

# E-Mail As Official Means of Communication

Policy 908

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Offices and individual members of the Appalachian State University community rely on Appalachian State University e-mail addresses as their primary means of communication. This includes communication to individuals and to groups within the campus community, and is motivated by the convenience, speed, cost-effectiveness, and environmental advantages of using e-mail rather than printed communication.

## 2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees and students of Appalachian State University and covers all uses and Users of University E-mail Facilities. Any User of University E-mail Facilities consents to all provisions of this policy and agrees to comply with all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, all other applicable University policies, regulations, and procedures, and with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 Official Communications

Include content related to 1) a student's enrollment, academic standing, financial information and responsibilities, emergency notifications and compliance with university policies and procedures and 2) an employee's employment status, responsibilities, and benefits, emergency notifications and compliance with university policies and procedures.

### 3.2 Official Appalachian State University E-mail Account

Is an account with e-mail address of the form <username>@appstate.edu. An Official Appalachian State University E-mail Account is provided to faculty, students, staff, and other individuals and entities granted e-mail privileges at Appalachian State University. It is automatically created for admitted and enrolled students as well as actively employed faculty/staff.

### 3.3 University E-mail Facilities

Include all facilities, technologies, information resources, and computing and electronic communication devices, hardware, software, and services required to accomplish the processing, storage, transmission, and communication of electronic mail, whether individually controlled or shared, stand-alone, or networked.

## 4 Policy and Procedure Statements

### 4.1 E-mail - The Official Means For Communication

4.1.1 E-mail is the official means for communication with every university student regardless of year or enrollment status. The university will send official communications to enrolled students and employees by e-mail using their university-assigned e-mail addresses. Students and employees are expected to check their e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis, and to read those communications (including any attachments) and respond (if applicable) in a timely manner.

4.1.2 While e-mail is an official method of communication, it is not the only official method of communication and does not preclude the university's use of other methods, including, but not limited to, text messages, other writings or oral communications.

4.1.3 Students and employees must insure that there is sufficient space in their accounts to allow for e-mail to be delivered. Students and employees have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical.

4.1.4 In general, e-mail is not appropriate for transmitting sensitive or confidential information unless an appropriate level of security matches its use for such purposes. Common examples of confidential information include: student grades, personnel records, social security account numbers, and data subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA). Most e-mail made or received in the transaction of university business cannot be altered or destroyed by university employees, except in accordance with applicable records retention schedules.

4.1.5 Appalachian State University provides University E-mail Facilities to faculty, students, staff, and other individuals and entities granted e-mail privileges for activities and associated administrative functions supporting its mission of learning, discovery, and engagement. Any use of University E-mail Facilities that interferes with University activities and functions, or does not respect the image and reputation of Appalachian State University, is improper.

4.1.6 Policies and regulations that apply to other forms of communications at the University also apply to electronic mail.

4.1.7 In addition, the following specific actions and uses of University E-mail Facilities are improper:

1. Concealment or misrepresentation of names or affiliations in e-mail messages.
2. Alteration of source or destination address of e-mail.
3. Use of e-mail for commercial or private business purposes.
4. Use of e-mail for organized political activity or political solicitation.
5. Use of e-mail to harass or threaten other individuals.
6. Use of e-mail that defames other individuals.

4.1.8 Information Technology Services at Appalachian State University is the owner of centralized e-mail and directory information, and provides creation, management, and distribution of Official Appalachian State University E-mail Accounts.

4.1.9 Appalachian State University does not monitor the content of electronic mail as a routine procedure. The University reserves the right to inspect, copy, store, or disclose the contents of electronic mail messages, but will do so only when it believes these actions are appropriate to: prevent or correct improper use of University E-Mail Facilities; ensure compliance with University policies, procedures, or regulations; satisfy a legal obligation; or ensure the proper operations of University E-mail facilities or the Appalachian State University Data Network.

## 5 Additional References

[Policy Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as Amended](#)  
[The UNC Policy Manual, 300.5.1-300.5.3](#)  
[University General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule](#)

## 6 Authority

[The UNC Policy Manual, 100.1, section 502A](#)  
[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\), as amended \(20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#)  
[Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\), as amended \(PL 104-191; 110 Stat. 1936; 29 U.S.C. 1181 et seq.; 42 U.S.C. 1320a-7c; 42 U.S.C. 1320d et seq.; 42 U.S.C. 1395b-5; 42 U.S.C. 1395ddd; 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164\)](#)  
[Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, a/k/a Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999 \(PL 106-102; 113 Stat. 1338; 15 U.S.C. 6801 et seq.\)](#)  
[N.C.G.S. §§ 132-1 and 132-3](#)

## 7 Contact Information

[University Registrar, 828.262.2050](#)  
[Information Technology Services, 828.262.6278](#)  
[Human Resources, 828.262.3186](#)

## 8 Original Effective Date

June 1, 2013

## 9 Revision Dates