

INTERIM POLICY

Effective Date: December 2, 2002

Adopted: December 2, 2002 as interim

Authority: [RCW 28B.35.120\(12\)](#); [WAC 292-110-010](#)

THIS INTERIM POLICY REVISES, MERGES, AND REPLACES: Interim POL 8300 Personal Use Of University Facilities and Equipment By University Employees, President's Council 12/6/99; POL 300-15 Electronic Messaging, President's Council 5/28/02.

POL- U5400.05

USING UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

This interim policy applies to all Western Washington University faculty and staff including student employees.

Definitions:

- **University Resources:** University resources include University-owned equipment and facilities.
- **Organizational effectiveness:** Organizational effectiveness relates to the University's mission and encompasses activities that enhance or augment the agency's ability to perform its mission.
- **Personal Use:** Personal use may include use for personal benefit or for the benefit or gain of other individuals or outside organizations.

1. University Resources Are Used To Support Academic and Administrative Functions

2. Employees May Always Use University Resources To Conduct Official Duties

3. Employees Are Responsible For Their Own Actions

Responsibility and accountability for the appropriate use of University resources ultimately rests with the individual University employee, or with the University employee who authorizes the use of the University resources.

4. Employees Are Permitted To Make Occasional Limited Personal Use

Occasional limited use of University resources by faculty and staff, **including e-mail and the Internet**, is permitted for other than official state job purposes only if all of the following criteria are met:

- a) There is little or no cost to the state;

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- b) The use is brief in duration, occurs infrequently, and is the most effective use of time and resources;
- c) The use does not interfere with the performance of the employee's official duties;
- d) The use does not disrupt or distract from the conduct of University business due to volume or frequency;
- e) The use does not disrupt other University or other state employees and does not obligate them to make a personal use of state resources;
- f) The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property or software; and,
- g) The use is not a prohibited use as set forth below in Section 6: *Employees Are Prohibited From Using University Resources For Certain Activities.*

5. **Employees May Make Personal Use Of University Resources That Promote Organizational Effectiveness Or Enhance Job-Related Skills**

- a) Employees must seek and obtain written approval from their immediate supervisor before using University resources.
- b) A supervisor may authorize a personal use of equipment or facilities that promotes organizational effectiveness or enhances the job-related skills of a state officer or state employee. Authorization can only be provided for one specific purpose. For example, a supervisor could approve the use of University word processors by an employee to type his or her own student thesis outside normal work hours, if the course of study is reasonably related to the employee's position.
- c) The appropriate supervisor must make a determination as to whether a proposed limited use of equipment is permitted, document the basis for the decision, and maintain records for the unit.

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6. Employees Are Prohibited From Using University Resources For Certain Activities

The state Constitution, state and federal laws, and the Ethics in Public Service Act strictly prohibit certain private activity and certain uses of state resources. Any use of state resources to support such activity clearly undermines public confidence in state government and reflects negatively on state employees generally. This rule explicitly prohibits at all times the following private uses of state resources:

- a) **Outside business.** Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business or private employment.
- b) **Soliciting.** Any use for the purpose of supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, including, but not limited to, a private business, a nonprofit organization, or a political party.
Exception: Supporting an outside group is allowed if provided for by law or authorized by the President of the University or President's designee. Examples include:
 - **Conducting the Combined Fund Drive as authorized by law and approved by the President or designee; or**
 - **Organizing a campus blood drive for the Puget Sound Blood Center, when approved by the President or designee.**
- c) **Campaigning.** Any use for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. Such use of state resources is specifically prohibited by RCW [42.52.180](#), subject to the exceptions in RCW [42.52.180\(2\)](#).
- d) **Lobbying.** Any use for the purpose of participating in or assisting in an effort to lobby the state legislature, or a state agency head. Such a use of state resources is specifically prohibited by RCW [42.17.190](#), subject to the exceptions in RCW [42.17.190\(3\)](#).

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- e) **Prohibited by law.** Any use related to conduct that is prohibited by a federal or state law or rule or a state agency policy including, but not limited to:
- **Illegal discrimination.** Transmission of sexually or racially explicit messages sent to harass or intimidate.
 - **Illegal pornography.** Transmission of illegally obscene materials.
 - **Copyright infringement.** Transmission of copyrighted material without the necessary permissions or payment.
 - **Chain letters.** Dissemination of chain letters or petitions.
- f) **Conversion for private use.** Any private use of any state property that has been removed from state facilities or other official duty stations, even if there is no cost to the state.
- g) **Modification of University cell phones.** A cell phone issued to an employee for official business purposes may not be modified to establish a personal line, or add calling plans or features for personal use, even if the additional expense will be paid for by the employee or if there is little or no cost to the University.

7. Employees Shall Have No Expectation Of Privacy In Use Of University Resources

Electronic mail, facsimile transmissions, and voice mail are technologies that may create an electronic record. This is what separates these from other forms of communication such as a telephone conversation. An electronic record can be reproduced and, therefore, may be subject to disclosure under the public records disclosure law. Further, electronic records may be disclosed for audit or legitimate state operational or management purposes. Requests for disclosure of e-mail follow the same procedures as disclosure of printed records.

8. Employees Who Receive Unsolicited Messages Are Not In Violation Of This Policy

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This policy does not apply to unsolicited messages that may be received via the University's electronic messaging systems. Messages received that would violate Section 6 (*Employees Are Prohibited From Using University Resources For Certain Activities*) should be promptly deleted.

9. Employees Shall Not Use University Resources In Outside Work

University facilities and equipment are not to be used in outside work.

Examples. Examples of where aspects of outside work might create a conflict with this policy:

- University offices or laboratories may not be used as a place of business for an employee's outside enterprise. University telephone numbers and addresses (including e-mail and/or Internet/World Wide Web addresses) may not be used or listed regarding an employee's outside business.
- University affiliations and titles may not be used in advertising related to an employee's outside business.
- University paper and other office supplies may not be used by an employee in the conduct of an outside business.
- University-owned computing resources and laboratory equipment may not be used by an employee for the conduct of an outside business.

10. University Adopts The Executive Ethics Board Rules

It is the University's policy to permit minimal personal use in parallel with the rules adopted by the state Executive Ethics Board, as they exist now or may be amended. In the event those rules are more restrictive than the University's, the Executive Ethics Board rules apply.