



University of Essex



IT Acceptable Use Policy

2026 - 2027

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Table of Contents

IT Acceptable Use Policy	1
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Introduction	1
Scope and definitions	1
Responsibilities	1
Unacceptable use	1
Access to other networks via the University of Essex network	2
Infringement	3

IT Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out how the IT facilities provided by the University of Essex should be used by staff and students and other authorised users such as affiliated organisations and tenants of the University.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone using IT facilities is aware of their responsibilities and uses these facilities safely and equitably. You must follow all applicable law; ignorance of the law is not an adequate defence for unlawful conduct.

The use of the network is monitored for performance, and for the detection and prevention of misuse.

Scope and definitions

This policy applies to all individuals who use the University of Essex IT facilities, including staff, students, contractors, members of organisations linked with the University and tenants. Compliance with this policy and the related policies and procedures listed in this policy, and also included in the Annex, is mandatory. Any breach of this policy and any related policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

The issues covered by this policy are complex and you are strongly urged to read the accompanying explanatory notes (.pdf). This gives more detailed information that we hope you will find useful.

Responsibilities

All staff, students and other users must only use IT facilities and resources for the furtherance of the mission of the University of Essex or for other reasonable purposes provided for within this and other relevant policies.

Unacceptable use

There are a number of activities that would be considered unacceptable use, the list below is representative but not exhaustive of activities that would contravene this policy:

- creation or transmission, or causing the transmission, of any images, data or other material that would be legally obscene or indecent. If this is within the law and/or for research purposes, permission must be sought from the Chief Information Officer
- creation or transmission of material with the intent to harass
- creation or transmission of material with the intent to defraud

- creation or transmission of material that would violate common law on grounds of confidentiality or privacy
- creation or transmission of defamatory material
- creation or transmission of material such that this infringes the copyright of another person
- creation or transmission of unsolicited bulk or marketing material to users of networked facilities or services, save where that material is embedded within, or is otherwise part of, a service to which the user or their User Organisation has chosen to subscribe
- deliberate unauthorised access to networked facilities or services
- any deliberate or persistent breach of industry good practice that is likely to damage the reputation of the University of Essex
- deliberate or reckless activities having, with reasonable likelihood, any of the following characteristics:
 - corrupting or destroying other users' data
 - violating the privacy of other users
 - disrupting the work of other users
 - denying service to other users (for example, by overloading of access links or switching equipment on the network, or of services or end systems on another organisation's network)
 - continuing to use an item of software or hardware after you have been asked by Digital Innovation and Technology Services to cease
- other misuse of the network and technology, such as the introduction of viruses, malware, ransomware or other harmful software on the University of Essex or other organisation's network
- any other use of the University of Essex's network, equipment and/or technology that would contravene the laws of England and Wales.

Access to other networks via the University of Essex network

Where the network is being used to access another network, any deliberate or persistent breach of the acceptable use policy of that network will be regarded as unacceptable use of the University of Essex network.

Infringement

Infringing these regulations may result in sanctions under the University's disciplinary processes. Penalties may include the withdrawal of services.

If you are not a member of the University, the matter will be raised with the person or organisation that requested access to University IT facilities for you.

Information about infringement may be passed to appropriate law enforcement agencies and any other organisations whose regulations you have or may have broken.

Related Policies and Procedures

- [Information Security Policy \(.pdf\)](#)
- [Harassment and Bullying: Our Zero Tolerance Approach - Information for employees, workers, contractors, students, invitees and visitors \(.pdf\)](#)

Document Control Panel

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