



<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Director of Information Services and Deputy Principal		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Office of the Director of Information Services and Deputy Principal		
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	This is a new policy		
<b>Review</b>	6 months from implementation		
<b>File Number</b>			
<b>Associated Documents</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorisation</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1.0	Authorised by the Vice-Chancellor	14 July 1997	14 July 1997

With the availability of e-mail accounts to all undergraduate students from Semester 1, 1997, all staff and students at UNSW gained access to electronic mail. The UNSW Executive agreed that a policy on the management and use of e-mail within the University was therefore needed.

**This policy is effective from 14 July 1997.**

Approved by  
Professor John Niland  
Vice-Chancellor

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## 1. Preamble

A key strategy of the UNSW Corporate plan is to use information technology to improve academic quality and student access. Making information technology more readily available contributes significantly to this objective.

UNSW's policy is to facilitate the use of information resources by the provision of appropriate and timely technology solutions and technical assistance. The use of these facilities for education, research and administration will be encouraged. A milestone on the way to this objective is the provision of an electronic mail system that meets the needs of its users.

The University of New South Wales recognises the advantages of providing electronic mail (e-mail) for members of its community and that students and staff will, increasingly, require access to such services for teaching, learning, and administrative activities.

While currently not a secure form of communication, if used appropriately, electronic mail has the potential to offer the following benefits to the University and members of its community:

- Encouragement of team working for teaching, research and administration.
- A more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly means for the University to communicate, day-to-day.
- Fostering collaboration across national and international boundaries.
- A method of communication which encourages the formation of a cohesive university community over geographically dispersed sites.
- That UNSW will meet the expectations of potential students with regard to the services provided by a university in a competitive international environment / market.
- The ability to disseminate information in a more timely manner.
- Rapid delivery of administrative information to staff.
- A convenient means for business transaction record-keeping.
- An enhanced means of social interaction for all staff and students which contributes to the completeness of the UNSW experience.
- Ease of establishing two-way communication with teaching staff.
- Enhanced access to teaching and research materials for some users with disabilities (in particular hearing-impaired users), who benefit from increasing amounts of materials in written form.

UNSW is also aware of the risks associated with electronic mail which include:

- The difficulty of providing access to suitably equipped computers for students.
- The increased difficulty in controlling record-keeping and legal liability issues.
- The awareness that e-mail is not a secure form of communication, and that currently privacy and confidentiality are not guaranteed.
- That electronic mail may be used to deliver material inappropriate to a University context.
- The problems related to information overload inevitable when large quantities of information, some of which is of marginal value, is delivered to individuals.

- That the implementation of e-mail may result in further barriers for users with disabilities, in particular where the users may require additional technologies to make the most effective use of e-mail.

Overall, UNSW considers electronic mail a positive resource for the University and will work to encourage its implementation and use.

## **2. Policy Statement**

The University will provide central electronic mail accounts for all staff and students of the University. The provision of electronic mail accounts to other members of the UNSW community will be at the University's discretion.

The Division of Information Services will provide a University Wide Network and Dial-in services such that anyone with access to a suitably equipped computer will be able to use their central electronic mail account.

Budget units will be encouraged to provide suitable computer resources to ensure that all staff will have access to their electronic mail accounts. Teaching units of the University will have responsibility for providing access to suitable computers for their students for use on UNSW campuses. However, it is accepted that provision of such access is expensive and local budget units will have their own priorities. Therefore they will need to provide access at a level consistent with these priorities and financial constraints.

The University will encourage the UNSW community to make extensive use of electronic mail to support teaching, administration and research and will promulgate best practice guidelines to make that usage efficient and professional.

As the University's central electronic mail services and network are limited resources, with increasing demands placed upon them, priority will be given to University-related activities.

The University will place constraints on the use of electronic mail to protect its legal position with respect to telecommunications, copyright and contractual law, to ensure the confidentiality of communications and the protection of privacy, to comply with record keeping requirements and to implement other University policies, such as those on paid outside work and equity.

However, within these constraints, and within the provisions governing acceptable use cited in this policy and by related policies and guidelines, social use of electronic mail is accepted as having positive outcomes for the University.

### **2.1 Regulation**

Use of electronic mail will generally be subject to regulation consistent with all relevant legislation and UNSW policy and guidelines. Self-regulation will be encouraged and the University will impose limits or take action only where and when necessary.

