Email Policy

Contents

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Purpose

1   Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) recognises that email and instant messaging are important communication tools for both staff and students. Email systems are provided to support the teaching, learning, research and approved business activities of the University.

2   This policy provides guidance on secure, acceptable and appropriate use of the University's email and related services, systems and facilities.

Applicability and Scope

3   The policy applies to all users who are issued with a BNU email account this includes students, staff, partners, affiliates, contractors and third parties.

4   The policy applies to all University students, staff, partners, affiliates, contractors and third parties who use Instant Messaging and social media applications provided by Buckinghamshire New University

5   This policy provides guidance about acceptable use, for the purpose of sending or receiving email messages and attachments and the sending and receiving of Instant Messages (chat) using IT facilities (hardware , software and networks) provided by Buckinghamshire New University.

6   This policy describes the standards that users are expected to observe when using University facilities for email and chat, and ensures that users are aware of the legal consequences attached to inappropriate use of the facilities.

Use of email

7   The University uses email to communicate official University information of many kinds to Staff, Students and others. Users are responsible for reading and responding to their email on a frequent and regular basis, since some official communications may be time sensitive.

8   Users are responsible for setting up an automatic out of office reply through Outlook when they are away from the University. This should include alternative contact details for urgent enquiries.

9   The sending of insulting, abusive or otherwise offensive messages or material is not permitted. Similarly, no information should be transmitted internally or externally which is defamatory, which brings the University into disrepute, or which contravenes laws, University policy and conventions on equal opportunities. Employees or students who receive emails with such content from other employees or students of the University or external parties should report the matter to their line manager or academic supervisor.

10 Any information which the University holds is potentially disclosable to a requester under any of the applicable Data Protection Legislation. This includes emails and chat.

11 Users need to be sure that they are not breaching any Data Protection Legislation and are complying with the information handling procedures when using email. This could include but is not limited to:

   •   Passing on personal information without consent from the data owner;
   •   Keeping personal information longer than necessary; and
   •   Sending personal information to a country outside the EEA.

12 Emails form part of the official records of the University. Emails are treated as a legal form of written communication , and care should be taken to avoid communicating information that may be regarded as unsuitable or unacceptable.

13 Staff may not use personal email accounts instead of a University staff email account to conduct University business, or automatically forward emails from a staff email account to a personal account.

14 University email should not be used as a permanent document storage or archiving facility.

15 Inboxes should be cleaned up periodically to remove unwanted emails (junk and obsolete) permanently. Where email messages need to be retained for long periods, these should be saved on the most appropriate university approved storage system and the emails deleted from the inbox.

Security and Privacy

16 The University makes every effort to secure its computer systems, networked resources, and email accounts, but cannot guarantee the infallibility of these systems to unauthorized intrusion, nor the authenticity of the sender of an electronic communication. For this reason email is not appropriate for transmitting personal, confidential or sensitive information of any kind.

17 BNU has implemented enhanced email security tools to protect against email borne threats and malware and to minimise the likelihood of related information security incidents. Emails may be stopped and attachments blocked by these tools. The Service Desk will not release messages and/or attachments that are considered a threat to the security of university operations.

18 Email should be used carefully when transmitting personal data. Any email containing personal information about an individual may be liable to disclosure to that individual under the Data Protection Legislation. This includes comments and opinions, as well as factual information. This must be borne in mind when writing emails, and when keeping them. Emails which do not contain personal information but contain other information that may be classified as confidential or sensitive may be liable to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

19 The University does not recognise any rights of email users to impose restrictions on disclosure of emails held in the University's system. Emails may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection Legislation, as part of legal proceedings (e.g. tribunals) or disciplinary investigation proceedings. Users are responsible for all actions relating to the use of their University IT Credentials and email accounts and should therefore make every effort to ensure no other person has access to their accounts.

20 Users are responsible for keeping their email passwords confidential, and should never share this information with others, including friends and family members.

21 If an employee is absent the University reserve the right to access accounts in order to access emails and files to ensure business continuity.

Monitoring

22 The University maintains the right to monitor the use of email accounts to ensure compliance with University policies. Any monitoring will be done in compliance with the Telecommunications Regulations 2000.

23 The University maintains the right to apply automatic message monitoring, filtering and rejection systems as appropriate and deny transmission of messages with content that is unacceptable, harmful or in breach of the terms of the policy.

24 BNU has a statutory duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, termed Prevent. The purpose of this duty is to aid the process of preventing people being drawn into terrorism. Users must not use their email account to create, download, store or transmit unlawful material or material that is indecent, offensive, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory or extremist. The University reserves the right to block or monitor access to such material.

25 Under Prevent duty guidance the University has an obligation and right to monitor emails for possible evidence of criminal activity or activity contrary to the Prevent statement in section 23. Authorised system administrators may provide the evidence of such monitoring to law enforcement officials.

Enforcement

26 Any actual or suspected breach of this policy must be reported to the Director of DTS via the Service Desk. The Director of DTS will take appropriate action and inform the relevant internal and external authorities.

27 Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant process.

Key Relevant Documents

28 This policy should be read and understood in the context of other Buckinghamshire New University Policies which together form the Information Security framework. Key documents include:

- Applicable Laws and Regulations

- Acceptable Use Policy

- Data Protection Policy

- Information Security Policy

Table of Definitions

IT Facilities	Hardware, software, data, network access, third party services, online services or IT credentials provided or arranged by Buckinghamshire New University.
IT Credentials	Your institutional login, often referred to as your Username, or any other token (email address, smartcard, dongle) issued by Buckinghamshire New University to identify yourself when using IT facilities.
Staff	Staff are salaried members of the University or contracted individually by the University to provide a service.
Student	A person pursuing any course of study in the University.
Visitors	A visitor is anyone, not a member of staff or student, requiring access to University premises or services.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

1.	**What is changing and why?**

The Email Policy describes the standards that users are expected to observe when using University facilities for email and chat, and ensures that users are aware of the legal consequences attached to inappropriate use of University email. This will ensure that all IT facilities and systems can be used safely, lawfully, and equitably. It is intended to protect both the University and users from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly. This policy was first introduced in June 2015 and has been reviewed in accordance with the review schedule to ensure that it remains applicable to the changing requirements of the University.

2.	**What do you know?**

This policy aims to ensure that all BNU staff and students are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to **the safe and secure use of email.** This will help to ensure that the personal information of staff, students, service users and stakeholders in general will be processed fairly and lawfully in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. .

3.   Assessing the impact

	Could benefit	**May adversely impact**	**What does this mean?** *Impacts identified from what you know (actual and potential)*	**What can you do?** *Actions (or why no action is possible) to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations*
a) How could this affect different ethnicities? *Including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.*	☐	☐	<u>Neutral impact</u> This policy applies to all regardless of their ethnicity. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail - it is a matter of choice or preference.	
b) How could this affect cisgender and transgender men and women (including maternity/pregnancy impact), as well as non-binary people?	☐	☐	<u>Neutral impact</u> This policy applies to all regardless of gender, gender reassignment whether on maternity or paternity leave including whether the woman is pregnant or is/has previously been absent due to maternity leave. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail - it is a matter of choice or preference	
c) How could this affect disabled people or carers? *Including neurodiversity, invisible disabilities and mental health conditions.*	☒	☐	<u>Positive impact</u> There are staff and students and other stakeholders who find e-mail easier than letters or telephone (e.g. the visually impaired using speech recognition software) this policy may have a positive impact by enabling all to communicate in their preferred manner. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail - it is a matter of choice or preference	The policy is available on the BNU website therefore is available in different fonts, text size and through assistive technology.
d) How could this affect people from different faith groups?	☐	☐	<u>Neutral impact</u> This policy applies to all regardless of religion or belief.	

			No one is forced to communicate by e-mail or instant messaging - it is a matter of choice or preference.	
e) How could this affect people with different sexual orientations?	☐	☐	Neutral impact This policy applies to all regardless of sexual orientation. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail or instant messaging - it is a matter of choice or preference	
f) How could this affect different age groups or generations?	☒	☐	Positive impact This policy may have a positive impact by ensuring staff students and other stakeholders can communicate by email or instant messaging (chat) if it is there preferred method. Formal communication does not have to be done by letter or telephone which may assist the younger age group when they communicate with the University. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail or chat therefore it does not discriminate against the older generation who may be less confident with the technologies.	
g) How could this affect those who are married or in a civil partnership?	☐	☐	Neutral impact This policy applies to all regardless of marital status. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail or instant messaging - it is a matter of choice or preference.	
h) How could this affect people from different backgrounds such as: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers.	☒	☐	Positive impact The policy may have a positive impact by ensuring that there is equality of opportunity by enabling communication by email for those unwilling or unable to use other forms of communication such as writing letters or using the phone. No one is forced to communicate by e-mail or instant messaging - it is a matter of choice or preference.	
i) How could this affect people with multiple intersectional experiences?	☐	☐	Neutral impact This policy applies to all in the same way therefore there is no cumulative impact on users.	

4. Overall outcome

No major change needed ☒	Adjust approach ☐	Adverse impact but continue ☐	Stop and remove ☐

5. Details of further actions needed

All staff will be made aware of the updated policy via an announcement on the staff intranet;
The policy will be made available to all new staff as part of their induction process;

All students will be made aware of the updated policy via MYBNU and Blackboard; The policy is accessible to all users on the BNU web site as a PDF document; The inappropriate use of the Policy will be managed in accordance with the University's policies and procedures and reported to external bodies when appropriate.				
6. Arrangements for delivery and future monitoring				
The policy will be reviewed every three years. The Director of Digital & Technical Services is responsible for reviewing the policy.				
7. Completed by:	Jenny Horwood	Technical Project Manager	**Date**	09- Jan-23
8. Signed off by:	Nicholas Roussel-Milner	Director DTS	**Date**	23/02/2023

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