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Supersedes	Guidelines on Use of Email

1. Introduction

Electronic mail (email) has become a ubiquitous service greatly enhancing communication both internally within the Saint Mary's University community and externally to users, including prospective students, alumni, and the public at large.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the appropriate use of University email facilities, associated responsibilities and rights of all users of University email facilities, and official Saint Mary's University email accounts. This policy also describes the obligations of other members of the Saint Mary's University community, particularly students and alumni, who need to receive emails from the University.

3. Scope

This email policy covers all uses and users of University email facilities, and Saint Mary's students and alumni. All faculty, staff, and students are required to consent to all provisions of this policy and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth herein, all other applicable University policies, regulations, and procedures, and applicable local, provincial, and federal laws and regulations.

Users of University email facilities whose actions violate this policy or any other University policy or regulation may be subject to revocation or limitation of email privileges as well as other disciplinary actions or may be referred to appropriate external authorities. The application of this policy will be consistent with relevant collective agreements.

4. Faculty and Staff Email Account

Email is one of the authorized means of communication for academic and administrative purposes within Saint Mary's University. Faculty and staff are required to activate their official Saint Mary's University email account. The faculty and staff official email address ends in "@smu.ca" and is usually of the form first-name.last-name@smu.ca.

5. Undergraduate Student Email

Undergraduate students are provided email as a communication tool in their academic and administrative purposes at the University. The undergraduate student official email address ends in "@smu.ca" and is usually of the form first-name.last-name@smu.ca.

Undergraduate students are required to provide a preferred email address which may be different from their Saint Mary's University email account.

6. Graduate Student Email

Graduate students are provided email as a communication tool in their research. They can also use it as an authorized means of communication for academic and administrative purposes within Saint Mary's University. Graduate students are required to activate their official Saint Mary's University email account. The graduate student official email address ends in "@smu.ca" and is usually of the form first-name.last-name@smu.ca.

7. Alumni Email

Alumni Email is sent to the Preferred Email address provided by the alumni. The Preferred Email address will be the email address through which the University will communicate with alumni.

8. Access to Email

The University will provide email access to all authorized users. Applications for account access, and other details concerning Network Services may be found on the [ITSS website](#).

9. Staff, Faculty and Graduate Student Responsibilities

Staff, faculty and students (graduate) are expected to read, and shall be presumed to have received and read, all official Saint Mary's University email messages sent to their Official Saint Mary's University email account.

All faculty, staff and graduate students are required to:

1. Activate their @smu.ca account at the time they join the University;
2. Regularly check their incoming University email; and
3. Maintain their University email account in working order (including compliance with the University's Policy on Information Technology, and appropriately managing disk space usage or email forwarding).

Users must adhere to the rules governing use of accounts, equipment, networks or other facilities and to licensing agreements entered into by the University. Adherence to provincial and federal laws and University policies is required.

To protect internal information in emails and to be consistent with the retention requirements under [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIPOP\)](#) and Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act (PIIDPA) staff are not permitted to forward their Saint Mary's University email address to another email address that is not under the control of Saint Mary's University. To protect information in emails and to be consistent with FOIPOP and PIIPDA legislation, faculty, staff and students are to be mindful

of privacy and confidentiality considerations as they distribute information outside the university.

10. Alumni Responsibilities

Alumni are expected to read, and shall be presumed to have received and read, all official Saint Mary's University email messages sent to their Preferred Email address.

Alumni are expected to keep their Preferred Email account in good working order and read messages regularly. Should they change email address, the University is to be informed of the new Preferred Email address.

For the protection and security of alumni, they must use their Preferred Email address when communicating by email with the University. Email received from any other email address will not be considered to be official correspondence from the student since its authenticity cannot be verified.

11. Bounced Email

Where email to faculty, staff, students, or alumni is bounced back to the sender due to insufficient space or other reasons, the sender will determine what action, if any, will be taken.

12. Acceptable Use

Policies and regulations that apply to other forms of communications at the University also apply to electronic mail. It is a violation for any user of official SMU email addresses to impersonate a University officer, a member of faculty, staff or student body.