## 2.2 Other UNSW Policies and Guidelines

A number of other UNSW policies constrain the use of electronic mail, including: Student use of electronic mail will be covered by Rules Relating to the Use of Computing and Electronic Communication Facilities at the University of New South Wales, the Student Misconduct Rules, and the Guidelines for the Reporting of Known (or suspected) Criminal or Corrupt Conduct, Maladministration or Waste.

Staff use of electronic mail should be consistent with the UNSW Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for the Reporting of Known (or suspected) Criminal or Corrupt Conduct, Maladministration or Waste.

Staff may use electronic mail for paid outside work only in a manner consistent with the conditions set out under the University of New South Wales Policy for Paid Outside Work by Academics and University of New South Wales Policy for Paid Outside Work by General Staff (currently in draft form with the University Executive).

The University policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action is equally applicable to communications undertaken by electronic mail as to those undertaken verbally or in writing.

The University considers personal information as confidential. Where such material is transmitted by electronic mail, due diligence must be undertaken by senders, recipients and managers of electronic mail systems and computers to ensure that such confidentiality is maintained.

## 2.3 Legal Framework and External Agreements

Users of electronic mail must be aware that electronic mail is subject to the full range of laws applying to other communications, including copyright, breach of confidence, defamation, privacy, contempt of court, harassment, vilification and anti-discrimination legislation, the creation of contractual obligations, and criminal laws.

The immediacy of e-mail, and the ability to use it to contact a wider group of people conveniently can, in some cases, make it easier to inadvertently be in breach of the law. Users must also be aware that the wide dissemination of electronic mail in some circumstances may lead to more severe legal consequences than other communications, and may lead to consequences in other jurisdictions. Users of electronic mail must be aware of these constraints when complying with other UNSW Policies affecting use of electronic mail, particularly those concerning misconduct.

Electronic mail is regarded by the University as similar to paper mail in relation to issues such as disposal and retention.

Some laws and agreements require the University to give access to electronic mail and information about electronic mail to parties outside the UNSW community. These include telecommunications legislation, freedom of information legislation, other legal rules (eg concerning subpoenas), and agreements with external internet suppliers that govern the transmission of e-mail.

The storage and communication of electronic mail in and by UNSW computer and telecommunications systems are protected by criminal law provisions in computer crime laws and tele-communications interception laws.

## **2.4 Directories, Mailing Lists and Broadcasts**

The University will provide directories listing electronic mail addresses.

Directories will be available via the Internet but, in this case, will be restricted so that it is not possible to extract large numbers of addresses simultaneously.

Directories for internal use may have less restriction.

To ensure that the business of the University is carried on efficiently, e-mail users will need to justify their exclusion from public directories.

To limit the quantities of unsolicited mail, members of the University must not provide external organisations with copies of directories or subsets greater than those accessible via the Internet.

## **2.5 Mailing Lists and Broadcasts**

Transmission of mail to multiple users must be controlled so that users do not receive a large quantity of unwanted and unsolicited mail as this can reduce the effectiveness of the electronic mail service. Users may solicit mail on a particular topic by subscribing to a mailing list from which they can also unsubscribe at will. Mailing list owners are required to create a meaningful list title for the information of recipients, and all recipients may request the names of all members of a list to which they subscribe.

Unsolicited group mailings may be undertaken by a formal mailing list or by sending individually addressed mail items.

Unsolicited mail may only be sent to multiple users where the mailing is related to their university function and the sender has an appropriate work relationship. For example, heads of School mailing to their staff, academics mailing their classes, financial administrators mailing all those with financial delegations etc.

Special interest groups must issue invitations to join before including any group or individual in a mailing list, and members have the right to unsubscribe at will.

Sending of unsolicited mail to all members of the University, or a substantial subset (such as all academics), requires the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

## **2.6 Volume and Performance Issues**

Performance and cost of the electronic mail systems for all users can be adversely affected by inconsiderate use by particular individuals. Therefore, the University reserves the right to set limits on:

- The size of individual electronic mail items sent.
- The total volume of electronic mail sent.
- The amount of electronic mail retained on central electronic mail servers.

