

Temporary Electronic Communications Records Retention Policy

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities in accessing these policies are available upon request by emailing accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu

Purpose and Scope

This policy controls the retention of temporary electronic records that may exist on employer issued or employee-owned cellular phones including but not limited to: SMS¹, MMS², text messages, iMessage, Google Chat, Messenger, voice to text messages, voicemail, and other direct messaging methods and platforms. This policy applies to all employees regardless of whether their devices are owned and issued by the University, covered by the University Mobile Wireless Communication Stipend Policy (Stipend Policy) or are personal wireless communication devices. This policy applies if a device has been used for the purposes of conducting University business, regardless of frequency.

Policy Statement

The effective and efficient operation of a modern university demands that employees at various levels engage in ongoing, real-time communications. The tools used just a decade ago are no longer sufficient for the proper handling of myriad operational issues. As a result, University executives, managers, faculty, and staff—including student-employees—often utilize electronic messaging tools and platforms that either did not exist or were not widely used just 10-12 years ago. These communication services and methods include, but are not limited to, SMS, MMS, text messages, iMessage, Google Chat, Messenger, voice to text messages, voicemail, and other direct messaging methods and platforms.

¹ SMS – Short Message Service

² MMS – Multimedia Messaging Service

These kinds of short electronic messages between and among University employees are not for the general purpose of conducting official University business, however. Due to their limitations and concerns related to security of the information being transmitted, these methodologies and platforms also are not for the purposes of developing or implementing University policy.

Therefore, faculty and staff are to utilize these methodologies and platforms for messages that are transitory³ and pre-deliberative in nature and for the purposes of arranging appropriate discussions, meetings, or other methods of policy development (i.e. emails, zoom or in-person meeting, and/or telephone calls). Official University business, when communicated electronically, is best conducted via email for record retention purposes.

Given the transitory nature of the above referenced messages, all faculty and staff covered by this policy are directed to regularly and routinely⁴ delete all University-related messages (i.e. messages between and among colleagues, to students, student groups, and outside entities) from their University owned, and/or personal cellular devices.

Information that may need to be retained for the purposes of University business or for establishing policy and/or policy direction should not be communicated through the above referenced messaging modalities. In those instances, faculty and staff are directed to utilize University email or arrange a meeting or telephone call with the appropriate individuals.

If, however, one of the foregoing methodologies intended for temporary/transitory communication has been used for official University

³ Transitory in this case means messages that have little or no documentary or evidential value and that need not to be set aside for future use; have short term administrative, legal, or fiscal value and should be disposed of once that administrative, legal or fiscal use has expired; or are only useful for a short period of time, perhaps to ensure that a task is completed or to help prepare a final product.

⁴ Regularly and routinely could constitute daily but no less frequently than once per work week.

business, such communications shall be preserved according to the general policy for University retention of that category of records.

Responsible University Official/Offices


Senior Associate Vice President and CHRO

Offices of Human Resources and Employee & Labor Relations

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