

Electronic Communication

Identifier: IT-002	
Revision Date: 10/1/2015	Effective Date: 10/18/2012
Approved by: BOR	Approved on date: 10/18/2012

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1. Introduction

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) encourages the use of electronic communications to share information and knowledge in support of ConnSCU mission and goals. To this end, ConnSCU provides and supports interactive, electronic communications resources and services.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote the use of electronic communication as an official means of communication within ConnSCU
- Ensure that ConnSCU electronic communications resources are used for purposes appropriate to the ConnSCU mission and goals;
- Prevent disruptions to and misuse of ConnSCU electronic communications resources and services;
- Ensure that the ConnSCU community is aware that use of ConnSCU electronic communications resources is subject to state and federal laws and the ConnSCU policies; and
- Ensure that electronic communications resources are used in compliance with those laws and the ConnSCU policies.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All electronic communications resources owned or managed by ConnSCU including the content of electronic communications, electronic attachments and transactional information associated with such communications;
- All electronic communications resources provided by ConnSCU through contracts and other agreements with ConnSCU;
- All users and uses of ConnSCU electronic communications resources; and
- All ConnSCU electronic communications records in the possession of ConnSCU employees or other users of electronic communications resources provided by ConnSCU.

4. Policy Authority

This policy is issued by the Board of Regents for Higher Education for the ConnSCU.

5. Definitions

The following terms are used in this Policy. Knowledge of these definitions is important to an understanding of this Policy:

Electronic Communication: Any communication that is broadcast, created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, or printed by one or several electronic communications services, including but not limited to email and telephone.

Electronic Communications Records: Electronic transmissions or messages created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, distributed, broadcast, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, or printed by one or several electronic communications services. This definition of electronic communications records applies equally to the contents of such records, attachments to such records, and transactional information associated with such records.

Electronic Communications Resources: Any combination of telecommunications equipment, transmission devices, electronic video and audio equipment, encoding or decoding equipment, computers and computer time, data processing or storage systems, computer systems, servers, networks, input/output and connecting devices, and related computer records, programs, software, and documentation that supports electronic communications services.

Electronic Communications Services: Any messaging, collaboration, publishing, broadcast, or distribution system that depends on electronic communications resources to create, send, forward, reply to, transmit, store, hold, copy, download, display, view, read, or print electronic records for purposes of communication across electronic communications network systems between or among individuals or groups, that is either explicitly denoted as a system for electronic communications or is implicitly used for such purposes.

6. Provisions

ConnSCU encourages the use of electronic communications resources for legitimate and authorized academic and administrative purposes and makes them widely available to the ConnSCU community. To insure the reliable operation of these resources, their use is subject to the following:

- Email is an official means for communication within ConnSCU unless otherwise prohibited by law. The colleges and universities reserve the right to send official communications to employees and students via email. In the event of an emergency, the colleges and universities shall utilize all available communication mechanisms including email to reach employees and students.
- All employees and students will be given official college/university email accounts. Official university communications shall be sent to official college/university email addresses. Employees and students are expected to check their official email accounts on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with campus related communications. Failure to receive or read official communications does not absolve the employee or student from knowing and complying with the content of such official communications.
- Employees are not allowed to conduct official ConnSCU business via private (unofficial) email accounts unless specifically authorized.
- Students, who choose to have their emails auto-forwarded to private (unofficial) email addresses, do so at their own risk. The college/university is not responsible for any difficulties that may occur in the transmission of the emails.

