

GCSOM Electronic Communications Policy



Policy Number: 600.1009.100

Policy Revision Date: 2020-05-28

Policy Category: Information Technology

Policy Owner: Information Technology

Policy Audience: Students, faculty, staff

1. Definitions :

GLB: Gramm-Leach Bliley [Act]

CALEA: Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

HITECH: Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act

2. Leadership Council Review:

May 28, 2020

3. Introduction / Purpose:

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM) encourages the use of electronic communications to share information and knowledge in support of the organization's mission of education, research and public service and to conduct the College's business. To this end, the College supports and provides interactive electronic communications services and facilities for telecommunications, mail, publishing, and broadcasting.

This policy is intended to work in conjunction with other relevant policies such as Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources, Electronic Resources Security, and others, to provide a safe and appropriate environment in which to conduct the business of the College.

4. Governance and Enforcement:

Information Technology

5. Policy:

Official Electronic Communications

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM) provides email accounts and portal access for all faculty, staff, students, and other members of the College community. GCSOM email accounts represent the only official email address to which College communications will be directed.

The College also maintains a portal, a website, and voicemail, which are also considered official means of electronic communication.

Members of the GCSOM community are required to check these points of electronic communication regularly in order to remain aware of important communications from the College.

GCSOM provides students with an email account prior to the student's matriculation to the institution. This account is free of charge and is active as long as the student remains active. Email is one of the primary modes of communication between students and the College. The information distributed via email varies from informational to critical.

Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their College assigned email account. Although students have the ability to forward their College email account to an alternative account (i.e., Google mail, Yahoo, Earthlink, etc.), GCSOM is not responsible for either the delivery or completeness of messages in this instance.

Redirection of Electronic Communications

Should individuals choose to redirect communications to a different address (eg: email auto-forwarding), GCSOM will not be responsible for the delivery, completeness, or the timeliness of such messages.

Security of Electronic Communications

Individuals are required to use care in directing electronic communications such that they reach only intended recipients and such that incoming electronic communication is accurately directed to them.

Where appropriate, electronic communications containing restricted data as defined by policy or by regulation, should be protected during transit across communications networks (see Electronic Resources Security Policy)

Backup, Retention, and Disposition

GCSOM maintains periodic backups of non-voice electronic communication files as a routine part of its operations to support system integrity and recovery. Those backups

are not intended as a permanent archive or to support the recovery of accidentally deleted files.

It should be further noted that backups are periodic and may not contain messages which were received, read/heard, and then deleted in between backup cycles.

GCSOM executes periodic automated archiving of its electronic communications systems in order to manage storage and maintain performance. Access to archived electronic communications may require additional steps or use of an alternate tool.

Users of the GCSOM electronic communications systems have the ability to delete electronic communications at their own discretion. Users should do so in accordance with any applicable record retention and or regulatory requirements.

Emergency Communications

In the event of an emergency, GCSOM will utilize any communication vehicles available in order to inform the impacted users. This will include official electronic communication vehicles such as email, the GCSOM portal, and telephone.

GCSOM has an emergency notification system which can be utilized in emergent situations. In addition to information on file in our Human Resources and Student systems, students, faculty, and staff are able to provide additional emergency contact phone numbers and email addresses via the GCSOM portal.

Privacy Guidelines

See GCSOM Electronic Resources Security policy.

This policy is overseen by the CIO or designee, who will review this policy annually to ensure that GCSOM is in compliance with internal and external requirements.

Outside entities that have shaped the terms of this policy include agencies, accrediting bodies, and state and federal regulations such as HIPAA, FERPA, CALEA, GLB and HITECH.

Violations of the Electronic Communications policy can result in informal or formal warnings, the loss of electronic resources privileges, and corrective actions up to and including termination.

In some cases, the nature of the violation may require notification of authorities and agencies beyond GCSOM (eg: felonies, harassment, etc).

6. Key Stakeholders:

Students, faculty, staff