

[Advancement](#)[Ethics](#)[Facilities and Lands](#)[Finances](#)[Governance](#)[Human Resources](#)[Information Technology](#)[Records](#)[Students](#)[Teaching, Research, and Outreach](#)[HOME](#)[Site Map](#)[Search](#)[About Policies](#)[Feedback](#)**IN THIS SECTION****• Data Security**

- [Authentication and Authorization \(V.1.2\)](#)
- [Data Security and Access Policy \(C-34\)](#)
- [Delegation of Administrative Authority and Responsibility For Information Assurance, Security and Awareness \(V.1.1\)](#)
- [HIPAA Covered System and Application Logging \(V.1.7\) Interim](#)
- [Incident Response \(V.1.4\)](#)
- [Privacy for Electronic Information \(V.1.3\)](#)
- [Proper Disposal of Electronic Media \(V.1.5\) Interim](#)
- [Remote Access to IT Resources \(V.1.6\) Interim](#)

**• World Wide Web**

- [Policy for Purdue Pages on the World Wide Web \(C-42\)](#)

**• Electronic Mail**

- [Electronic Mail \(V.3.1\)](#)
- [Policy on Sending Campus-wide Electronic Mail \(V.3.2\)](#)

**• Acceptable Use**

- [IT Resource Acceptable Use Policy \(V.4.1\)](#)
- [Electronic Devices and Services Policy \(V.4.2\)](#)

**Information Technology****Electronic Mail (V.3.1)****POLICY V.3.1**

Volume V, Information Technology

Chapter 3, Electronic Mail

Issuing Office: OVPIT

Responsible Officer: VPIT

Responsible Office: OVPIT

Originally Issued: June 22, 2004

Revised: August 28, 2008

[Printable Version \(HTML\)](#)**Table of Contents**

- [Reason for This Policy](#)
- [Statement of Policy](#)
- [Disclaimer](#)
- [Definitions](#)
- [Who Should Know This Policy](#)
- [Related Documents](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [History](#)

**Reason for Policy**

Electronic mail (e-mail) has become a ubiquitous service greatly enhancing communication both internally within the Purdue community and externally to Users, including prospective students, alumni, and the public at large.

The purpose of this policy is to describe the appropriate use of University E-mail Facilities, associated responsibilities, and rights of all Users of University E-mail Facilities and Official Purdue University E-mail Accounts. This policy supersedes the original Purdue University electronic mail policy released on September 29, 1995.

**Statement of Policy****Policy Coverage:**

This e-mail policy 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.

Users of University E-mail Facilities whose actions violate this policy or any other University policy or regulation may be subject to revocation or limitation of e-mail privileges as well as other disciplinary actions or may be referred to appropriate external authorities.

**Access to E-mail:**

- **Social Security Numbers**

- [Social Security Number Policy \(V.5.1\)](#)

Purdue University provides University E-mail Facilities for legitimate University-related activities to faculty, students, staff, and other individuals and entities granted e-mail privileges at Purdue University, as well as connections between on-campus electronic mail systems and external data networks. The use of University E-mail Facilities -- like the use of any other University-provided resource and like any other University-related activity -- is subject to the normal requirements of legal and ethical behavior within the University community. Thus, legitimate use of University E-mail Facilities does not extend to whatever is technically possible.

**Purdue E-mail Account:**

Information Technology at Purdue (ITaP) is the owner of centralized e-mail and directory information for the West Lafayette campus, and provides creation, management, and distribution of Official Purdue University E-mail Accounts. Each of the Purdue University regional campuses has the same role for its own centralized e-mail and directory information.

Staff members with access to a University-owned computer on campus, students, and faculty are required to activate their Official Purdue University E-mail Account. Users are expected to read, and shall be presumed to have received and read, all official Purdue University e-mail messages sent to their Official Purdue University E-mail Accounts.

Individual academic and administrative units may choose to operate their own e-mail facilities as an alternative to the centrally available resources, but the use of any such facilities shall also be subject to this policy. Users may forward their Purdue University e-mail to another e-mail address, but any User who does so expressly assumes all responsibility for delivery beyond the @purdue.edu domain.

**Acceptable Use:**

Purdue provides University E-mail Facilities for activities and associated administrative functions supporting its mission of learning, discovery, and engagement. Although modest personal use of University E-mail Facilities is allowed, University E-mail Facilities should be used for University-related educational and administrative purposes. Any use of University E-mail Facilities that interferes with University activities and functions or does not respect the image and reputation of Purdue University is improper.

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

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 that have not been approved on Purdue University Form 32a.
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 degrades or demeans other individuals.

**Public Record and Privacy:**

Any e-mail sent from Users at Purdue University or residing on Purdue University E-mail Facilities may be considered a public record under the Indiana Public Records Act (IC 5-14-3) and may be subject to disclosure.

