



Email Procedure

Procedure Number: 505P

Responsible Office: VP of Information and Engineering Technologies (IET) and College Computing

Forms: N/A

Effective Date: 03/08/2024

Date Last Reviewed: 03/08/2024

1. Purpose

This policy procedure details the specific actions to be taken by all Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) employees, including full and part-time staff, faculty, contractors, consultants, volunteers, interns and student hires, and students (collectively “users”) who use College electronic mail (email).

2. Definitions

Personal Use: use that is not job-related.

Official Information/Communications: messages and information sent from College offices, faculty and/or administrators regarding services, programs, and other relevant information.

3. Procedure

1. Authorized Use of Email

- a. Access to email is an essential tool that imposes on users certain accompanying responsibilities. The Information Technology Security Agreement and the [M365 Acceptable Use Agreement](#); NOVA, Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) polices; and the same standards of conduct that are expected of users regarding the use of other College facilities, services, and resources apply to the use of email.
- b. All faculty, staff, and students are expected to check their College email on a frequent and consistent basis to ensure that they are staying current with all official communications. Though College email is for official use, College email services may be used for incidental personal purposes provided that such use does not directly or indirectly interfere with the College operation of computing facilities or email services or interfere with the user’s employment or other obligations to the College. There should be no expectation of privacy in regard to email messages of a personal nature sent or received from College email accounts or from College computers.
- c. Official email that contains personal or sensitive information sent to registered students should only be sent encrypted to NOVA or VCCS student email addresses. Email to a non-NOVA or non-VCCS student email address that is not a valid alternate email address in a SIS record cannot contain any information protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- d. Other communication of a more general nature that does not include legally required, personally identifiable, or FERPA-protected information should use the most appropriate electronic means for reaching the intended audience. This includes general information about class assignments, quizzes, tests, programs, College-wide announcements, financial aid or tuition payment due dates, course or registration information, weather-related closings or delays, and College events.
 - e. Where a prospective student does not have a VCCS email address, the email address provided by the student may be used.
2. Safety and Security
- a. Users are responsible for safeguarding their identification (ID) codes and passwords, and for using them only as authorized. Each user is responsible for all email transactions made under the authorization of his or her ID.
 - b. Faculty and staff may not set up their College email account to automatically forward email to an email account outside the College.
3. Access to and Disclosure of Email
- a. Employee email is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
 - b. The College has the right, consistent with this policy and applicable law, to access, review and release all electronic information that is transmitted over or stored in College systems or facilities, whether or not such information is private in nature, and therefore, confidentiality or privacy of email cannot be guaranteed.
 - c. Employees who resign or terminate employment will have their email accounts terminated. Such employees should be aware that their email accounts will be accessed by their supervisors in order to continue to conduct College operations after they leave. If such access is necessary, the appropriate Administrative Council member must make this request through Human Resources before access will be granted.
 - d. If a legal hold must be placed on an email account, a NOVA representative from the Attorney General's office must make a request to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to add the legal hold. The hold will remain in place until it is communicated by the NOVA representative to remove it from legal hold.
 - e. Emeriti and retired faculty and staff will have their NOVA email accounts terminated but will retain their VCCS email access through the myNOVA portal.
4. Prohibited Use
- a. Using email for illegal activities is strictly prohibited.
 - b. College email services may not be used for non-College commercial activities, personal financial gain, non-approved charitable activities, the advancement of any political agenda, or for personal, casual use.
 - c. Email users shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the College or any unit of the College unless expressly authorized to do so.

- d. College email services may not be used for purposes that could reasonably be expected to cause, (directly or indirectly) strain on any computing facilities, or interference with others' use of email or email systems. Such uses include, but are not limited to, the use of email services to:
 - i. Send or forward chain letters. These emails often contain warnings that may very well be hoaxes. Use appropriate websites, like <http://www.snopes.com/>, to validate the myths and warnings.
 - ii. Spam – that is, to exploit listservs or similar systems for the widespread distribution of unsolicited mail.
 - iii. Letter-bomb – that is, to resend the same email repeatedly to one or more recipients.
 - iv. Knowingly send or transmit computer viruses.
- e. The email system should not be used to store documents or email messages that are the basis for official action, historical record, or truly official communication. If a particular email needs to be saved for official document retention purposes, it should be printed or saved as a separate document.