

**1. Purpose**

This Policy governs the retention of electronic mail (“e-mail”) and is intended to provide guidance on the need for retention of e-mails sent and received by Southeastern Illinois College (“SIC”) employees.

Southeastern Illinois College is committed to effective records retention to comply with all legal requirements, local, state and federal, for the retention or storage of electronic mail or instant messaging technologies.

**2. Scope**

This Policy covers all SIC personnel, vendors or contracted personnel that utilize SIC’s e-mail system. This Policy is secondary to SIC’s compliance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the Illinois Local Records Act.

The following email retention periods have been established:

- Academic per FIRM guidelines: unless paper record exists, grade related materials are kept indefinitely.
- All other electronic email and messaging communications without legal holds: 18 months.

**3. Reference**

SIC is subject to record retention requirements imposed by federal, state and local regulations. Retention periods may change by regulation, order or specific events. Any record that is the subject of litigation or pertaining to a claim, audit, administrative charge or investigation should be retained until final resolution of the action or unless otherwise noted.

**4. Types of E-mail Messages**

A. For retention purposes e-mail messages generally fall into the following two categories:

1. E-mail of intended or transitory value: For example, a message seeking dates for a meeting has little or no value after the meeting. Retaining such messages serves no purpose and takes up space. Messages of limited or transitory value may be deleted when they no longer serve an administrative purpose.
2. E-mail containing information having lasting value: For example, e-mail about interpretations of an agency’s policies or regulations may be the only record of that subject matter. Such records should be transferred to another

medium and appropriately filed, thus permitting e-mail records to be purged.

**B. Special Considerations**

**1. Instant Message Correspondence**

SIC instant message correspondence may be saved with the logging function of the software, or copied into a file and saved, and this fact should be made known to participants in instant message conversations.

**2. Encrypted Communications**

SIC encrypted communications should be sent/stored in a manner consistent with SIC's Acceptable Use Policy, but in general, sensitive information should be stored in a password protected or encrypted format.

**3. Recovering Deleted Email via Backup Media**

Deleted email may be recovered from archived backups. Email may not be deleted or destroyed from backups inconsistent with the retention period of this policy.

**5. Procedures for Compliance with the Records Retention Requirements**

While the methods for reviewing, storing or deleting e-mail may vary, compliance with the retention requirements of this policy, the Local Records Act and/or federal, state and local regulations may be accomplished by doing one of the following:

5.1. Retention of Hard Copy. Print the e-mail and store the hard copy in the relevant subject matter file as would be done with any other hard-copy communication.

5.2. Electronic Storage of E-mail. Electronically store the e-mail in a file, so that it may be maintained and stored to meet retention guidelines and policy.

**6. Enforcement**

Failure to comply with the E-mail Retention Policy and any associated guidelines and procedures may result in disciplinary action and penalties applicable by law.

Adopted: September 23, 2014

Amended: January 17, 2017/ September 17, 2019 / August 20, 2024

Legal Ref:

Cross Ref: