

EMAIL MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Using and Managing Western E-Mail Messages

1. PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and management of information communicated via electronic messaging by Western Colorado University (The University) faculty and staff.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. *Email*: An electronic message that is transmitted between two or more electronic devices, whether or not the message is converted to hard copy format after receipt and whether or not the message is viewed upon transmission or stored for later retrieval. Includes electronic messages that are transmitted through a local, regional, or global computer network. Includes both message content and associated attachments.
- b. *Public Records*: All writings made, maintained, or kept by the institution for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds.

3. SCOPE

- a. Applies to all Employees (faculty and staff) of the University.
- b. All email communications written in the conduct of institutional business, regardless of ownership of the device(s) used to send the message, ownership of the email address, or ownership of the email system used, are covered by this policy. That is, if you use your personal device or even your personal email address to conduct university business the communication is covered by this policy and is subject to the same rules (including possible statutory disclosure) as email sent or received using your @western.edu account. This includes all message content and associated attachments.

4. COLORADO PUBLIC RECORD STATUTES

- a. Email messages are subject to the Archives and Public Records Act (APRA, C.R.S. §24-80-101), which governs the retention and destruction of public records.
- b. Email messages are subject to the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA, C.R.S §24-72-201) and are generally considered Public Records that are open to inspection pursuant to CORA, C.R.S §24-72-203 unless covered by a specific statutory exception.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- a. There should be no presumption of privacy or confidentiality of University email. The University manages all @western.edu email accounts on secure servers on premises or via our cloud provider. Despite that, there are many reasons email is not confidential. Examples include, but are not limited to;
 - i. Sent messages may be saved indefinitely on the recipient's computer
 - ii. Copies of messages can be made electronically or on paper
 - iii. Messages can be intentionally or accidentally forwarded to others
 - iv. Messages may be sent to incorrect email addresses
 - v. Can be improperly delivered by an email system
 - vi. Can be subject to state and federal disclosure laws
 - vii. Can be subject to discovery and preservation requests
 - viii. Can be requested by law enforcement
- b. Additionally, while the University does not routinely monitor or inspect email messages, the University does reserve the right to monitor or review any and all aspects of its computer and telecommunications systems including employee e-mail.

6. PROPER USE

A. EMAIL SERVICES MAY ONLY BE USED:

- i. To communicate in support of the academic and administrative functions of the University.
- ii. In a courteous and professional manner.

B. EMAIL SERVICES MAY NOT BE USED, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- i. For sending obscene or patently offensive messages
- ii. For sending intimidating, threatening, harassing, or abusive messages
- iii. For intercepting, disrupting, or altering an email communication without proper authorization
- iv. For accessing, copying, or modifying email messages from or within the electronic files or records of another without permission
- v. For misrepresenting the identity of the source of an email communication
- vi. To allow another to use one's email account for any purpose
- vii. For sending unsolicited "junk" email or mass electronic mailings, such as chain letters, without a legitimate business purpose
- viii. For commercial purposes unrelated to Western business
- ix. Reproducing or distributing copyrighted materials without appropriate authorization
- x. For any purpose which violates state law, federal law, or institutional policy.

7. EMAIL LISTS

- a. The University employs email groups (lists) to communicate quickly to a large number of recipients. Examples include "westerninfo", which distributes messages to all non-

student members of the Western community and the “Faculty List” which distributes to all faculty and selected staff. As these lists affect many individuals, extra care should be taken when using these lists for sending messages. In addition to adhering to rules for proper use, unless your reply is relevant to all the members of the list, avoid replying to the list (“reply all”) and rather respond to the sender directly (off -list). Be mindful that overuse of westerninfo and other lists for purposes other than important university communication can result in critical messages being ‘lost in the shuffle’ rendering the list ineffective.

- b. The University may, at a minimum, suspend or revoke the email privileges of any employee who uses email for any of the prohibited activities. The University may also impose additional appropriate sanctions depending on the severity of the violation.

8. PROPER MANAGEMENT OF EMAIL

- a. Email messages that are not relevant to institutional business and/or are not covered by a retention guideline should be deleted after receipt or sending.
- b. Email messages (and attachments) that contain relevant institutional business should be classified by content, sorted and stored with like records, either electronically (recommended) or in printed form according to Western’s data retention guidelines (see Trustee Policy Manual, Section 3.11 and 3.12, or contact the Human Resources Office).
- c. Email may not be moved or redirected *en masse*, (e.g., via the archive function provided with most email clients or by forwarding to another email address, etc.) or otherwise stored in any uncategorized fashion.

D. MAILBOX SIZE LIMITATION (QUOTA)

- i. Mailbox size for each @western.edu email account are subject to limitations based on resource availability.

E. DEFAULT MESSAGE AGE LIMITATION

- i. Any email message which has not been placed in an area specified for retention will be automatically and permanently deleted from the Western email system after three (3) years.

F. RETENTION TECHNIQUES

- i. The exact procedures for retaining email messages changes with available technology. Please see Information Technology Services for current quotas, message age limits and retention techniques.