

Policies on Computer Use and Internet Access

Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Resources

The College provides technology resources for use by students, faculty, staff, and the general public. This technology includes but is not limited to, all College computing equipment, software, systems, networks, electronic mail, website, and Internet access. These resources are the property of the College and are provided to the campus community to support the College's mission and institutional goals. The College reserves the rights to grant, restrict, or deny privileges and access to technology resources.

Use of the technology resources must be consistent with the stated mission, goals, policies, procedures, and priorities of the College. Use of College resources is a privilege and requires that users agree to abide by all relevant College policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Users are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner at all times.

Any use of College technology resources for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities, is prohibited. Respect for intellectual property or copyright, ownership of data, security measures, and personal rights and privacy must always be demonstrated.

It should be clear that all personal use of computers to access pornographic websites will result in appropriate disciplinary action and may result in civil and criminal penalties for users. Personal use of computers for business purposes is prohibited and may constitute violation of the Alabama Ethics law. It is illegal to download music through the College computer network system. Employees who are found to be illegally downloading music will be subject to federal and state laws pertaining to such acts.

Email Monitoring

GSCC may monitor all information stored, transmitted, received, or contained in the College email systems. Workplace files, Internet use, and email may be monitored by the College. Information flowing through or stored on computers within the network is not considered confidential and is subject to monitoring by network administrators.

Personal Blogs and Websites

This policy is also applicable to content that you publish on the Internet (e.g. your contributions to blogs, message boards and social networking or content-sharing sites) even if created, updated, modified or contributed to outside of working hours or when using personal IT systems.

When you post content to the Internet that identifies you as an employee of the College and discusses your work, the College, or employees of the College, it is expected that you will conduct yourself appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with the policies of the College and the Alabama Community College System.

If you already have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that you work for the College, or you intend to create a personal blog or website that will identify you as an employee of the College, you should report this to your immediate supervisor. Any blog or posting that clearly identifies that you work for the College in which you express any idea or opinion should also include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed are personal and do not represent the views or opinions of the College. Online publications which do not identify the author as an employee of the College and does not mention the College and are purely concerned with personal matters will normally fall outside the scope of this policy.

Violation of College and Alabama Community College System policies on Internet sites is subject to investigation and sanctions within this policy and other applicable policies.

Computer Hardware/Software

Any personally-owned computing property or peripheral equipment (including wireless devices) brought to the College cannot be connected to the College network without the approval of the employee's Supervisor and Computer Services. Personally-owned software cannot be loaded onto a College-owned computer unless it is directly related to the job position and is approved by the Supervisor. If any approved personally-owned computer software is loaded onto a College-owned computer, the license and documents must remain with the College computer on campus in the event of an audit. Computer software may be audited by Computer Service and others.

Security and Privacy

Immediately report any suspected breach in the security of the network to appropriate College personnel (e.g. an instructor, lab assistant, or system administrator). Users of campus networks are responsible for safeguarding their user IDs and passwords and for all activity generated from their accounts. Users are expected to comply with system administrator requests for information about computing and IT activities.

The College complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of educational records without student permission. The College takes reasonable measures to protect the security and privacy of its computing resources and accounts assigned to individuals but cannot guarantee security and privacy. The College is a public institution and subject to the Alabama Open Records Act. Communications and other documents created by means of College technology resources may be released to appropriate authorities, and all information stored electronically may be made available in administrative or judicial proceedings.

Users should be aware that privacy and security cannot be guaranteed in any networked environment. The College reserves the right to monitor network traffic generally and individual traffic if necessary.

The President or his/her designee may authorize access to employee or student e-mail or computer files if it is believed necessary to prevent or correct improper use, satisfy a legal obligation, or ensure proper operation of the electronic resources.

College Website Disclaimer

The College makes no guarantees that the services of the website will be error-free or uninterrupted or that it will meet the needs of the user. The College cannot be responsible for loss of service or data due to events such as computer failure, loss of power, or security violations. By using the website, the user agrees to abide by all College policies and by state and federal laws. The information offered represents the offerings and requirements of the current catalog, but the right is reserved to make necessary changes in course offerings, curricula, and academic policies. The material obtained from the College website is not intended to create a contract between the user and the College.

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation of democracy. Freedom of expression includes both freedom of speech and the right to receive information. The College will not deny access to a medium that provides free speech as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of another person or violate any state or federal laws or any policies of the College.

The College website provides links to sites of interest and use on the Internet. The College makes no warranties about the accuracy or currency of any information on its website(s) that may be accessed from its services. The College bears no responsibility for material accessed through news groups, chat rooms, bulletin boards, or other web resources not sponsored by the College. All liability is disclaimed for data, information, or opinions expressed through these mediums.