

## Student E-mail Policy

### Policy Statement and Purpose

Electronic mail or "e-mail" is an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost effective, and environmentally sensitive manner.

This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the University as needed. Mail sent to the VCU e-mail address may include notification of official University-related actions, including disciplinary action.

### Who Should Read This Policy

All members of the VCU community should read this policy.

### Related Documents

[VCU net Security Policy](#)

[VCU Computer and Network Resources Use Policy](#)

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\)](#)

### Contacts

Questions or comments about this policy should be directed to the [Chief information Officer\(CIO\) for Technology Services](#). Substantive changes to this policy will be authorized by the approval of the [University Information Technology Advisory Committee \(UITAC\)](#) with concurrence by the Vice Presidents. Editorial changes for clarity may be approved by the CIO.

### Definitions

Automatic E-mail  
Redirection

E-mail sent to an @vcu.edu address that is automatically sent via computer code to another e-mail account rather than being delivered to the VCU account. This is sometimes referred to as auto forwarding.

Nickname E-mail Account	An e-mail account, issued by an internet service provider or web-based e-mail service, in which the name of the account is a nickname or is otherwise unrelated to the name of the account owner.
Official E-mail Account	An e-mail account issued by the University, which is based on a person's first name, middle initial, and last name, and ends in the domain name "vcu.edu".

## **Procedures**

### **University Use of E-mail**

E-mail is an official method for communication at VCU. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, University-related communications sent to their official VCU student e-mail account.

### **Activation of Student E-mail Accounts**

A VCU e-mail account is automatically created for all accepted students. All students are required to activate their official VCU student e-mail account within one week of the beginning of the first semester of enrollment. Accounts may be activated at anytime by going to the ["Obtaining a VCU e-mail account" web page](#). A student e-mail account activated on the VCU Web is the official e-mail address to which the University will send e-mail communications. This official address will be on the University's electronic directories and records for that student. The official address will end in the domain name "vcu.edu". E-mail addresses that end in "vcu.org" are not official e-mail addresses.

### **Expectations Regarding Student Use of E-mail**

Students are expected to check their official VCU e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis in order to remain informed of University-related communications. The University recommends checking e-mail daily.

VCU offices cannot validate that a communication coming by e-mail is from a student unless it comes from a valid VCU address. If students make queries to VCU administrative offices or faculty from "nickname" e-mail accounts (Hotmail, AOL, etc.), they may be asked to resubmit their query using an official VCU account.

### **Faculty Expectations and Educational Uses of E-mail**

Faculty members may require e-mail for course content delivery, class discussion, and instructor conferencing and may specify course-related e-mail policies in their syllabi. Faculty may require that students use their VCU account for course-related communications. Faculty may also require students to confirm their subscription to University-provided mailing lists.

### **Appropriate Use of Student E-mail**

All use of e-mail will be consistent with other University policies and local, state, and federal law, including the VCU Computer and Network Resources Use Policy, VCUnet Security Policy, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

### **Automatic E-mail Redirection**

The University will not permit e-mail sent to an @vcu.edu address to be automatically redirected to a non-university e-mail account. Exceptions to this requirement may be authorized for valid academic purposes when requested by the dean of the student's school and approved by the Chief Information Officer. Once e-mail has been delivered to the @vcu.edu account, users may forward messages to outside accounts. The University highly discourages this as a routine practice because it cannot guarantee delivery of mail to systems outside of the vcu.edu domain.

E-mail lost or not delivered because of redirection or forwarding does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to his or her official e-mail address. The University is not responsible for and will not investigate problems with e-mail delivery to outside redirected or forwarded accounts.

### **Privacy of E-mail**

Virginia Commonwealth University uses various methods to protect the security of its computer and network resources and of its users' accounts. Users should be aware that any electronic communications and data utilizing University-owned computer and network resources potentially may be disclosed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and other University, state and federal laws and regulations or for appropriate university business needs.

*This article was updated: 02/25/2010*