

ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standardized, system-wide approach to managing the protection of information and Information Technology Resources to support core business needs and the provision of continuity and privacy at Westfield State University (“University”) and establish accountability for violations of this policy. This policy is intended to protect the users of the University’s Information Technology Resources by ensuring a reliable and secure technology environment that supports the educational mission of the University. These resources are provided as a privilege to all Westfield State University employees, students, and authorized guests. The University seeks to ensure the integrity of Information Technology Resources made available to the user community, as such, to ensure these resources are secure from unauthorized access for those that utilize them. This policy is not intended to inhibit the culture of intellectual inquiry, discourse, academic freedom, or pedagogy. In general, the same ethical conduct that applies to the use of all University resources and facilities applies to the use of the University’s Information Technology Resources.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors, consultants, contractors, or others (herein afterwards referred to as “constituents”) who use or have authorized access to University Information Technology Resources. This policy is supplemented by the policies of those networks to which the University is interconnected, including, but not limited to, the University of Massachusetts Information Technology Systems group, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Information Technology Division, UMass Online, etc. It covers all University information whether in hardcopy or electronic form and any systems which access, process, or have custody of business data. This policy also applies to any and all information, in any form and in any medium, network, internet, intranet, computing environments, as well as the creation, communication, distribution, storage and disposal of information.

DEFINITIONS

Distribution List: A distribution list refers to a facility in the e-mail system to enable many subscribers mail addresses to be reached through a single (list) name. (i.e., departmental list, FACSTAFF, UniCom).

Westfield State University’s e-mail system: The University’s e-mail system is a communication resource to enhance and facilitate the academic and administrative operations of the University. This includes any originating e-mails containing @westfield.ma.edu. Use of the system shall be to support these purposes and this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, “Information Technology Resources” means all computer, applications and communication facilities, services, data and equipment that are owned, managed, maintained, leased or otherwise provided by the University.

PUBLIC RECORD

E-mail, whether created or stored on university-owned equipment may constitute a public record under Massachusetts' Public Records Law or be subjected to mandatory disclosure under other laws or regulations, including the rules compelling disclosure during litigation. Users of the University's e-mail services should be aware that Massachusetts' Public Records Law and statutory and regulatory provisions prevent the University from guaranteeing complete protection of email, including personal e-mail residing on the University's information technology resources.

The messages, information and data carried by the e-mail system are the sole property of the University and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The University reserves the right to monitor and access those systems and their contents as they deem necessary, in accordance with the law and relevant collective bargaining agreement. No user of the University's e-mail system shall have a reasonable expectation of privacy in any e-mail.

USER OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

I. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Individuals with approved access to the University's e-mail system have the responsibility to maintain a confidential password, as well as the responsibility to regularly change their password, to protect the system from unauthorized access. The University will never ask for your password, and users should not provide this information to anyone.
- B. Individuals with approved access to the e-mail system have the responsibility to log off and lock their computer or mobile device. This will prevent others from tampering with an account or accessing confidential material.
- C. All messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient unless necessary as a normal function of their job. Employees are not authorized to intentionally retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them.
- D. Never assume that e-mail is confidential. A message can easily be forwarded to another e-mail user, and anyone has potential access to read an e-mail message once it has been printed. Technical problems or human error may result in the unintended distribution of e-mail.
- E. Phishing attacks and cyber fraud incidents have significantly increased over the past few years. Your university provided email account helps identify you to

others and includes the security designed to help prevent these incidents. When conducting business as part of your employment at the university, you must utilize your university email address (ending in @westfield.ma.edu) to ensure proper identity and compliance.

II. USAGE

- A. The University's e-mail system is the official method of communication for the University. Only mailboxes with westfield.ma.edu suffixes are supported. Anyone who utilizes another e-mail system, or forwards e-mail from their university account to another account does so at their own risk and is responsible for ensuring they are in receipt of all intended communications.
- B. The University's e-mail system is intended to support the academic and administrative mission of the University. Users are expected to demonstrate a sense of responsibility in utilizing the email system to include maintaining professional etiquette in all e-mail communications.

Usage of the university e-mail system is also in accordance with the Social Media and Communication and the Distribution List guidelines.

III. RETENTION

Users are responsible for preserving their email in accordance with the Massachusetts Statewide Records Retention Schedule.

[MA Statewide Records Schedule dec18.pdf \(mma.org\)](#)

UNACCEPTABLE USES

It is unacceptable to use the University e-mail system as follows:

- for personal or private profit;
- In any way that violates University policy;
- In any way that violates local, state, or federal law;
- to send or receive, either across the University e-mail system or the Internet, any copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, peer review committee reports and activities, or similar materials, or any information where exposure of that information to outside parties would have an adverse impact on the University or its employees, without prior approval;
- as a vehicle for unauthorized disclosure of confidential business or private facts concerning employees, students, or University-related business (authorized e-mail and e-mail attachments containing sensitive business information may be sent within the Westfield State University system on its secured network);
- for communications regarding commercial solicitations;

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- for communications regarding political advertising, chain-letters, jokes, derogatory or inflammatory statements, and/or idle gossip.

ENFORCEMENT

Access to the e-mail system is a privilege and any misuse of the e-mail system may result in withdrawal of access to the system and disciplinary action up to and including termination. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Information Security Officer.