The University pays for electronic mail incoming to the University. While clearly in most cases users are not responsible for the electronic mail sent to them, they may

encourage such mail. Therefore, the University encourages users not to solicit large volumes of incoming mail with no, or marginal, relevance to their role within the University. The University reserves the right to request that users unsubscribe from external mailing lists where unacceptable costs are incurred.

## 2.7 Retention of Electronic Mail

The *record-keeping and archival practices and procedures*<sup>1</sup> of the University for the retention of written documentation in paper and other hard copy formats have been developed to ensure that public accountability and audit requirements are properly met.

Where electronic mail messages are sent and received by an employee of the University, acting in that capacity, they form part of the official record of the University, and will be viewed in the same way as other hard copy formats of written documentation. The *record-keeping and archival practices and procedures*<sup>1</sup> of the University which apply to hard copy formats of written documentation also apply to e-mail messages.

1 . The Financial Services Accounting Manual  
The University Disposal Schedule 1984 (Under Revision)  
Disposal Agreements for Specific Record Series

## 2.8 Ethics and Appropriate Practice

Electronic mail may not be used for commercial purposes (except as noted, where the usage is for acceptable paid outside work), and must be consistent with the relationship that the individual user has to the University.

The sender, whether institutional or individual, must be clearly identifiable in all transmitted messages.

The transmission of unsolicited electronic mail should only occur where the recipient can be identified as having a high probability of having a particular interest in the subject matter. This excludes the generalised transmission of, for example, political or recreational material except to self-subscribing mailing lists.

Electronic mail should not be sent in such a way as to harass users. In general, if a recipient indicates that they do not wish to receive further messages on a topic, or from an individual or group, then no further messages should be sent. Clearly, exceptions exist for compulsory administrative mailing lists or broadcasts.

Any user aware of misuse of e-mail has a responsibility to report it to the Division of Information Services or to the unit operating the system being accessed.

Good practice guidelines will be developed and disseminated to address:

- Clarity and brevity.
- Construction of messages so that they can be readily interpreted by the receiver's mail reader software including issues such as attachments.
- Appropriate use of unsolicited electronic mail.
- Record-keeping.
- Issues of security in electronic mail.
- House-keeping.
- Issues relating to the impact of e-mail on users with disabilities.

## 2.9 Training and Recommendations

The University will, from time to time, recommend appropriate electronic mail packages and configurations and provide information on the installation and use of such packages.

The University will provide training on the use of electronic mail from technical, best practice and cost/benefit perspectives.

## 2.10 Availability and Termination of Access

Electronic mail accounts will be available centrally to all enrolled students and all staff. Other members of the UNSW community will be required to apply on an annual basis.

Provision of computers to enable access to electronic mail accounts for staff and other non-student members of the University community is the responsibility of individual budget units.

In accordance with DEETYA guidelines, HECS liable and non-fee-paying HECS exempt students must be able to complete their chosen award without facing additional course-related charges imposed by the University. In courses where additional course-related costs are involved, the University should make reasonable provision of necessary services such as reasonable access to computers etc. Therefore, students cannot be required to use electronic mail for academic purposes unless the relevant School provides or funds the equipment required to access the service in circumstances appropriate to completing any required work.

Access to the service will be terminated when the user ceases to be an employee or enrolled student of the University. Other members of the community will be required to re-apply on an annual basis.

The University reserves the right to terminate the access of any user whom it believes is not operating in accordance with the policy.

## 2.11 Security

The University cannot guarantee confidentiality or undiscovered alteration of communications via third parties unless steps are taken to guard against disclosure. The University will employ best efforts to avoid unnecessary exposure of information, but current methods used to transport e-mail, especially outside the University, cannot be regarded as secure.

While most users operate electronic mail in an ethical and legal manner, the University advises that forgery of electronic mail can and does occur in the current environment. Whether crude or sophisticated, it is recommended that should electronic mail suggest an unusual course of action, recipients should seek to verify the authenticity of the message via some other form of communication. This may take place via personal contact, paper mail, fax, or telephone, or an authentication means.

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of material, it will normally be necessary to employ digital cryptography. In small groups, this can be accomplished by secret key cryptographic methods using a large variety of cipher methods. However, for organisations as large as the University, this implies the use of public key cryptographic ciphers.

Encryption will be used for those types of documents identified as requiring protection. A standard, uniform method of encryption will be adopted by the University for the protection of documents of a sensitive or confidential nature.

