

# ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL) POLICY

July 2006

Updated April 2019

TNS –POL - 007

## Purpose for Policy

Electronic mail (e-mail) has become a ubiquitous service greatly enhancing communication both internally within the Southern University 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 Southern University E-mail Accounts.

## Definitions

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

# 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.

---

## Policy and Procedures

### **Access to E-mail**

Southern 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 Southern 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.

### **Southern E-mail Account:**

Division of Information Technology at Southern University is the owner of centralized e-mail and directory information for the Baton Rouge campus, and provides creation, management, and distribution of Official Southern University E-mail Accounts. Each of the Southern 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 use their Official Southern University E-mail Account. Users are expected to read, and shall be presumed to have received and read, all official Southern University e-mail messages sent to their Official Southern 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 they are still required to use their Official Southern University E-mail Accounts.

### **Acceptable Use:**

Southern 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 Southern 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:

- Concealment or misrepresentation of names or affiliations in e-mail messages.
- Alteration of source or destination address of e-mail.
- Use of e-mail to harass or threaten other individuals.
- Use of e-mail that degrades or demeans other individuals.

### **Public Record and Privacy:**

Any e-mail sent from Users at Southern University or residing on Southern University E-mail Facilities may be considered a public record, and may be subject to disclosure. Southern 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 Southern Data Network. Any Southern 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 Southern Business:**

*The Southern 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 Southern University e-mail messages sent to their Official Southern 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), and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.

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.

**E-Mail Retention and Disposal:**

E-mail stored on official University systems will generally be preserved for no longer than 10 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 Southern 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.

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.

---

**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.

**Who Should Know This Policy**

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

---

Email Administrator

---

Associate VP and CIO

---

Chancellor/President