



**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England

*This Policy sets out the responsibilities and required behaviours of all users of IT facilities provided by UWE Bristol*

# Acceptable Use Policy

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## Document Control

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain the responsibilities staff, students and authorised third parties have in relation to their use of all electronic communications facilities, equipment and services provided by UWE Bristol.

It forms part of the Information Security Policy Toolkit and underpins the overarching Information Security Policy. This policy provides everyone with guidance, so they have clear understanding of the requirements that UWE Bristol places on them, and the standards of behaviour expected.

## 2. Scope

The policy applies to all students and staff of UWE Bristol and all other third-party users authorised by the University or any department thereof. It relates to the use of all electronic communications facilities owned, leased, hired or otherwise provided by UWE Bristol, connected directly or remotely to university infrastructure or used on university premises.

## 3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all students, staff and authorised third parties to ensure that their behaviour and activities when using UWE Bristol facilities is in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

## 4. Consequences of Policy Violation

Failure of an individual student or member of staff to comply with this policy may lead to the instigation of disciplinary procedures and, in certain circumstances, legal action may be taken. Failure of a contractor to comply may lead to the immediate cancellation of a contract. Where appropriate, breaches of the law will be reported to the authorities.

## 5. User Accounts

Those authorised to use UWE Bristol IT facilities are assigned an account for their individual use, under the following conditions:

- a. This account may not be used by anyone other than the individual to whom it has been issued
- b. The assigned account password must be changed immediately and not divulged to anyone, including ITS staff or friends and family members, for any reason
- c. For security reasons, this password must not be used as the password for any other account
- d. Individuals must remember their password and change it if there is any suspicion that it may have been compromised
- e. UWE Bristol reserves the right to change an account password at any given point in time if there is evidence to suggest that the account in question has been compromised
- f. Some users may also be given authorisation to use one or more generic (role based) email addresses
- g. Individual email addresses are for the sole use of the assignee, but remain UWE Bristol assets and their use is subject to university policies

## 6. Equipment

The following statements define restrictions around use of personal and UWE Bristol provided equipment when using University networks or information.

- a. Equipment not provided and managed by ITS must not be connected to UWE Bristol internal networks (through network ports or staff only Wi-Fi) without the prior agreement of ITS
- b. Equipment on campus that is connected to the UWE Bristol network or otherwise managed by ITS may not be relocated without the prior agreement of ITS
- c. Staff and students are responsible for ensuring that all devices used in connection with university activity are password protected to safeguard any information held in the event of loss or theft
- d. Computers and other equipment used to access UWE Bristol facilities must be locked if left unattended while logged in.
- e. Computers and other equipment used to access UWE Bristol facilities must either have a university supported Windows or Mac build installed and must be used as a primary device for processing university data.
- f. Staff must ensure that they have up-to-date Anti-Virus software installed, the latest security updates have been applied and that there is a firewall always running on equipment connected to the UWE Bristol network, including equipment not owned by or supplied by the University
- g. Any device that is not compliant with the above criteria is liable to physical or logical disconnection from the network without notice
- h. Serious damage, theft or loss of electronic communications equipment should be reported to ITS.
- i. All university managed IT equipment must be returned to a responsible line manager, or equivalent member of staff, when either:
  - o A UWE member of staff leaves the organisation (IT equipment returns are just one activity associated with the existing 'Leaving the University' intranet guidance).
  - o Equipment is deemed to be end of life by IT Services.
  - o IT Services specifically request equipment to be returned.

## 7. Student Software Licences

UWE Bristol licences must be used within the terms of the vendor's licence agreements and:

- a. can be installed only on devices owned by a current UWE Bristol student or a device provided to an individual UWE Bristol student to facilitate their studies
- b. must not be used for other personal, business or commercial purposes
- c. must be used only by the UWE Bristol student
- d. must be removed when no longer a UWE Bristol student

## 8. Personal Use of UWE Facilities

UWE Bristol provides IT facilities, including email addresses and computers, for academic and administrative purposes related to work or study. Reasonable personal use is however permitted under the following conditions:

- a. it is used in a manner which does not obstruct the work of other students or staff, and which encourages a scholarly atmosphere to be maintained

- b. it does not breach or undermine any UWE Bristol policies or codes of conduct
- c. it is not excessive in its use of resources e.g. crypto currency related activities

Members of staff and students should use only their UWE-provided email account when conducting university business. UWE Bristol computing facilities must not be used for the storage of data unrelated to the business or functions of the University. In particular, these facilities should not be used to store or share copies of personal photographs, media or personal emails.

