

# ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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Current Status:

**Approved**

Policy Type:

**All University**

Effective Date:

08/29/2019

Last Updated:

04/05/2024

Applies To:

**Students, Faculty, Staff, Visitors**

Responsible University Officer:

**Interim President**

Policy Owner:

**Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management**

Policy Contact:

## Rationale

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Email expedites and reduces the cost of communications, helps to ensure timely receipt of announcements and notifications, and allows for verification of message delivery. Use of email is intended to meet the academic and administrative needs of the campus community.

# Policy

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St. Cloud State University (SCSU) recognizes email as an efficient means of gathering and disseminating information. SCSU students and employees will be able to access their SCSU email account once they activate their Star ID. Activation information can be found in the Technology Accounts policy (See the Related St. Cloud State University Policies section). This assigned SCSU email address will be listed as the individual's designated contact email in Minnesota State, State of Minnesota or St. Cloud State University enterprise and records systems and shall remain active until deactivated according to system, state or university policy and procedure.

All SCSU email users are required to utilize email in accordance with all approved federal, state, Minnesota State, and SCSU statutes, policies, procedures, and use guidelines. Conduct which involves the use of information resources to violate a university policy or regulation or state or federal law, or to violate another's rights, is a serious abuse that may result in limitation of privileges, as well as appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action.

Email is recognized as a valuable communication tool available to all employees and shall be the official means of communication with students. Employees who are on-duty or on-assignment and students are expected to receive, read, and if appropriate, act expeditiously upon communications distributed through SCSU email. Since email is the official means of communication to students, failure by a student to read their emails does not release them from being held accountable to or complying with the content of those emails. Employees and students will not be held responsible for failure to adhere to these expectations if they are prevented from doing so because of downtime or other problems with the St. Cloud State email system or servers. When communication is necessary with an employee who is not scheduled for a work assignment or is on-assignment at a location with no email access, or when another means of communication is specified in a bargaining agreement; other means of communication will be used in addition to or in lieu of email.

## **Privacy and Right of University Access**

SCSU does not routinely monitor all messages, however, it does have the authority, at any time, to inspect the contents of any University equipment, files, or mail on its system for any legitimate business, legal or disciplinary purpose. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to: reasonable suspicion of a violation of law or University policy; investigation into systems issues; litigation or anticipated litigation; or a need to perform work when an employee is not available. Access by university personnel for university purposes does not alter intellectual property rights of employees or students.

Email users must understand that not all data is private or protected and SCSU must comply with laws governing the release of data. Much of the data created, received, or backed up on SCSU systems may be considered public, including some email communications, even those containing opinions or personal remarks. (See Related St. Cloud State University Policies)

## **Data Protection**

Caution should always be used when emailing sensitive or confidential information.

- Senders must ensure that the email is properly addressed to the intended recipient email(s).
  - Use care in selecting “reply” or “reply all.”
  - Utilize “Bcc” feature when recipients should not be aware of others receiving the email message, or when the email addresses of recipients should be protected from disclosure.
- If there is uncertainty about the risk of data going to email addresses outside of the SCSU email system, users may consider using the Minnesota State secure file sharing system (See Supporting URLs).
- Users should be aware of the signs of potential email tampering or fraud such as hacking or phishing schemes. Such malicious activity on SCSU systems should be reported immediately to the IT Security Coordinator or forwarded to [phishing@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:phishing@stcloudstate.edu).
- Users must keep their account and password information private.
- Users must lock work devices to avoid unauthorized access to email and other systems.
- Employees must only disclose non-public data to persons who are legally entitled to access such data. Breaches or suspected breaches must be reported immediately. (See the Related St. Cloud State University Policies section below.)
- Data, including official emails, should be maintained, archived, or destroyed per established retention schedules, record transfer procedures, and secure record destruction guidelines.

## **Appropriate Use**

SCSU expects appropriate use of e-mail to enhance productivity through the efficient exchange of information in education, research, public service and the expression of ideas. Messages sent as electronic mail should meet the same standards for distribution or display as if they were tangible documents or instruments. It is unacceptable to use the University's system to engage in wasteful, disruptive, or

unprofessional practices, such as creating or sending chain letters, “flaming” (hostile, bullying, threatening or harassing) email transmissions, non-SCSU sanctioned mass messaging or marketing practices, or otherwise engaging in email practices that might unnecessarily burden or even overload SCSU servers or systems.

