

ORIGINATOR: President

SUBJECT: University of Maryland University College E-mail Guidelines

I. Introduction

These guidelines provide parameters for the appropriate use of e-mail at UMUC. They provide information on when you should (and should not) use electronic mail and the privacy issues that exist when you choose to use e-mail. These guidelines ensure that common courtesy and appropriateness are considered when sending e-mail.

II. Privacy

All information created, received or contained in University Computing Resources is available to the public unless an exception to the Maryland Public Information Act applies. Even if there is an exception to the Maryland Public Information Act, e-mail communications (sent and/or received by a UMUC e-mail account) may be disclosed in a court proceeding. Keep in mind that any e-mails you send or receive become a permanent record even if you delete the e-mail from your account. Accordingly, you should have no expectation of privacy when sending e-mails using a UMUC e-mail address, or to or from a UMUC computer.

Since your e-mails are not private, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not put social security numbers or anything else of a sensitive nature in e-mail communications.
- Only put information in e-mails that you would be comfortable discussing in a conversation with other people present.
- Do not put anything in an e-mail that you do not want forwarded.
- Do not forward internal e-mails outside of UMUC unless there is an appropriate business reason to do so.
- When communicating via e-mail with individuals outside of UMUC, remember that they should not be privy to “insider information.”
- Be cautious when discussing confidential business practices or human resource matters in e-mails and know that using the phrase “confidential” does not mean your e-mail is protected from disclosure.

III. When to Use E-Mail

E-mail is a tool and not the only communication vehicle at your disposal. When you need to communicate with someone, instead of quickly sending an e-mail, think about what may be the best way to interact with that person. Increasingly, individuals are using e-mail as the primary form of communication when it may be more appropriate to meet in-person or have a telephone interaction. If your unit has specific communication standards, these will be communicated directly to you and will guide you in determining the preferred method of communication you should use.

In addition, e-mails are often misinterpreted or taken out of context. It may be helpful to have a conversation with a colleague rather than wait for a return e-mail on important university business as the telephone allows for a live, synchronous interaction. For example, an in-person meeting is better when you are in the fact-finding stage of a project or need immediate feedback.

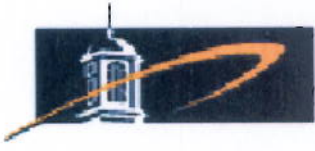
IV. Tips When Using E-Mail

When you have determined that e-mail is the most appropriate way for you to communicate, follow these tips:

- Remember when you are writing an e-mail that you are communicating with a person and not just to another computer.
- Start your e-mails with a salutation.
- End your e-mails with a signature and contact information.
- Use the spell check feature and proofread your e-mails for edits.
- Make sure you know who you are e-mailing and do not include an e-mail address by accident.
- Use the forwarding and carbon copy features judiciously.
- Only hit “reply all” if you really need to reply to all.
- When continuing e-mail chains, review the content and distribution list on the e-mail to ensure appropriateness.
- Do not send an e-mail when you are angry or an e-mail you may regret sending later.
- When conducting UMUC business, use your UMUC e-mail account if one has been assigned to you.

V. Policy Information

Use e-mail in accordance with UMUC Policy 270.0 - Policy on Computer Use. Failure to adhere to these Guidelines subjects you to the enforcement as outlined in the Policy, which is available online at www.umuc.edu/policy/fisc27000.shtml.



UMUC

Acknowledgement of Receipt

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and read the **University of Maryland University College E-mail Guidelines Policy (270.10)**.

Print Name

Signature

Date