In addition, the following specific actions and uses of University email facilities are improper:

- Concealment or misrepresentation of names or affiliations in email messages.
- Alteration of source or destination address of email.
- Use of email for commercial purposes, or personal financial gain, that have not been approved by Saint Mary's University.
- Use of email for political activity or political solicitation.
- Use of email to harass or threaten other individuals.
- Use of email that degrades or demeans other individuals.

Email users must also adhere to the University's Policy on Information Technology

13. Use of Email for Saint Mary's University Business

The official Saint Mary's University email account shall be considered an official means for communicating University business, and may in some cases be the sole means of communication. Users are expected to read, and shall be presumed to have received and read, all official Saint Mary's University email messages sent to their official Saint Mary's University or Preferred Email accounts.

Users must recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. "I didn't check my email", errors in forwarding mail, or email returned to the University with "Mailbox Full" or "User Unknown" are not acceptable excuses for missing official University communications via email.

Furthermore, email transmissions that leave the Saint Mary's email system may be subject to interception and should not be assumed to be secure. *Sensitive* information should not be communicated via email unless it is to an official Saint Mary's University email account.

Some information is considered *particularly sensitive* and should not be distributed or reproduced and sent via email, including use of the official Saint Mary's University email account. Personnel records (e.g.; student grades) and personal financial information (e.g.; student account) are considered particularly sensitive information.

The author of any business messages assumes responsibility to ensure that messages do not violate any University policies, regulations, or procedures.

University email systems are not available for Broad-Based Messages to be sent to target audiences. Other facilities such as SMUport group tools may be utilized for such requirements.

14. Email Retention and Disposal

Each user account has a maximum storage limit for each email account. It is the responsibility of each user to maintain their email account within that limit. Log files associated with email messages which provide a record of actual email transactions, but not the email content, are generally preserved for no longer than 30 days.

Email correspondence and associated documents sent as attachments may be considered official University records, and, as such, may need to be retained longer than the established policy guidelines for email retention and disposal. It is the responsibility of the sender and recipient of these email messages to determine the required retention period, to comply University Email Procedures and with applicable University policies and procedures regarding record retention, and to preserve these email records either electronically or in printed form with all of the associated header and transmission information or consider a distribution means other than email.

15. Public Record and Privacy

Faculty and staff's communication on University matters is not private strictly speaking except as it relates to the specific exemptions set out in the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIPOP\)](#). It is not the mode of communication that is important as much as what is communicated and why. When faculty and staff use email, it should be remembered that a record is being created that may be subject to the Act, and therefore care and professionalism should be exercised. The sender of an email has no control over what a recipient may do with it.

All email records created by University computers or sent from Users at Saint Mary's University or residing on Saint Mary's University email facilities are considered University records and are therefore, considered a public record for the purposes of FOIPOP and may be subject to disclosure: Assigning confidential passwords does not mean that the use of email system is private or secure.

- Email messages are University records that may be either transitory or required for ongoing purposes. If an email record is transitory, it should be disposed of when no longer required. If an email record is required for ongoing legal, fiscal, audit, administrative or operational purposes, it should be printed and filed according to the office's classification system or stored in the unit's electronic records management system. Email should be reviewed regularly and should be managed accordingly. The disposition of electronic records is governed by the same retention rules as paper records.
- If a request for access is received under the FOIPOP, existing email records are included and must not be deleted after receiving notification of the request.
- If email is deleted from the local computer, it is the equivalent of shredded paper records or records put in a recycling bin. Any central back up of email is for purposes of disaster

recovery only, and not for recovery of specific items of deleted email for FOIPOP requests.

- Only authorized personnel in the performance of their employment duties may access and monitor email, similar to other records containing personal information under the FOIPOP. This may relate to a request under the FOIPOP, labour relations issues, a reasonable suspicion of abuse of the email system, or the need for business access in the absence of an employee.

Refer to the University's Policy on Information Technology for further information regarding the privacy of communications.

16. Disclaimers

Many organizations require that any email messages that are sent outside of the organization have a disclaimer attached at the end of the message. While these disclaimers do not in any way reduce a user's obligations of confidentiality or limit the University's liability in the event of a mishap, they do put the unintended recipient on notice that a misdirected message should be deleted.

All staff email messages should have the following disclaimer included at the end of the message:

Notice: This communication, including any attachments, is confidential and may be protected by legal privilege. It is intended only for the person or persons to whom it is addressed. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender by e-mail or telephone.