Refer to Access to Public Records Policy VI 4.1, and see [http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/records/vi\\_4\\_1.html](http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/records/vi_4_1.html) for further information.

Purdue 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 Purdue Data Network. Any Purdue administrator who believes such actions are necessary must first obtain the written approval of an appropriate administrative authority: a dean in the case of an academic unit, or a director in the case of an administrative unit.

#### **Use of E-mail for Purdue Business:**

The Official Purdue University E-mail 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 Purdue University e-mail messages sent to their Official Purdue University E-mail Accounts. Because the contents of such e-mail are subject to laws governing public records, Users will need to exercise judgment in sending content that may be deemed confidential. Furthermore, e-mail transmissions may not be secure, and contents that are expected to remain confidential should not be communicated via e-mail. Common examples of confidential contents include: student grades, personnel records, individual donor gift records, 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).

Deans, vice presidents, and their appointees may send Broad-Based Messages relating to University business without any prior approval. The author of any business messages, however, assumes responsibility for assuring that messages do not violate any University policies, regulations, or procedures. Disclaimers of confidentiality included in e-mail messages do not protect the sender if confidential information is shared or disclosed inappropriately.

Broad-Based Messages to be sent to target audiences outside of an area of direct administrative or academic responsibility should be done in compliance with the direct e-mail guidelines. See <http://www.purdue.edu/VPSS/dse/dse.php> for further information.

#### **E-Mail Retention and Disposal:**

E-mail stored on official University systems will generally be preserved for no longer than 30 days after deletion by the e-mail User. Log files associated with e-mail messages which provide a record of actual e-mail transactions, but not the e-mail content, are generally preserved for no longer than 90 days.

E-mail Users storing messages on Purdue University servers often have the capability to "archive" e-mail items to files. This effectively allows Users to save any e-mail messages for any length of time. These retention and disposal guidelines do not apply to e-mail archives and backups done by individuals.

Users may at their discretion configure their Official Purdue University E-mail Accounts to forward all e-mail to an external e-mail address.

Forwarding to an external address prevents messages from being stored at Purdue, but a record of the forwarding transaction is stored on University E-mail Facilities in system logs.

E-mail 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 e-mail retention and disposal. It is the responsibility of the sender and recipient of these e-mail messages to determine the required retention period, to comply with applicable University policies and procedures regarding record retention, and to preserve these e-mail records either electronically or in printed form with all of the associated header and transmission information. See [Policy VI.4.2, Assignment of Authority and Responsibility for the Retention and Disposal of University Records](#), for more information.

### Disclaimer

The University makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, with respect to the University E-mail Facilities it provides. The University will not be responsible for damages resulting from the use of University E-mail Facilities, including, but not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, service interruptions caused by the negligence of a University employee, or by the User's error or omissions. The University specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through University E-mail Facilities, except material represented as an official University record.

### Definitions

#### Word

#### Definition

<b>Official Purdue University E-mail Account</b>	Account with E-mail address of the form <username>@purdue.edu. An Official Purdue University E-mail Account is provided to faculty, students, staff, and other individuals and entities granted e-mail privileges at Purdue University. It is automatically created for admitted and enrolled students as well as actively employed faculty/staff.
<b>Broad-Based Messages</b>	Messages sent to large groups of individuals associated with Purdue University.
<b>User</b>	Includes any faculty member, staff member, student, or other individual or entity who is assigned an Official Purdue University E-mail Account who uses or attempts to use University E-mail Facilities.
<b>University E-mail Facilities</b>	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.

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## Who Should Know This Policy

This policy covers students, faculty, staff, and all individuals or entities using any University IT Resources and all uses of such IT Resources.

President	Faculty
Provost	Business Office Staff
Chancellors	Administrative and Professional Staff
Vice Chancellors	Clerical and Service Staff
Vice Presidents	All Employees
Deans	Undergraduate Students
Directors/Department Heads/Chairs	Graduate Students
Principal Investigators	Others Granted E-mail Privileges

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## Related Documents

Policy for Access and Use of Purdue's Electronic Mail System (superseded by this policy)

[http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/information\\_technology/email.html](http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/information_technology/email.html)

Policy VI.4.2, Assignment of Authority and Responsibility for the Retention and Disposal of University Records

[http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/records/vi\\_4\\_2.htm](http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/records/vi_4_2.htm)

Purdue University Application for Permission to Engage in an Outside Activity and/or Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

<http://www.purdue.edu/research/vpr/rschadmin/coi/docs/Form32A.pdf>

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## Contacts

Contact	Telephone	E-mail
IT Networks and Security	 (765) 494-4000	<a href="mailto:itap-securityhelp@purdue.edu">itap-securityhelp@purdue.edu</a>

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## History

Hyperlinks and contacts updated August 28, 2008

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