IT Appropriate Use - Best Practice for Email Guidelines

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Email is used at Victoria University as a business communication tool and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, professional, effective and lawful manner. The University considers email an important means of communication and recognises the importance of proper email content.

(2) The purpose of this procedure is to provide advice on the proper use of the University's email system and to inform users of the University's required standard for email use.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) This Guideline applies to:

a. VU staff, students and other users with a University email account.
b. Sending or forwarding emails from the University email system.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Nil

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(5) Nil

Section 5 - Procedures

(6) Nil

Section 6 - Guidelines

Legal Requirements

(7) The following actions are forbidden by law when sending or forwarding emails:

a. Using material which constitutes an infringement of copyright. Refer to the University's ' Copyright Material (Use of) ' policy in determining what third party material can be used.
b. Defaming an individual, organisation, association, company or business.
c. Communications that are obscene, offensive or involve the use of illegal material, including the use or transfer

of material of a sexual nature.

d. Breaching a university policy, procedure, statute or regulation.
e. Directly or indirectly interfering with or conflicting with lawful University business.
f. Intentionally bringing the University or its officers into disrepute.
g. Sending unsolicited and unauthorised global or commercial email messages.
h. Forging or attempting to forge email messages.

(8) If you send or forward an attachment that contains a virus, you and the University can be held liable.

(9) Staff members who send or forward such emails may be subject to disciplinary action which may include termination of employment. Students who send or forward such emails may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Student Misconduct Regulations .

(10) Any emails received of this nature should be forwarded via email for reporting and investigatory purposes to the ITS Service Desk at servicedesk@vu.edu.au . Emails will be logged by ITS Service Desk and assigned to the ITS Security Office for investigation. Each case will be assessed and proper action will be taken based on the severity of the breach..

(11) Staff and students at VU undertaking research may send emails containing such materials provided that it demonstrably refers to their area of research and is done so in a responsible manner.

(12) The use of the "on the behalf of" option is permitted to be used by Victoria University, with the approval of the email account holder.

(13) Emails can be sent on behalf of another user as long as the user has given the appropriate permissions.

Personal Use

(14) Although the University's email system is meant for business use, the University allows the reasonable use of email for personal use under the following conditions:

a. Personal use of email should not interfere with work.
b. Personal emails must adhere to the IT Appropriate Use policy and associated procedures.
c. Users are discouraged to forward nuisance emails such as chain letters, junk mail, jokes and frivolous attachments.
d. Must not be used to run a private business whether for profit or not for-profit.

Spam

(15) The sending of unauthorised and unsolicited global or commercial email transmissions (spam) is forbidden. Mass electronic communications should only be sent in accordance with the VU Internal Mailing Lists procedure.

Sensitive and restricted information

(16) Avoid sending sensitive and restricted official information by e-mail. If you do, you should secure the information by including it in a Microsoft Word or Excel file and protecting it with a password, and then provide the recipient with the password by means of other communication, for instance by telephone.

(17) The University recommends any information users consider sensitive or vulnerable be encrypted, especially for transmission to external organisations.

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Disclaimer

(18) A disclaimer will be automatically attached to all outgoing emails sent from University email accounts. This disclaimer must not be altered or interfered with in any way.

System Monitoring

(19) Your emails may be monitored for the operational integrity of the Victoria University Infrastructure and/or to comply with legal or regulatory requirements. See the IT Security Policy.

(20) If there is evidence that a student or staff member is not adhering to the guidelines set out in this policy, the University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including termination and/or legal action.

Passwords

(21) All Email accounts maintained on the University's email systems are property of the University.

(22) Passwords must not be disclosed to other people unless it is necessary for approved operations of the University.

(23) The University will NEVER ask you to provide your email username and password by email. If you receive a message asking you to respond with details of your username and password, it is a forgery.

(24) If you provide these details to third parties fraudulently masquerading as University officials, you will be responsible for all actions carried out using your account by those third parties.

(25) To comply with current and future auditing requirements, complexity requirements are enabled for Active Directory accounts which are used to read Exchange mailboxes. They require at least three of the following four character groups when selecting a password:

a. English uppercase characters (A through Z);
b. English lowercase characters (a through z);
c. Numerals (0 through 9);
d. Non-alphabetic characters (such as !, $, #, %)

(26) All passwords need to be eight (8) characters or greater.

(27) You cannot have your first name or surname as part of the password.

(28) The system retains 12 previously used passwords, therefore do not reuse passwords.

Styling

(29) Emails sent from VU email accounts must not contain customised backgrounds. Backgrounds should remain as a default that is provided by the email applications.

Writing emails

(30) Best practice guidelines for writing emails:

a. The title of the email should reflect the contents therein.
b. Write well-structured emails and use short, descriptive subjects.
c. The University's email style is informal. This means that sentences can be short and to the point. You can start your e-mail with 'Hi', or 'Dear', and the name of the person. Messages can be ended with 'Best Regards'.

d. Signatures must include your name, position and faculty/department. A disclaimer will be added underneath your signature (see Disclaimer).
e. Use the spell checker before you send out an email.
f. Do not send unnecessary attachments. Send links and/or use shared drives.
g. Do not write emails in capitals.
h. If you forward emails, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
i. Only mark emails as important if they really are important.

Replying to emails

(31) Emails should ideally be answered within at least 8 working hours, but users should endeavour to answer priority emails within 4 hours.

Maintenance

(32) Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and either set your email to automatically empty your 'deleted items' on closing or regularly empty your deleted items folder.

Request for access to email

(33) Requests for a new VU email account can be made through the IT Service Desk system .

Request for access to another mailbox

(34) Requests for access to another mailbox can be made through the IT Service Desk system .

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