## 9. Use of Third-Party IT Services

Wherever possible, users should always use only IT services provided or endorsed by UWE Bristol for conducting university business. However, if a requirement arises that is not met by existing solutions, this must be discussed with the University's Information Security team in the first instance. An alternative solution may already be available, or it may, subject to regulatory and procedural requirements, be possible to make use of services provided by third parties. Further information is available in the Information Handling Policy.

## 10. Unacceptable Use of UWE Facilities

Whilst not exhaustive, the following activities are considered to be unacceptable uses of UWE Bristol facilities. These restrictions are consistent with the JANET acceptable use policy (by which the University is bound) and the law.

- a. Any illegal activity or activity which knowingly breaches any UWE Bristol policy
- b. Any attempt to knowingly gain unauthorised access to facilities or information
- c. Any attempt to knowingly undermine the security or integrity of UWE Bristol facilities (including any unauthorised penetration testing or vulnerability scanning of any university systems)
- d. Providing access to facilities or information to those who are not entitled to access
- e. Admin accounts are provided strictly for their approved purpose and must not be used to create local admin accounts or grant admin privileges to other users. All associated admin level activities must be in accordance with the corresponding access request form.
- f. Any irresponsible or reckless handling or unauthorised use or modification of UWE Bristol data (see the Information Handling Policy)
- g. Any use of UWE Bristol facilities to bully, harass, intimidate or otherwise cause alarm or distress to others
- h. Sending unsolicited and unauthorised bulk email (spam)
- i. Creating, storing or transmitting any material which infringes copyright
- j. Creating, storing, accessing or transmitting defamatory or obscene material. (In the unlikely event that there is a genuine academic need to access obscene material, ITS must be made aware of this in advance and prior permission to access must be obtained from the Executive Dean)
- k. Using software beyond its licensed purposes or otherwise breaching software licensing agreements
- l. Using UWE Bristol facilities for commercial gain without the explicit authorisation of the appropriate authority, such as crypto mining related activities
- m. Failing to comply with a request from a member of ITS to desist from any activity which has been deemed by ITS to be detrimental to the operation of UWE Bristol facilities

- n. Knowingly failing to report any breach or suspected breach of information security to ITS (further information on incident reporting is available in the Information Security Policy)
- o. Failing to comply with a request from a member of ITS for you to change your password
- p. Unauthorised use of any software. This includes using key generators to bypass licensing of legitimate software. If you require software, it should always be acquired legally.
- q. Unauthorised use of personal, non-approved, VPN software. Use of such software may lead to precautionary, administrative, measures being taken, such as the resetting of password and MFA resets for associated accounts. Unless by exception, and prior ITS approval, all remote connectivity to university systems should be via either the use of - Always On VPN (AOVPN) or iVanti Secure Access client.

## 11. Use of Generative AI (GenAI)

GenAI refers to AI that generates content based on user instructions. Large Language Models (LLMs), such as Copilot, create text and other outputs in response to written or spoken prompts. Though often used independently, GenAI is increasingly integrated into software to enhance functionality.

Specifically, this guidance applies to individuals using GenAI for UWE administrative tasks. As such, all individuals are individually responsible for ensuring their use of GenAI tools complies with university policies, including Information Security, Data Protection, and any other relevant governance frameworks and university policies deemed appropriate. Any misuse or failure to adhere to these policies may result in appropriate action being taken.

Wherever possible, individuals should always use the university's licensed GenAI tool – Copilot. At present, Copilot chat is available to all staff with an advanced version (Microsoft 365 Copilot) currently available to those on the pilot. Other licensed tools, such as ChatGPT, may be used but must adhere to data protection and cyber security standards and should be supported by appropriate assurance and governance activities.

Given the potential for significant legal and reputational risks associated with the use of GenAI tools, in all circumstances, individuals should always exercise caution and best judgement when using them.

Individuals must always ensure that none of the following are entered into GenAI tools:

- a) University credentials
- b) Personally Identifiable Information (PII), sensitive or confidential data (which includes university intellectual property (IP)).
- c) Queries that could cause harm or reputational damage to the university.

## 12. Compliance with Legislation

In addition to the above requirements, UWE Bristol has a statutory duty, under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, termed "PREVENT". The purpose of this duty is to aid the process of preventing people being drawn into terrorism. Individuals must also be aware of their responsibilities under the regulations listed below, and understand the fact that any infringement may result in action taken against them in accordance with university procedures:

- a. Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- b. Computer Misuse Act 1990
- c. Data Protection Act 1998
- d. Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- e. Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006
- f. UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018

### **13. Monitoring**

Monitoring of individual usage of UWE devices and services will not be undertaken as a matter of course. However, this may be necessary when concerns arise about the level or nature of personal use of the systems, or to support an investigation. Disciplinary action may also be considered appropriate in such circumstances. Further information is available in the Information Security Policy