- Contents of all electronic communications shall conform to state and federal laws and ConnSCU policies regarding protection of privacy, intellectual property, copyright, patents and trademarks
- Using electronic communications resources for any purpose restricted or prohibited by state and federal laws, regulations or ConnSCU policies is prohibited.
- Using electronic communications resources for monetary gain or for commercial, religious, or political purposes that are not directly related to ConnSCU institutional missions or otherwise authorized by appropriate ConnSCU authority is prohibited.
- Usage that directly or indirectly causes strain on the electronic communications resources is prohibited.
- Capturing, opening, intercepting or obtaining access to electronic communications, except as otherwise permitted by the appropriate ConnSCU authority is prohibited.
- Using electronic communications to harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct ConnSCU business is prohibited.
- Users of electronic communications resources shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions or otherwise making statements on behalf of ConnSCU unless authorized to do so.
- Directly or by implication, employing a false identity (the name or electronic identification of another), except under the following circumstances, is prohibited:
 - A supervisor may direct an employee to use the supervisor's identity to transact ConnSCU business for which the supervisor is responsible. In such cases, an employee's use of the supervisor's electronic identity does not constitute a false identity.
 - A user of the ConnSCU electronic communications services may not use a pseudonym (an alternative name or electronic identification for oneself) for privacy or other reasons, unless authorized by an appropriate ConnSCU authority for business reasons.
- Forging email headers or content (i.e., constructing an email so it appears to be from someone else) is prohibited.
- Unauthorized access to electronic communications or breach any security measure is prohibited.
- Interfering with the availability of electronic communications resources is prohibited, including but not limited to the following: (i) sending or forwarding email chain letters or their equivalents in other electronic communications services; (ii) "spamming," i.e., sending electronic junk mail or junk newsgroup postings; (iii) "letter-bombing," i.e., sending an extremely large message or sending multiple messages to one or more recipients to interfere with the recipient's use of electronic communications resources; or (iv) intentionally engaging in other practices such as "denial of service attacks," i.e., flooding the network with traffic.
- Distribution of an electronic mail to the entire or a substantial portion of a campus community must obtain prior approval as specified by the receiving institution.

7. No Expectation of Privacy

All activities involving the use of ConnSCU IT systems are not personal or private. Therefore users should have no expectation of privacy in the use of these resources. Information stored, created,

sent or received via ConnSCU IT systems is potentially accessible under the Freedom of Information Act.

Pursuant to Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA), Public Act 98-142, and the State of Connecticut's "Electronic Monitoring Notice", the Board of Regents reserves the right to monitor and/or log all activities of all users using ConnSCU IT systems without notice. This includes, but is not limited to, files, data, programs and electronic communications records without the consent of the holder of such records.

8. Assurance

Each ConnSCU institution shall incorporate the Electronic Communication Policy as part of the terms and conditions for issuing institution email accounts. Each ConnSCU institution shall have all full-time and part-time employees, including student employees, acknowledge that they have read and understand the Electronic Communication Policy. Each ConnSCU institution shall make the Electronic Communication Policy accessible to all employees and students.

9. Enforcement

Violations of ConnSCU information technology policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, as well as ConnSCU Policies, General Rules of Conduct for all college and university employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and the ConnSCU Student Conduct Codes.

For purposes of protecting the ConnSCU network and information technology resources, the BOR Information Security Program Office, in conjunction with college/university IT department, may temporarily remove or block any system, device, or person from the ConnSCU network that is reasonably suspected of violating ConnSCU electronic communications policy. These non-punitive measures will be taken to maintain business continuity and information security; users of the college/university information technology resources will be contacted for resolution..

10. Exceptions

ConnSCU recognizes that some portions of the Electronic Communication Policy may have to be bypassed from time-to-time because of technical or business reasons.

Accordingly, exceptions may be made provided:

1. The need for the exception is legitimate and approved by the BOR CIO or designee.
2. The exception does not disrupt or compromise other portions of the ConnSCU service delivery capability.
3. The implementation of the exception is vetted through the Change Management Process.

4. The BOR Information Security Program Office, in conjunction with college/university IT department, is able to establish a monitoring function to assess the operations of the implementation exception.
5. The exception has a defined lifecycle, in that the "retirement" of the exception is scheduled (e.g., "when Release 4.9 is implemented," "at contract termination," etc.)

11. Exception Request

To request an exception, please submit the Information Security Exception request to SecProg@ct.edu

The requestor and BOR Information Security Program Office will define the approved alternative configuration if different than the original proposal of the requestor.

The exception process is NOT an alternative to the Change Control Management process.

12. Disclaimer

CSCU disclaims any responsibility for and does not warrant information and materials residing on non-CSCU systems or available over publicly accessible networks. Such materials do not necessarily reflect the attitudes, opinions or values of CSCU, its faculty, staff or students.

13. Related Publications

Related Policies

- [Link to BOR Information Security Policy when approved]

Related Standards and Procedures

- [Link to Support Services Procedure Page]

Web Sites

- [General Link to Support Services Website]

14. Revision History

Previous versions of this standard

- None

History of Changes

- None

Standards superseded by this standard

- None