

# Regent University Electronic Mail Policy

## General Provisions

The purpose of this policy is to ensure proper use of Regent University's electronic mail (Email) systems and make users aware of what Regent University deems acceptable use of its Email systems. Regent University reserves the right to amend this policy without prior notification at its own discretion.

## Application

This policy applies to all persons possessing an Email account on the Regent University Email systems. The described population includes, but is not limited to, all faculty, staff, students, contractors, limited-term employees, or other representatives of Regent University. Email systems at Regent University include, but are not limited to, university Email accounts, organizational Email accounts hosted by Regent University, Email Servers, Email Message Stores, Email List Servers, and Content Inspection Servers.

## Privacy Provisions

All messages, in any format, are the property of Regent University. Regent University does not guarantee confidentiality with respect to any information stored, sent, or received through its Email systems. Any messages may be unintentionally disclosed through message forwarding or other means by the message originator or any intended recipients. For this reason, all users should exercise caution before sending sensitive information via Email.

Regent University reserves the right to inspect Email messages and/or disclose Email messages to law enforcement or government officials or to other third parties, at its sole discretion, without notification to or permission from those creating, sending, or receiving the information. Routine automated email inspection is performed for virus and phishing protection, Data Loss Prevention and the security Regent-confidential information and Regent Student, Faculty and Staff personal information.

In accordance with the requirements of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Office of the Registrar may elect to publish student Email addresses as directory information. All faculty and staff are required to consider students' privacy when communicating with them via Email. (For more information on what may or may not constitute FERPA violations within Email, visit <http://www.regent.edu/it/helpdesk/document/ferpa-email.cfm>)

Consistent with FERPA requirements, each student may submit a request to the Office of the Registrar asking to not disclose his/her personal information. Notwithstanding this request, Regent University reserves the right to utilize a student's name and Email address within the University's learning environments to facilitate normal classroom operations. Regent University's learning environments include, but are not limited to, traditional classroom settings and the Internet-based Blackboard Learning environment. As such, other students enrolled in the course will have access to these data. By registering for courses, students waive their FERPA protections with respect to name and Email address within Regent University learning environments.

## University Use of Email

Regent University provides each user with a Regent Email account. As such, all users with an Email account are required to maintain Email communication with Regent University. The Regent-provided student email address (<regentID>@mail.regent.edu) is a student's address of record. Regent University reserves the right to utilize Email as an official means of communication and each user is responsible for monitoring and maintaining his/her Email account so that he/she may receive important messages from the University. If a student user chooses to forward Email sent to his/her Regent Email address to a third-party Email address, it is his/her responsibility to maintain these changes. **Responses and official communications from all Regent users MUST come from an official Regent email address. Messages sent from a personal third-party account regarding classes or**

**official Regent business will not be accepted.** The sole exception to this is contacting the Regent IT Helpdesk regarding account or access issues; a personal email address may be used for this purpose though the IT Helpdesk reserves the right to require a user to verify their identity.

### **Faculty and Staff Email Forwarding**

Regent University does NOT permit Faculty or Staff to forward Email messages from their university account to any third party account or to send from a third party account for official University business. Faculty and Staff are required to utilize their university provided Email (username@regent.edu) account for all business or educational related communications to and from all other university representatives (faculty, staff, students), business partners, and educational partners. Further, the university considers faculty and students who might also be a full-time or part-time staff employee, temporary employee, or Graduate Assistant (GA) equivalent to a staff person concerning this Email policy. For that reason, faculty and students who also fill roles within the university that include staff duties, as defined above, are not permitted to forward Email messages from their university account to any third-party vendor.

While Regent University does not release students from the responsibility of receiving correspondence via their university Email account, the university does permit students to forward their Email to third party vendor accounts (ie: AOL, Yahoo!, MSN, Gmail). However, university related Emails may contain sensitive information. Therefore, the university warns that the risk of information disclosure will be greater when Email is forwarded to a third-party account. Regent University does NOT guarantee the privacy of such information during third party transactions. Further, by configuring one's Regent University Email account to forward messages to a third-party address, the account owner releases Regent University from any liability with respect to disclosure of personal information; whether the information is, or is not, protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students accept sole responsibility for maintaining a confidential environment when they configure their university account to forward to a third-party vendor. Regent makes no guarantees about data integrity when email is forwarded to a third-party vendor.

