

POLICY

Effective Date: Fall Quarter, 2003

Revised: November 6, 2019

Approved by: WWU President's Council

POL-U1700.02 USING E-MAIL ACCOUNTS FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH STUDENTS

This policy applies to the use of Western Washington University email as an official communication tool with students.

Purpose:

Recognizing the expanding reliance on electronic communication, WWU has determined that email will be one of the university's official means of communication. Departments, faculty, and staff may use email instead of the U.S. postal service for providing students with information relating to official university business. The use of email is not required; U.S. postal service or campus mail may still be used as appropriate. This policy only applies to email messages sent by the university to students.

1. Email is an Official Means of Communication

University assigned student email accounts shall be one of the official means of communication of the University with all students.

2. Students are Responsible for all the Information Sent to Them via the University Assigned Account.

Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their University assigned email account. Students who choose to forward messages from their University email account to another account are still responsible for all the information (including attachments) that was sent to the University email account.

The University expects that such communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. Official email communications are intended only to meet the academic and administrative needs of the campus community.

3. The University will Create Email Accounts for all Enrolled Students

Official University email accounts are created for all enrolled students. A student must activate his/her account in order to access University correspondence.

4. Students will Adhere to the Following guidelines:

- a) Official University email accounts are created for all enrolled students. These accounts must be activated by the student before University correspondence can be accessed. The official email address will be maintained in the Student Information

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System.

- b) Students may have email electronically redirected from their official university email accounts to another account (e.g., @aol.com, @hotmail.com, or an address on a departmental server), but they do so at their own risk. These risks can include lost mail or lost attachments due to: Being over quota at the remote site; Loss of remote service for business reasons; or Delayed delivery.
- c) The University will not be responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors or by departmental servers. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with communications sent to his or her official email address.

5. Departments, Faculty, and Staff Shall Adhere to the Following Guidelines:

- a) Official email notices can be used in place of correspondence that traditionally was sent directly to students on university or departmental letterhead.
- b) Academic and administrative departments, faculty and staff can choose to send individual and targeted messages pertaining to university business without additional approval. Targeted messages are defined as email sent to a defined subset of Western students. Data sets of targeted student email addresses can be obtained from the university student information data warehouse.
- c) Messages that are sent to the entire Western student body should address emergency, time sensitive, and safety related topics. These messages and exceptions as deemed appropriate are to be approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services or the Vice Provost for Information and Telecommunications Services (technology related email), or their designees. Departments may post non-official correspondence (i.e. announcements) pertinent to the entire student body on the MyWestern portal.
- d) To maintain confidentiality and to prevent potential spam, when emailing to a targeted list of students, use mail merge or the blind carbon copy (bcc) field for address list.
- e) Judicious use of Official Notices is encouraged. All messages should be concisely written and address a single topic.
- f) Departments, faculty, and staff should exercise caution in using email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters. It is important to be careful to send messages only to the intended recipient(s).
- g) Confidentiality regarding student records is protected under WWU's Student

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Records Policy, and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Student email addresses and all use of email, including use for sensitive or confidential information, is to be consistent with these regulations.

- h) The distribution of targeted or mass communication to students shall be restricted to Western Washington University departments for University business. External requests will not be honored.