such standards or implies University endorsement or sponsorship of personal views. Failure to abide by such standards or use a required disclaimer may give rise to disciplinary action under applicable disciplinary procedures.

g) University e-mail services shall not be used for purposes that could reasonably be expected to cause undue strain on computing facilities or interfere with others' use of e-mail or e-mail systems. Prohibited uses include but are not limited to: (i) forwarding chain letters; (ii) generating "spam" (exploitation of listservs or similar systems for the widespread distribution of unsolicited e-mail); and (iii) deploying "letter-bombs" (resending the same e-mail message repeatedly to one or more recipients).

### **Broadcast E-mails**

Persons with authorized access to the University e-mail system may not "broadcast" e-mail messages without the express advance approval of the Senior Vice President or his/her designee. "Broadcast" means transmission of a message to the University community at large, or major populations thereof (such as students, faculty or staff) through a University server or servers. This rule does not prohibit University administrators or constituency representatives from communicating with their units or constituencies.

## **Forms**

None

## **Contacts**

Director Computing and Information Technology  
(802) 656-3316

The Director of Computing and Information Technology is the UVM official responsible for oversight of this policy.

## **Related Documents/Policies**

Computer and Network Use Policy

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/cit/compose.pdf>

University Name, Symbols, Letterhead, and other Proprietary Indicia of Affiliation

[http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general\\_html/letterhead.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general_html/letterhead.pdf)

## **Effective Date**

Approved by the President on April 30, 2004