Should I Forward Email Outside MountaineerMail

While it is possible to forward email from your MountaineerApps account to another external account, ITS strongly recommends against this practice unless there is a special need. Before considering this change, employees should check with their Department Head or Supervisor to determine if the unit observes specific requirements related to email use.

If there is a special need to forward your email, then it is important to be aware of additional responsibilities that exist by making this change.

**Individual Responsibilities and Issues Related To Message Forwarding**

- **Potential For Less Privacy** - Our MountaineerApps platform is covered under a contract with Google that specifically precludes scanning the content of email messages for commercial purposes. If you use a non-Appalachian Google account or another personal message provider, then you will not be covered with these same protections and it is possible that data may be inspected.

- **Responsibility For Account Security** - For MountaineerApps email accounts, ITS provides attack detection services to help identify and respond to security issues related to accounts including account compromises. ITS, therefore, shares accountability for ensuring that security issues are addressed in a timely manner. In contrast, ITS is not able to provide the same detection services for non-Appalachian email accounts. For this reason, employees need to be aware that they are individually responsible for the security of their personal accounts.

- **FERPA Compliance** - The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1972 (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Our use of MountaineerApps is covered by contractual agreements with Google that allow us to address compliance with FERPA requirements. However, when messages are forwarded to a non-Appalachian email provider, the account is not covered by these same protections. This means that there is a risk of violating federal law should employees forward email messages that contain student education records or information (e.g., grades/transcripts, advising records, personally identifiable information, student schedules, exams, papers, theses, etc.) to an email provider that does not legally acknowledge FERPA obligations. If an employee believes that they may be exchanging this type of material via email, they should not forward their email.

- **Public Records Act Requests** - All Appalachian State University employees are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Act (NCGS Chapter 132). This act provides a method for third parties to request records associated with the public business of all state agencies, including Appalachian. If University emails are forwarded to a non-Appalachian account that also includes personal information and email, then that account will be subject to such a request as the account will be viewed as being used to facilitate official University business. This could mean that the employee would be required to present all of the information from this non-Appalachian account to the University for inspection and possible disclosure should the University be legally compelled to produce materials.

- **Appalachian Policies + Applicability To Private Accounts** - Appalachian employees must follow University policies when conducting University business irrespective of whether the resources used are managed/owned by the University or not. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that if an employee forwards their Appalachian email to another account, then the use of this non-Appalachian account becomes subject to University policies and standards. This may not be desirable for personal accounts that are used for a variety of non-work activities.

**Benefits of Not Forwarding Your Email**

In addition to some of the issues listed above, there are many positive benefits to only using MountaineerMail for University Business.

- **Easily Separate Your Personal/Work Data** - By using MountaineerApps Mail, you can easily keep your personal email and work email separate - for example, if an employee wanted to share a document with someone, they could give your appstate.edu address instead of your personal Gmail address. Employees can avoid co-mingling activities from campus with personal interests such as political or religious activities that would be prohibited with campus resources.

- **Email Backups** - Appstate.edu email is backed up in Google Vault. If an employee has a problem and needs to have an email restored, ITS can assist if the email is in an @appstate.edu account.

- **Improved Collaboration** - By using MountaineerApps mail, employees are using the same platform and Google Apps domain as that of their colleagues and students. Sharing documents with students or colleagues is much easier to do from within the same domain. Co-workers can even work on a file at the same time within Google Docs and chat with each other in the file to make decisions together about what to include?

If you have questions about any of these items, please don’t hesitate to IT Support.

**Note:** Please make sure that you have read the items above before reviewing the instructions below.

See these instructions on how to move content from a personal Google Account back to MountaineerApps!

If you still feel that forwarding your Appalachian email to a personal account is the best route for you, see Google's procedure for forwarding mail to another email account automatically.

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