

Electronic Mail Services (email) Policy

Version 1.1	Last Updated: 5/5/2024
Security Level: Public	Issued: 8/15/2022

Purpose

Fitchburg State University recognizes that principles of academic freedom and shared governance, freedom of speech, and privacy of information hold important implications for electronic mail services (hereafter referred to as “email”). This policy reflects these principles within the context of Fitchburg State’s legal, operational and administrative obligations.

Scope

This policy applies to all email services belonging to Fitchburg State University (any that end with a .fitchburgstate.edu suffix).

Policy

Fitchburg State University encourages the use of email services to share information, improve communication, and to exchange ideas in furtherance of Fitchburg State’s mission within the parameters of the following principles and rules of conduct:

1. **Communication.**
Your Fitchburg State University provided email account is the primary means of sending information to faculty, staff and students. Accordingly, you are expected to check this account frequently and regularly to ensure you are current with all necessary communications from the University. Users having difficulty accessing their email are expected to contact the helpdesk to remedy any issues.
2. **Identification.**
Your University provided email account helps identify you to others and includes security designed to help prevent attacks. When dealing with internal departments or other users, you should use your University provided account to ensure identity and compliance with State retention laws.
3. **Privacy.**
Fitchburg State Technology Department does not routinely inspect, monitor or disclose email messages without the holder’s consent or the presence of special circumstances

as explained below. Individuals are prohibited from gaining access to the email account of another individual except in the limited circumstances where such access is authorized by this policy.

4. Public Record.

Email may constitute a public record under Massachusetts' Public Records Act or be subjected to mandatory disclosure under other laws, including laws compelling disclosure during the course of litigation. Users of FSU's email services should be aware that Massachusetts' Public Records Act and similar laws prevent FSU from guaranteeing complete protection of even personal email utilizing FSU accounts.

5. Responsible Use.

Those who use Fitchburg State email services are expected to do so responsibly. Users are expected to comply with commonwealth and federal laws, with all [Fitchburg State policies](#), and within normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.

6. Access Restrictions.

Access to Fitchburg State email services, when provided, is a privilege that may be wholly or partially restricted without prior notice and without the consent of the user when there is reason to believe that violations of law or Fitchburg State policy have occurred, or in other urgent or compelling circumstances.

7. University property.

Any email addresses or accounts associated with Fitchburg State are the property of Fitchburg State University.

8. Authorized access and disclosure.

Fitchburg State University may inspect, monitor, or disclose email without the consent of the holder of such electronic correspondence in special circumstances, such as:

- a. When required by law
- b. When required by University policy
- c. There is reason to believe that violations of law or policy may have occurred or be occurring
- d. Troubleshooting of the email system requires access
- e. Upon termination, to facilitate continued University operations

In the event inspection, monitoring or disclosure of email is required, FSU shall notify the affected individual(s) of the action(s) taken.

9. Approved communications.

Email is the official method of communication for Fitchburg State University. Only mailboxes with ". fitchburgstate.edu" suffixes are supported.

Permitted Use

1. Users.

Authorized users of Fitchburg State email services are limited to alumni and active Fitchburg State University students, faculty, staff, and others affiliated with the University.

2. Non-competition.

Fitchburg State University email services shall not be provided in competition with commercial services to individuals or organizations outside of Fitchburg State.

3. Restrictions.

Fitchburg State mail services shall not be used for: unlawful activities, commercial purposes not under the auspices of or for the benefit of Fitchburg State, personal financial gain or for purposes that violate this or other Fitchburg State policies.

4. Representation.

Users of Fitchburg State University email services shall not give the impression they are representing or making statements on behalf of Fitchburg State or any unit of Fitchburg State unless authorized to do so. Where appropriate, an explicit disclaimer shall be included unless it is clear from the context that the author is not representing the University.

5. False Identity.

Users of Fitchburg State University electronic mail services shall not employ false identities nor send email on behalf of other users unless specifically approved.

6. Interference.

Fitchburg State University email shall not be used for purposes that could reasonably be expected to cause, directly or indirectly, strain on computing systems or unwarranted or unsolicited interference with another's use of email services. Such prohibited use includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Sending or forwarding chain letters
- b. Using list servers or similar broadcast systems to accomplish the widespread distribution of unsolicited email (AKA "spam")
- c. Resending the same electronic mail repeatedly to one or more recipients to interfere with the recipient's use of email services (AKA "letter bombing")

7. Personal use.

Fitchburg State email services may be used for incidental personal purposes provided that, in addition to the foregoing constraints and conditions, such use does not burden Fitchburg State with noticeable incremental cost(s) or interfere with the user's employment or other obligations to Fitchburg State.

8. Ownership.

Use of the Fitchburg State email system to receive or transmit documents implies and acceptance that these messages are the exclusive property of the University unless otherwise agreed upon in writing.

Security, Privacy, and Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality.

Fitchburg State attempts to provide secure and reliable email services. However, the confidentiality of email cannot be assured. Expectations of confidentiality may be compromised by numerous sources, such as:

- a. As applicable under this policy
- b. Technical problems or human error resulting in the unintended distribution of email
- c. Compromised passwords used for unauthorized access
- d. Interception of transmission of messages across the internet

Therefore, users of Fitchburg State email services should exercise extreme caution with using email services to communicate confidential or sensitive matters. Users should always employ whatever protections (such as password-protecting files, encrypting messages, etc.) that are available to them.

2. Unauthorized disclosure.

State and federal law and Fitchburg State policy require that certain records, including but not limited to, student records, peer review records, and certain personnel information, are confidential. Therefore, users of Fitchburg State University email services are prohibited from transmitting, seeking out, using, or disclosing confidential information without written authorization and without taking appropriate precautions, including the use of encrypting technologies or password-protecting files to protect the integrity of the confidential information encountered in the performance of duties or otherwise.

3. Incidental IT disclosure.

During the performance of their duties, technology department personnel may need to observe transactions addressing information or messages to ensure the proper functioning of the email or support systems. Except for these purposes as stated, information technology personnel activities are limited to the least invasive level of inspection necessary to perform assigned duties.

4. Encryption.

You may send encrypted Gmail messages to other users and should follow the guidance contained in the "[Fitchburg State Encryption Policy](#)" before doing so.

Retention

1. Beginning on May 1, 2009, email correspondence involving all faculty and staff users (those that use a username. fitchburgstate.edu address) shall be retained indefinitely.
Correspondence prior to that is limited to whatever existed on the mail server on that date.
2. Student email shall not be archived, and retrieval is limited to whatever the system is currently storing.

Roles

Staff Members: Understand this policy.

Technology Staff: Follows this policy and shall maintain a log with the change documentation.

CISO/ISO: What is their role

References

CISv8 Controls 9.1, 9.4

Massachusetts General Laws ch. 4, § 7(26)

Enforcement

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of access rights and/or termination of employment under adherence to their respective collective bargaining agreement. Students found to have violated this policy may have their access removed and may have additional actions taken as directed by the Student Code of Conduct.

Revision History

Date of Change	Revision	Responsible	Summary of Change
8/15/2022	1	Steve Swartz, CIO Sherry Horeanopoulos, CISO	Creation of Policy, Start of Revision Tracking, Formatting of Document
5/31/2024	1.1	Eric Boughton, CISO	Formatting and changing FSU to Fitchburg and IT to Technology