

**Personal Use of University Facilities, Computers,
and Equipment by University Employees**

1. Policy

University facilities, computers, and equipment are to be used to support its teaching, research, service, and administrative functions. University employees may not use state resources (including any person, money, or property) under their official control or direction or in their custody, for personal benefit or gain, or for the benefit or gain of any other individuals or outside organizations. This prohibition does not apply to the use of state resources that are reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties or the use of resources that promote organizational effectiveness or enhance job-related skills and do not interfere with the employee's performance of official state duties.

a. Examples of Allowed Use

Examples of uses consistent with the University's mission and reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties or promotion of organizational effectiveness or enhancement of job-related skills include but are not limited to the following:

- Communication with appropriate other University employees to convey greetings and announcements, and to build interpersonal rapport (e.g., birthday greetings, birth announcements, carpool solicitations, and social opportunities)

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- Announcement of and participation in social gatherings to acknowledge accomplishments of colleagues or celebrate holidays and events (e.g. retirement parties and holiday gatherings)
- Development of competency in the use of information technologies and computer resources
- Personal student classroom work done outside of normal work hours
- Occasional notices of charitable activities such as blood drives and special events
- Coordination of the Combined Fund Drive

b. Criteria for Limited Personal Use

Occasional limited personal use of University facilities, computers, and equipment, including email and internet access, is permitted only if all six of the following conditions are met (per WAC 292-110-010):

- There is little or no cost to the state
- Any use is brief in duration, occurs infrequently, and is the most effective use of time or resources
- The use does not interfere with the performance of the employee's official duties
- The use does not disrupt or distract from the conduct of state business due to volume or frequency
- The use does not disrupt other state employees and does not obligate them to make a personal use of state resources

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- The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information, or software

c. Examples of Limited Personal Use

Examples of permissible personal use of facilities, computers, and equipment include but are not limited to the following:

- Electronic communication with children and dependents
- Scheduling personal appointments
- Personal use of computers for listening to news and music at employee's workstation so long as it does not interfere with computer access for official use and as authorized by a supervisor
- Use of games, during breaks, that an employee does not personally install on a University computer

2. Responsibility for Policy

University employees may make independent assessments, consistent with this policy, of the permissibility of the use of University facilities, computers and equipment for other than official state job purposes. University employees are encouraged to consult with and seek approval from their supervisors when they are uncertain about the permissibility of a use of University resources, facilities, computers, or equipment. Supervisors at all times retain discretion to restrict uses of state resources, facilities, computers, and equipment in response to concerns regarding an employee's work performance or use of University

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facilities, computers, and equipment that exceeds the permissible uses outlined in this policy. In making their decisions to make personal use of University computers and equipment, employees are reminded that there should be no expectation of privacy with regard to the use of University communication technologies (e.g., email, facsimile transmissions, voice mail, and Web sites visited).

3. Non-University Activity

University policy permits faculty, librarians, and academic personnel to engage in outside professional work, subject to the specified limits (University Handbook, Volume 4, Part V, Chapter 6). Professional and classified staff may engage in outside work activity as well, provided such activity does not intrude into their University obligations and job performance or conflict with the proper discharge of their official duties (Administrative Policy Statement 47.3).

The use of University resources including facilities, computers, and equipment for the conduct of outside work is *strictly prohibited*. Using University property for private financial gain may be a misappropriation of state funds, a violation of the state's ethics law, and could enable state employees to compete unfairly with private businesses. Activities that are considered University service rather than outside work, but none the less may result in the award of an honorarium to the employee, are not subject to the prohibition on the use of University resources.

a. Prohibited Use of Resources

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University resources, including facilities, computers, and equipment, may *not* be used for the following purposes:

- Conducting an outside business or private employment
- Supporting, promoting, or soliciting for an outside organization or group unless otherwise provided by law and University policy
- Assisting an election campaign, promoting or opposing a ballot proposition or initiative, or lobbying the state legislature
- Advertising and selling for commercial purposes

In addition, University resources, including facilities, computers, and equipment, may not be used in any manner that is in violation of University, state, or federal laws, rules, or policies, or to violate the rights of any third party.

Examples of restrictions on the use of University resources, facilities, computers, and equipment include but are not limited to the following:

- University offices or laboratories may not be used as a place of business for an employee's outside enterprise
- University telephone numbers and addresses, including email and web addresses, may not be used or listed regarding an employee's outside business
- The use of University affiliations and titles in connection with an outside business must clearly acknowledge the independent nature of the employee's outside work from his or her University responsibilities

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- University stationery and other office or consumable supplies may not be used by an employee in the conduct of an outside business
- University computing resources and laboratory equipment may not be used by an employee for the conduct of an outside business or to promote an outside business
- Personal use of any University resources, computers, or equipment to support political activities (such as assisting a campaign for election, promoting or opposing a ballot proposition or initiative, or lobbying members of the state legislature), even though not for remuneration, is not permitted
- Personal use of University resources, computers, equipment, or consumables that have been removed from the University or other official duty stations, is not permitted even if there is no cost to the state (e.g., use of University tools or equipment for home improvement projects)
- Personal use of University resources, computers, or equipment for product sales, even though not for remuneration, is not permitted (e.g., online book sales or referral links to book publishers or sales houses)
- University computing and Internet resources may not be used in violation of federal copyright law

b. Allowable Use of Resources

The University does possess unique laboratory or other equipment or facilities, which, by their very nature, should be available to private businesses for testing or examining proprietary products. When such situations arise, authorization for the usage must be approved through normal departmental processes (see Administrative Policy Statement

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59.5). The fair rental value of the facilities, computers, and equipment requested, including costs and overhead, must be established by the dean or vice president.

4. Reporting Violations of the Policy

University employees are directed to Administrative Policy Statement 47.10 with regard to their obligation to report misuse of University resources, facilities, computers, and equipment. Employees who violate published University policies regarding the personal use of University resources, facilities, computers, and equipment, or policies regarding outside work and conflict of interest are subject to appropriate disciplinary or corrective action, including dismissal.

5. State Investigation and Enforcement Authority

The state Executive Ethics Board has the authority to investigate allegations of improper use of state resources (per RCW 42.52.360), and it is charged with enforcing laws and rules prohibiting state workers from improperly using state resources. The Executive Ethics Board's determinations and actions are independent of any disciplinary or corrective action taken by the University.

6. Additional Information

For additional information and clarification on the regulation of the use of state resources, University employees are directed to the Executive Ethics Board web site at www.wa.gov/ethics.

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