

North Dakota State University

Policy Manual

SECTION 158.1

E-MAIL AS AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION METHOD FOR EMPLOYEES

SOURCE: NDSU President

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Electronic mail (e-mail) sent to and received from @ndsu.edu, like postal and campus mail, is an official means by which the University communicates with employees. NDSU exercises the right to send e-mail communication to employees and expects that e-mail communication is received and read by employees in a timely manner.

2. RATIONALE

Employees may have several addresses. Determining where to send official communication can be challenging, especially when there may be an emergency. Electronic communication is convenient, fast, cost-effective, environmentally advantageous and readily available. E-mail has been designated as an official communication medium by the University.

3. DEFINITIONS:

3.1 Employee(s)

See definition of employee as described in [NDSU Policy, Section 101, Personnel Definitions](#).

3.2 Official E-mail Address

An e-mail address assigned to an individual by the NDSU Information Technology Division (NDSU IT).

3.3 Official E-mail Communication

An e-mail message regarding official University business sent from an NDSU employee or departmental representative.

3.4 Employee Official Electronic Mailing List

A mailing list populated with official e-mail addresses of all employees for official communication. Employees are expected to read and act appropriately on all messages sent to this list.

3.5 Redirected E-mail

E-mail redirected or forwarded from an official e-mail address to an address not issued by NDSU IT (e.g., jane@gmail.com, john.smith@cs.ndsu.edu).

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all NDSU employees.

5. EMPLOYEES USE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Security and Appropriate Usage: Employees are required to comply with all institutional and University System policies and procedures, especially North Dakota University System 1202.1 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy and [NDSU Policy Section 158, Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications Devices](#), and relevant local, state, and federal law.

5.1 Account Monitoring

Employees are responsible for monitoring their e-mail for official campus communication, and have the responsibility to recognize that certain communication is time sensitive. Supervisors are responsible for notifying employees with limited access to e-mail of time-sensitive communications.

NDSU reserves the right to monitor an e-mail account for suspected inappropriate usage.

5.2 Special Accommodation

Employees with a disability who are unable to use e-mail as an official University communication may request an exemption to this policy in the form of an alternate format accommodation. To request accommodation refer to [NDSU Policy Section 168](#).

5.3 E-mail Problems

So as to not interfere with the receipt of official University communication, employees can report any technical problems in accessing or using their official e-mail addresses and accounts to the NDSU IT Help Desk. The Help Desk may be reached through e-mail, NDSU.helpdesk@ndsu.edu, and by calling 701-231-8685.

5.4 Additional Requirements

Additional requirements may be imposed by administration, colleges, divisions, and other entities within the University. Employees are responsible for accessing, reading, and responding to their e-mail in a timely manner.

6. UNIVERSITY USE OF E-MAIL

6.1 Campus Wide Announcements

The University works to minimize the number of messages sent to employees. Official messages sent to employees are to be sent through the official mailing lists. These lists are moderated by NDSU officials.

6.2 Mail Formatting

Contact information for the originating employee and department must be clearly denoted in the message signature. To maintain consistent branding standards across all forms of communication at NDSU, it is recommended that employees use one of the standard NDSU e-mail signature [options](#).

6.3 Attachments

In order to facilitate the timely operation of NDSU's e-mail system and to minimize the amount of storage required to deliver this service, it is recommended that attachments not be included in e-mail announcements sent to large groups such as the NDSU employee official e-mail lists.

6.4 Business Use of E-mail

Individuals' NDSU official e-mail addresses are to be used in accordance with the business of the University and for purposes directly related to their position and/or job functions. Official e-mail addresses may not be used for conducting personal business. Incidental personal use is allowed and is to be determined by the respective dean, provost, vice president, president, director, department chairperson, or department head. Personal use must follow all applicable NDSU policies and laws. Use of email to store or transmit social security numbers, dates of birth, credit card numbers, or any similarly sensitive pieces of information is explicitly disallowed for both business and incidental personal use.

6.5 E-mail Sent by Employees

In efforts to protect privacy and better ensure authenticity, University administration, colleges, divisions, and other entities within the University require that e-mails which request a response or are in direct relation to duties and job functions, be sent via official e-mail addresses.

7. E-MAIL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Initial E-Mail Assignment and Service Setup

E-mail accounts, which create electronic identities and assign e-mail addresses, are automatically set up for new employees by the NDSU Information Technology Division upon acceptance of employment to the University. E-mail addresses are free of charge and remain active as long as the person is employed by the University, or as approved by the respective dean, provost, vice president or president.

7.2 Activating E-mail

After initial e-mail account setup, employees must activate their e-mail addresses and accounts. Instructions are available on the [NDSU Help Desk Website](#).

7.3 Redirecting of NDSU E-mail

Official University electronic communication is sent to the @ndsu.edu address. Failure to receive official University messages when using a non-official e-mail address does not absolve employees from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to their @ndsu.edu addresses.

Employees wishing to redirect e-mail sent to their official NDSU e-mail address must formally request and receive permission their department head/chair, from their respective dean, provost, vice president, or president as well as the Vice President for Information Technology or designee.

If the request is approved, the employee's dean, provost, vice president, president, or designee must request the change for the employee's e-mail redirect by contacting the NDSU Help Desk.

All email messages that are redirected to a non-official email account are still subject to the North Dakota Public Records law, [NDCC 44-04](#), regardless of the system this email resides in. Individuals must comply with any public record requests and any requests made by NDSU.

7.4 Privacy and Confidentiality

Communication via e-mail is subject to all of the same public information, privacy, and records retention laws as other forms of communication. While NDSU e-mail affords some measure of privacy, the redirecting of e-mail by employees to outside accounts and the sharing of messages with third parties may negate the privacy protection rights afforded to employees by the University.

7.5 University Spam Policy

In an effort to reduce the amount of spam the NDSU e-mail system must process, some messages considered to be spam or sent from known spammers are blocked. Use of additional spam fighting tools that delete official e-mail before it is read does not exempt individuals from the policy outlined in this document.

For more information on e-mail services, see www.ndsu.edu/helpdesk or www.ndsu.edu/its.

HISTORY:

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