## **Bulk Emails and Mailing Lists**

This policy does not apply to email marketing efforts that may be included in a vendor contract, but rather is about informational or data gathering broadcast emails. The ability to regularly send non-marketing, non-commercial bulk email messages, whether to existing or newly created mailing lists, or to large or pre-defined target groups on campus is limited to specific departments and/or authorized employees. This limitation is in place to restrict the number of bulk emails and the creation of mailing lists outside of secure systems, and to safeguard the value of email as a communication tool. It is also designed to ensure compliance with system and institutional policies and procedures, the University’s mission and vision, and desired communications strategies or best practices.

The ability to send research related broadcast emails is determined on a case by case basis. The use of email to initiate contact with potential participants in research may not be sent without prior approval of the research protocol by St. Cloud State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Campus members who are not authorized to send bulk emails on a regular basis may make requests for both non-research and research bulk email distribution through the procedures outlined in this policy.

## **Procedure**

### **Bulk Email Criteria**

Requests for all bulk email messaging must meet these criteria for consideration:

- The message must comply with FERPA, Minnesota State policies and procedures, and St. Cloud State policies and procedures, CAN-SPAM Act, and any other applicable state or federal laws.
- The message must comply with SCSU Brand Guidelines.
- The message must come from a valid St. Cloud State University email address.
- The sender must provide contact information in, or at the end of, the body text of the message.
- The message must be succinct and clear, and be targeted as much as possible to the individuals who need to receive the message.
- The message should provide an essential communication related to the University or a University department, unit or program. Examples include, but are not limited to, information about university missions, operations, budgets, academics, health/safety,

required notices or training, awards/accomplishments, and important news or events.

- For messages including a survey, the survey instrument shall be created using a University contracted survey software provider or software that has been vetted and approved by the Minnesota State System Office of the General Counsel. Survey data may not reside in the body of the email, but shall be accessed via a link in the body of the email.

### **Bulk Research Email Additional Criteria**

These additional rules apply to mass email use in research:

- Student email addresses are considered limited directory data at St. Cloud State University. They can be provided to conduct research for University purposes, including cooperative or collaborative research with other entities, but shall not be released to other entities for independent research not involving SCSU.
- Researchers may only be provided mass email distribution lists for an IRB approved faculty or staff led research project, undergraduate research project, honors thesis, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation. The researcher shall not be given a distribution list unless approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has been provided.
- Individual email addresses will not be provided directly to the researcher. A list of email addresses will be selected based on the research protocol and a random sampling will be used. This distribution list will have a single address for the entire list while keeping the individual email addresses secure. The researcher will be given only the single address for the distribution list, and email recipients will only see that single address when the email is received.
- The broadcast email must contain a statement about the University purpose of the email such that it is clear the researcher is abiding by the St. Cloud State University limited directory statement (See Supporting URLs).
- The researcher must use their St. Cloud State University email address to send the broadcast email.
- Emails must include the IRB approved Implied Consent language in the body of the email.

### **Bulk Email Requests**

Bulk email Authorizing Units are listed in the Bulk Email Approval Table below. These authorizing units have the ability to regularly send bulk email for university purposes. Occasionally someone outside of the Authorizing Units may need to issue a non-marketing, non-commercial broadcast messages designed to convey information to large groups on campus, such as all students or all employees. Such

requests for broadcast email messages should be for a legitimate SCSU purpose and can be made by email to the appropriate Authorizing Unit who will consider the message for compliance with system and institutional policies and procedures. If a survey will be included with the message, the survey contents must be included in the request to the Authorizing Unit. The Authorizing Unit shall notify the requestor via email if the broadcast may be sent, or they may provide additional guidance to the requestor about their message or suggest another communication method.

If a person wishes to send a message to a target group that does not already have an established mailing list they must first complete the data request form found on the Analytics and Institutional Research (AIR) website (see Supporting URLs). The Director of Analytics and Business Intelligence or other AIR employee shall seek permissions from the most appropriate Authorizing Unit based on the data requested. Upon approval, the AIR division will submit an online request form to the ITS Help Desk to establish a bulk email address for the requested target group (see Supporting URLs). The ITS Help Desk will provide a single bulk email address (a ListServ) to the requestor.

*Bulk Email Approval Table:*

<b>Authorizing Unit</b>	<b>Mailing Lists</b>	<b>Examples of General Use</b>
President's Office	all faculty, all students, and all staff	Alerts, significant announcements, policy changes impacting all or most of the community
Provosts Office	all faculty, students and staff in Academic Affairs	Important meetings and seminars, training, special faculty events, news
Graduate School	all graduate students	Community-wide announcements, special meetings, health insurance
Human Resources	all employees (includes faculty)	Matters related to employment: benefits, payroll, leave, years of service, retirement, training
Strategic Enrollment Managemet	all students	Matters related to admissions, retention, recruitment, registration
Student Life and Development	all students	Housing information, student services announcements

Analytics and Institutional Research	Customized mailing list based on request	Surveys, data gathering, or research (upon IRB approval), messages requiring a unique target group
Public Safety	All faculty, students, staff	Safety alerts and notifications, parking, transportation, city notices
University Communications	All faculty, students, staff	Campus e-Newsletter, general communications that do not fit under another Authorizing unit

### Research Bulk Email Requests

The type of research that this section refers to is the type of research that requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Research for bulk email in this section refers to the use of email for a systematic inquiry designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Members of the IRB can provide guidance on whether a survey or research email requires the following procedures.