## **2.12 Charging**

The University reserves the right to review and consider, from time to time, the levying of a charge for electronic mail services.

## **3. Implementation**

The Division of Information Services will be responsible for the Policy, and for the central facilities required to provide electronic mail.

### **3.1 Facilities**

The Communications Unit within DIS will maintain central servers available to all members of the University, and regulate their use.

### **3.2 Directories**

The Communications Unit will provide a University-wide directory which will include e-mail addresses. Although the Communications Unit will endeavour to include all e-mail addresses that are on the central systems, it cannot automatically include those from local e-mail systems. It is the responsibility of all e-mail users to ensure that their directory entry is current.

The directory will be available over the Internet as a WWW page. Searching the directory will require entry of a minimum of two characters from a surname to impede the compilation of complete copies by outside organisations.

### **3.3 Mailing Lists**

The Communications Unit will make available the "majordomo" system for creating e-mail lists and will establish lists for valid purposes (as defined by this policy under Item 2.5) on request.

### **3.4 Charging**

The University reserves the right to charge users for use of e-mail outside University business but does not currently intend to do so while such use is not a significant economic burden. Electronic mail has a per user cost, but as it is viewed as a strategic initiative, the cost will be carried by the University.



### **3.5 External Users**

Those members of the University community who are required to reapply for accounts on an annual basis may attract an annual management fee.

### **3.6 Guidelines**

The Communications Unit will develop Good Practice Guidelines for use by all users of central electronic mail, formalising the rules currently available to students. The University will develop guidelines on the electronic storage and retrieval of e-mail messages which form part of the official record of the University.

### **3.7 Performance**

The Communications Unit will monitor the performance of the existing central e-mail system and its usage in order to ensure the service meets the needs of its users within the available resources.

### **3.8 Security**

The Division of Information Services will investigate a range of key cryptographic ciphers to determine the method best suited to the University's needs. As national and international standards are established, the University will ensure that all members of UNSW will have access to trustworthy sources of electronic information and a reliable encryption method, and will promulgate their use.

### **3.9 Support**

The Communications Unit will evaluate and recommend client software. The Communications Unit will provide basic user documentation for the facilities.

The University encourages budget units to utilise the central e-mail facility. The Communications Unit will assist those units wishing to migrate to the central service.

Budget units that implement local e-mail systems are responsible for ensuring that those systems comply with University policy.

The Division of Information Services Helpdesk will provide support for staff using the central facilities (where recommended software and hardware are used) and the Communications Unit's student support desk (the DISCONNECT desk) will provide support for students.

### **3.10 Regulation**

The Communications Unit will monitor usage of the central service and will discontinue the service to any user who is considered to be in breach of this policy or the rules applying to UNSW computing facilities. Any such decision may be appealed to the Director of Information Services and Deputy Principal.

### **3.11 Training**

The Division of Information Services will make training available in standard electronic mail software packages.

#### 4. Evaluation

Both the success of this policy and its technological implementation will be evaluated regularly. The first review of the policy will take place 6 months from initial implementation as it covers new ground. It is expected that some elements of the policy may require adjustment.

Stakeholders, including users, University staff, the student body, Heads of Budget Units, Deans and the University Executive will be consulted as part of the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria will include:

- The degree of compliance to the Policy.
- The degree to which e-mail facilities are available to staff and students.
- The degree to which e-mail facilities are used as alternate or additional to traditional forms of communication.

The Division of Information Services will actively canvas opinions at intervals and will welcome unsolicited submissions at any time.

**For information and assistance contact:**

The Office of the Director of Information Services and Deputy Principal on Extension 8080.

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## Appendix A: History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice-Chancellor	14 July 1997	14 July 1997	
<p>This policy was first developed on <b>14 July 1997</b> by a Working Party chaired by Ms Christine Page-Hanify, Director of Information Services and Deputy Principal. The Working Party consisted of the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr Keith Burston, Manager, Communications Unit</li><li>• Associate Prof Graham Greenleaf Faculty of Law, Co-Director, Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII)</li><li>• Ms Debbie Osborn, Head, Records Administration</li><li>• Mr Geoff Oakley, Manager, Computing Facilities, School of Computer Science and Engineering</li><li>• Ms Elizabeth Marks, Administrative Officer, Policy &amp; Coordination, DIS</li></ul>				

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