Official Communications with Residents and Fellows
IUSM-GME-PO-00017

Scope

This policy applies to all Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) Graduate Medical Education (GME) resident and fellow physicians.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define procedures and regulations related to methods of communication and to conduct official business including email, MedHub (system-wide GME database), and U.S Postal Service.

Policy Statement

Introduction
Each resident is issued a University network ID and email account for use throughout the time the resident is in training at IUSM. The domain for residents’ emails is iu.edu or iupui.edu. Official IUSM communications will be sent to residents’ official university email addresses. If a resident chooses to forward his/her mail to another email address,
the resident’s campus email address will remain the destination for official university and school correspondence.

Email shall be considered an appropriate mechanism for official communication by IUSM unless otherwise prohibited by law. IUSM reserves the right to send official communications to residents by email with the full expectation that residents and fellows will receive email and read these emails daily on work days.

Daily and weekly communications of interest to the residents are also posted on the MedHub home page.

**Responsibilities**
Resident responsibilities are expected to check their email, as well as MedHub, on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with School-related communications. The expected minimum standard is to check IUSM emails at least once each working day. Residents must ensure that there is sufficient space in their accounts to allow for email to be delivered. Residents have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. Residents will not be held responsible for an interruption in their ability to access a message if system malfunctions or other system-related problems prevent timely delivery of, or access to, that message.

**Email Etiquette**
Residents are expected to follow appropriate email etiquette when communicating with faculty, staff, and peers. Users are subject to all university, campus, school and departmental policies concerning information technology, including without limitation policies on use and misuse of information technology resources. A selected list of applicable policies can be found online (Reference 1). Inappropriate use of email may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal.

**HIPAA Regulations**

Based on HIPAA regulations, the Office of Compliance Services on behalf of the School of Medicine requires that Protected Health Information (PHI) not be sent via email. Residents are instructed to consult with their department’s privacy officer and review their departmental policies before sending any PHI via email. (Reference 2)

**Passwords**

Residents may not share with or transfer to others their university accounts including network IDs, passwords, or other access codes that allow them to gain access to university information technology resources.

**Technology Resources**

Indiana University technology resources may not be used in a manner that violates the law, for private commercial activities that are not approved by the university, for personal private gain, or for political campaigning and similar activities that are inconsistent with the university’s tax-exempt status.

**Incidental Personal Use**
Incidental personal use is an accepted and appropriate benefit of being associated with Indiana University’s rich technology environment. Appropriate incidental personal use of technology resources does not result in any measurable cost to the university, and benefits the university by allowing personnel to avoid needless inconvenience. Incidental personal use must adhere to all applicable university policies. Under no circumstances may incidental personal use involve violations of the law, interfere with the fulfillment of an employee’s university responsibilities, or adversely impact or conflict with activities supporting the mission of the university.

**Forwarding of Email**
Residents who choose to have their email forwarded to a private (unofficial) email address outside the official university network address, do so at their own risk. Neither the University or School is responsible for any difficulties that may occur in the proper or timely transmission or access of email forwarded to any unofficial email address, and any such problems will not absolve residents and fellows of their responsibility to know and comply with the content of official communications sent to residents’ and fellows’ official University email addresses.

**Course-Related Use of Email**
Faculty may assume that a resident’s official university email is a valid mechanism for communicating with that resident or fellow, although faculty should exercise caution about including sensitive data in an email. This policy will ensure that all residents and fellows will be able to comply with program requirements communicated to them by email from faculty.

**Responding to an Unofficial Email Address**
IU employees need to be careful when responding in detail to a query sent from an unofficial email address since there is no assurance that the sender is, in fact, the resident or fellow. A recommended step is to provide generic replies only, or to require residents and fellows to provide their primary campus email address to receive a reply.

**Procedures**

**U. S. Postal Service**
IUSM communicates with residents through both the U.S. Postal Service and the individual’s official university email account as discussed above. Therefore, it is important for residents and fellows to update their information as soon as they have any changes in their mailing address.

**Change in Address**
Residents must log into One.iu and select the Employee Center to update the address, phone number, etc. Residents must also update MedHub.

**Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (IPLA)**
The Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (IPLA) should also be notified of any change in the home address. Updates to the address and phone number can be made on the
medical license as part of the on-line renewal process. If changes need to be made after an individual has renewed their license, an email or fax should be sent to IPLA. Email: pla3@pla.IN.gov; Fax: 317-233-4236.

Definitions

A resident is an IUSM resident or fellow, or a non-IUSM resident or fellow electively rotating through IUSM and provides clinical care as part of a GME program.

Implementation

The Designated Institutional Official (DIO) for GME is responsible for implementation of this policy.

Oversight

Policy authority for this document resides with the Graduate Medical Education Committee. The DIO and the Graduate Medical Education Committee are responsible for oversight. This policy will be reviewed every three years or more often if deemed necessary.

Related Information

The IU web site for Public Safety and Institutional Assurance can be found at: https://uaa.iu.edu/safety/index.shtml

The HIPAA regulations can be found at: http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/

History

1. Policy IUSM-GME-PO-0017 approved by GMEC and published on 12 December 2012.
2. Policy reviewed, updated, and approved by GMEC on 14 September 2016.