

Official Student Email Policy: Use of Email for Official Correspondence with Students

1. Seminary use of email

Email is a mechanism for official communication within Hartford Seminary. The Seminary has the right to expect that such communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. Official email communications are intended only to meet the academic and administrative needs of the campus community. As steward of this process, the Registrar is responsible for directing the use of the official student email. See, *Guidelines for the Use of Official Student Email Addresses* for details.

2. Assignment of student email

Official Seminary email accounts are available for all enrolled students. The addresses are all of the form first-name.last-name@student.hartsem.edu. These accounts must be activated before the Seminary can correspond with its students using the official email accounts.

3. Redirecting of email

If a student wishes to have email redirected from their official @student.hartsem.edu address to another email address (e.g., @gmail.com, @hotmail.com, etc.), they may do so, but at their own risk. The Seminary will not be responsible for the handling of email by outside. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her @student.hartsem.edu email account.

4. Expectations about student use of email

Students are expected to check their email on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with Seminary-related communications. Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. "I didn't check my email", error in forwarding mail, or email returned to the Seminary with "Mailbox Full" or "User Unknown" are not acceptable excuses for missing official Seminary communications via email.

5. Privacy

Users should exercise extreme caution in using email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters, and should not assume that email is private and confidential. It is especially important that users are careful to send messages only to the intended recipient(s). Particular care should be taken when using the "reply" versus "reply all" command during email correspondence.

6. Educational uses of email

Faculty will determine how electronic forms of communication (e.g., email) will be used in their classes, and will specify their requirements in the course syllabus. This "Official Student Email Policy" will ensure that all students will be able to comply with email-based course requirements specified by faculty. Faculty can therefore make the assumption that students' official @students.hartsem.edu accounts are being accessed and faculty can use email for their classes accordingly.

7.) Active/Deactivated Student Email Accounts

All students enrolled in classes currently or within the past year will have a student email account. The email will be deactivated 3 months after graduation or if a student has not taken a course in the past 24 months.

Guidelines for the Use of Official Student Email Addresses

Appropriate use of email addresses is essential to the success of this mode for contacting students. On one hand, if the address is used to communicate too much information too often, particularly if the information is perceived to be unimportant, students will abandon the system. On the other hand, if sensitive, confidential information is communicated via email, student's privacy rights may be violated. This document is intended to help guide the appropriate usage of student email, in particular those messages sent **from** Seminary administrators, faculty and staff **to** students. Students may choose to use their email accounts more broadly than prescribed by these guidelines.

General guidelines

- Keep messages simple and direct.
- Use plain text in messages--do not include HTML or formatted content.
- Format messages so that lines wrap at 80 characters or less.
- When possible, send email messages only to the specific group of students for whom the message is pertinent.
- When a message is to be sent to many recipients, use an email program that will not list all the recipients in the message; alternatively, include all recipients' addresses as "Bcc:" instead of "To:"
- When a message is to be sent to more than 1,000 students, send separate mailings in groups of no more than 1,000 email addresses.
- A "From:" or "Reply-to:" name and email address of the sender is required.
- Encourage students to check their @students.hartsem.edu accounts regularly or to forward their account to an address that they will check regularly.
- Ensure that any non-directory information (see FERPA policy for definition of directory information) is sent only to the student.

Examples of appropriate uses

- Communicating commencement and convocation information
- Degree check information
- Notification concerning students' change of course schedules (drop/adds), general petitions, withdrawals, and residency
- Notification of cancellation of registration
- Student aid processing issues and deadlines
- Academic departmental information such as class changes, registration issues, new courses, job-opening lists, and events
- New student information about academic support services and academic policies
- Advising appointments
- Notices about student internships and workshops
- Payment deadlines and other Business Office information
- General Education Program information

Examples of inappropriate uses

- Information unrelated to Seminary business
- Solicitation
- Promoting political viewpoints
- Personal information
- Messages containing confidential information such as course grades, financial aid award amounts, or tuition/fee payment amounts
- Emails that violate the Official Email Policy

As steward of the official student email address, the Registrar is responsible for directing its use.