

EMAIL BEST PRACTICES AT HSU

As a member of the HSU community, you are provided with a Google Apps for Education account to help you communicate and collaborate with others in support of your work at the University. This short document provides basic information about this account, some recommendations for getting the most out of it, and how to avoid potential pitfalls.

Privacy and Access

This is a State-issued account, which means that it has some key differences from a personal email account. Because your HSU mail account is sponsored by a government agency, any mail that you send and receive (as well as any saved chat logs and calendar events) is subject to disclosure under certain circumstances:

- Under the Public Records Act, members of the public can request access to emails and other correspondence
- In the event of a possible lawsuit, you and the University may be asked to hold all the email in your account and to turn over specific search matches to the legal teams involved.
- Warrants, HR investigations, IT security investigations, and subpoenas can also result in access to your university email account by others.

Emails sent from your campus account to an off-campus address are no longer under the control of the campus. Such email may be forwarded again or retained indefinitely by the recipient and should not be considered protected in any way.

Personal Accounts

We strongly recommend that you establish and maintain a personal email account to use for non-work conversations and activities such as banking, online shopping, etc. This ensures that, if your campus account needs to be accessed by others for any of the above reasons, your personal communications stay private.

Departmental Accounts

Another good practice is to make sure you use a generically named email account as the published contact address for your department. That way, if you retire or move on, there isn't a question of who can access that email address for business continuity purposes.

Calendars

The Google Apps suite includes a calendaring function that's useful for collaborative activities. For students and faculty, ITS provides a tool to add all scheduled courses into their Google Calendar as part of the myHumboldt portal. If you are concerned about the privacy of your calendar, consider sharing only your [free/busy](#) time, or changing the privacy level for specific [events](#).

Retention and Disposition of Institutional Records in Email

Some emails may qualify as institutional records. You should make a habit of regularly reviewing your email and moving records you need to retain from your mailbox to a campus file share. Examples of institutional records are:

- Final reports
- Contracts
- Meeting minutes
- Memoranda
- Decision papers

Drafts and discussions leading up to final versions are typically not considered records; the records custodian and Data Owner in your area will be developing more specific guidance. A detailed decision matrix is available at https://www.umsystem.edu/media/fa/management/records/record_flowchart.pdf

Keeping accounts after leaving campus

Alumni and employees retiring from campus can retain their HSU email accounts as long as they keep them active (log in once a year and change the password when requested to do so). Bear in mind that the campus may need to change the email domain associated with those accounts in the future, which could mean abc123@humboldt.edu is migrated to abc123@alumni.humboldt.edu, abc123@emeritus.humboldt.edu, or something else along those lines at some point.