All class-related email must originate from a student's University-assigned email address, not a third-party or personal address. Any other emails originating from third party accounts to Regent University faculty or staff members may induce replies directly to those third party accounts as opposed to the persons replying sending messages to the originator's university Email account. The university categorizes such requests similarly to forwarded Emails in that any user requesting confidential information from a third party account releases Regent University from liability in the event that a reply to the third party account contains confidential information as originally requested (by a student).

To clarify the risk of forwarding Email to third party vendor accounts, users should understand that Email systems messages transmit data in 'clear text' format by default. This means that any entity between the originator and recipient (third party account) can potentially intercept or read the message. Thus, any information contained in such a message may be exposed to unintended parties. Moreover, Email messages stored on third party vendor servers are readable by said vendor's technology administrators (in the least). For these reasons, Regent University strongly encourages all students to utilize their assigned university account for Regent University related communications instead of forwarding messages to and requesting information from a third party vendor account.

### **Exceptions for Forwarding**

In general, staff and faculty are not permitted to forward Email to third party accounts. However, if a staff or faculty member has extenuating circumstances, he/she may request to forward Email to a third party account. The onus lies with the requestor for providing a convincing argument to have forwarding approved. Each request must be directed through the university Help Desk. Requests may take up to 5 working days to complete. Approved requests will be retained by the Information Technology department and must be renewed annually. All requests will be evaluated by the IT Security Department and approved by the Vice President of Information Technology. There is no avenue for appeal; all decisions regarding Email forwarding requests are final. Further, the Vice President of Information

Technology reserves the right to revoke previously granted forwarding privileges at his/her own discretion without prior consent from or notification to the affected user.

### **Acceptable Use**

Notwithstanding the actions deemed 'misuse' within this policy, all users of Regent University's Email systems are permitted to utilize Email for university related business and liberal personal use.

### **Misuse**

The following actions are considered misuse and strictly prohibited. Any violation of these offenses will invoke disciplinary actions on offending users up to and including termination of enrollment and/or employment.

- Utilizing Email to transmit (send or receive) any part/s or whole copyrighted works for which the user has not received permission to use.
- Email messages, in stored, forwarded, received, or sent format, should not be used in a way which may constitute intimidating, hostile or offensive material, including but not limited to such conduct based on gender, race, color, religion, national origin or disability. The University's policy against sexual or other harassment applies fully to its Email systems.
- Using Email for personal business transactions or partisan political purposes.
- Using Email to facilitate a local, state, or federal crime.
- Utilizing encryption devices in order to conceal illegal or prohibited activities. Users who employ encryption mechanisms to protect confidentiality agree to provide "plain text" copies of messages upon request to Regent University. Failure to abide by such requests is a violation of this policy and will be treated accordingly.
- Using Email for personal means in a manner that adversely affects one's faculty or staff work duties.
- Using Email to send or forward chain letters, offensive jokes, messages carrying viruses or worms, and mass mailings.
- Sending messages in another person's name or a fictitious name.
- Sending messages, unrelated to the operation of the University, that adversely affects the normal operation of the Email systems.
- Forwarding your Email messages from your university account if you are a faculty or staff person.

### **Policy Violations**

Abuse of Regent University's Email systems, through prohibited personal use, or use in violation of law or university policies, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or enrollment. All persons to whom these guidelines are applicable, as stated above, are responsible for adhering to these rules. All supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring that these policies are adhered to within their respective areas of responsibility.

All users of Regent University's Email systems may report university policy or law violations to their immediate supervisor, representative faculty or school personnel, or directly to the Information Technology Department Help Desk at 757-352-4076 or [infosec@regent.edu](mailto:infosec@regent.edu).