



The **College at Brockport**

Category:
Office of Human Resources

Responsible Office:
Human Resources

Policy Title:
E-mail and Network Policy

Policy:

Purpose and Goals

The College at Brockport provides staff with access to the Internet for the benefit of the College. Every employee has a responsibility to use the Internet in a productive and responsible manner. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that e-mail systems used by employees of the agency support agency business functions to their fullest capacity. This policy advises staff and management of their responsibilities and provides guidance in managing information communicated by e-mail.

All equipment and systems are owned by the state of New York and access to information systems is a privilege -- not a right. Violations of this policy can result in the termination of this privilege and/or disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

Personal use of computers and the Internet is not prohibited. Employees should accept personal responsibility for appropriate use of the Internet, appropriate conduct on the systems, and for reporting any misuse of the network.

Use of E-mail

E-mail services, like other means of communication, are to be used to support agency business. Even though there is no apparent need at this time to prohibit personal Internet and e-mail use, the College expects that since employees accessing the Internet and e-mail are representing the College, communications should be primarily work-related. Employees are responsible for ensuring that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical and lawful manner and in support of the College mission. Staff **will not use** e-mail for illegal, disruptive, unethical or unprofessional activities, or for personal gain, or for any purpose that would jeopardize the legitimate interests of the State. Harassment of any kind is prohibited.

Management and Retention of E-mail Communications

Since e-mail is a communications system, messages should not be retained for extended periods of time. Users should remove all e-mail communications in a timely fashion. If a user needs to retain information in an e-mail message for an extended period, he or she should transfer it from the e-mail system to an appropriate electronic or other filing system.

Unacceptable Use of the Internet

The Internet should not be used for personal gain, personal business or profit-making activities or advancement of individual views. Use of the Internet must not disrupt College operations, the College network or the network of other users. It must not interfere with employees' productivity.

Employees must be aware that some Internet information will not be of educational value and may even be defamatory, inaccurate, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, racially offensive or illegal.

The College does not condone the use of such materials in its work and educational settings. The risk from employees inappropriately accessing these materials, however, is outweighed by other types of positive information and learning opportunities and, therefore, the College expects users of its systems to focus on the appropriate use of the systems.

Privacy and Access

E-mail messages are **not** personal and private. Managers and technical staff may access an employee's e-mail:

- for a legitimate business purpose (e.g., the need to access information when an employee is absent for an extended period of time);
- to diagnose and resolve technical problems involving system hardware, software, or communications; and/or
- to investigate possible misuse of e-mail when a reasonable suspicion of abuse exists or in conjunction with an approved investigation.

A staff member is prohibited from accessing another user's e-mail without his or her permission.

E-mail messages sent or received in conjunction with agency business may:

- be releasable to the public under the Freedom of Information Law;
- require special measures to comply with the Personal Privacy Protection Law.

All e-mail messages including personal communications may be subject to discovery proceedings in legal actions.

Security

E-mail security is a joint responsibility of agency technical staff and e-mail users. Users must take all reasonable precautions, including safeguarding and changing passwords, to prevent the use of the account by unauthorized individuals.

All e-mail users should:

- Be courteous and follow accepted standards of etiquette.
- Protect others' privacy and confidentiality.
- Consider organizational access before sending, filing, or destroying e-mail messages.
- Protect their passwords.
- Remove personal messages, transient records, and reference copies in a timely manner.
- Comply with agency and unit policies, procedures, and standards.
- Use caution when downloading software from the Internet to prevent viruses.

Procedure:

Violations of any guidelines listed above may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. If necessary the College will advise appropriate officials of any illegal violations. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action.