To request bulk email for research:

1. Complete an IRB Application/Protocol and submit for review.
2. Include details on the application about the participants for the bulk email.
3. When applicable, seek a signed letter of cooperation from the external research site or cooperating organization or agency to document: 1) the cooperating partner's understanding of the nature of the researcher's work; 2) their commitment towards the project; and 3) their approval of the project as it relates to their involvement.
4. Include a "script" of the Subject and Body of the email as well as the content of the survey.
5. Upon IRB approval, a request for the required mailing list can be made by completing the data request form found on the Analytics and Institutional Research (AIR) website (see Supporting URLs).
6. Email the Director of Analytics and Business Intelligence and cc. the IRB Administrator to notify that a research related request was submitted online. Attach the IRB approvals to this email so that the AIR team will know they have the proper permissions to gather the data and work with IT to create a single email address for the mailing.

7. Review and comply with all criteria for bulk email and research bulk email.
8. Review and comply with the Rules for Surveys if a survey will be included in the mailing.

### **Assistance:**

For questions, concerns or complaints about:

- Data privacy, email security, or ListServ guidance contact the Data Practices Compliance Official or IT Security.
- Possible violations related to employee ethics contact Human Resources
- Possible violations related to student code of conduct contact Student Life and Development
- Possible violations related to email threats, harassment, or discrimination contact the Office for Institutional Equity and Access.
- Possible violations related to email use in research contact the Institutional Review Board.
- All other general email transactions or potential violations contact the Director of Information Systems or the Deputy Chief Information Officer.

See Supporting URLs for links to contact information.

## **Guidelines**

### **Best Practices**

In addition to becoming familiar with the policies and procedures linked in the Supporting URLs and Related St. Cloud State University Policies sections, email users might also benefit by following these best practices:

- Keep email organized, and clear email that is no longer needed, to ensure ease of email search and sufficient space for incoming messages.
- Keep subject lines and messages simple and direct to achieve a clear communication goal.
- Refrain from making statements that you would not say to someone if you were face to face, or that you would not want to be made public.
- Try not to read between the lines or jump to conclusions since it can be difficult to express and interpret emotion in text. Avoid using ALL CAPS or excessive punctuation that might be viewed as the email equivalent of shouting.

- Understand that not everyone checks their email constantly throughout the day or is able to respond instantly. Be respectful of others' time commitments and consider other communications methods for matters that need immediate response.
- Use caution with humor – what you find funny, someone else might find offensive.
- Use caution with slang, jargon, and acronyms that the intended recipient might not be familiar with or understand.
- When attaching documents, use common file formats such as .doc, .xls, and .pdf that most recipients will have software, or can easily obtain software, to open.
- Double check your entire email including the recipients before hitting the send button.

## Keywords

Electronic communications, mass email, targeted,

## Related St. Cloud State University Policies

[Data Practices](#)

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[Ensuring Safety of Non-Public Data](#)

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[Technology Account Access and Management](#)

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## Supporting URLs

Websites, Related External Documents, Statutes

- [Analytics & Institutional Research Data Request Form](#)
- [Analytics & Institutional Research Contacts](#)
- [Information Technology Services](#)
- [MoveltSecurely](#)
- [Use of Electronic Communication and Technology](#)
- [Data Practices Contacts](#)
- [Data Privacy - Limited Directory](#)
- [IT Contacts](#)

- [Secure Computing](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Employee Code of Ethics](#)
- [Human Resources Contacts](#)
- [Office for Institutional Equity and Access Contacts](#)
- [IRB Contacts](#)
- [Student Life and Development Contacts](#)
- [ITS Help Desk Online Request Form](#)

## Definitions

**Bulk Email** A single email sent to an entire group of people at the same time. Generally this refers to a large target group, an entire population, or sub-group of a larger population.

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## Contacts

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### Owner

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### Contact

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**To make a comment or suggest changes to this policy:**

**St. Cloud State University Users: [Login](#)**

**Non-St. Cloud State Users: Email comments to [policy@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:policy@stcloudstate.edu)**

