Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements for responsible and appropriate use of Hibernia College's ICT resources. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Personal Data and Records Policy](#).

Scope

To whom does the policy apply?

(2) This is an overarching policy that applies to all students, Staff, Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and third parties involved in the use of Hibernia College ICT.

In what situations does the policy apply?

(3) This policy applies in any context where an individual is using ICT resources provided by the College or engaging in any ICT activity on behalf of the College using third party resources

Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

(4) The Director of IT is responsible for managing and overseeing the College's implementation of this policy.

(5) All Staff, Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and students are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to.

(6) Line Managers, in conjunction with Human Resources, are responsible for managing and addressing any suspected breaches of this policy by Staff should they arise.

(7) The Registrar is responsible for managing and addressing any suspected breaches of this policy by students should they arise.

(8) Where third parties are involved in collaboration with the College for any reason, they are also required to adhere to this policy.

Definitions

(9) ICT resources

(10) Acceptable use

Section 2 - Context

Legal and Regulatory Context

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QQI Guidelines

(11) The policy fulfils the requirement to have a documented approach to Information and Communications Technology used in the development and provision of programmes as set out in QQI's Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

Legal Requirements

(12) The policy is designed and implemented to comply with relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016.

National Policy Context

(13) This policy has been designed in the context of a significant discourse nationally and in the European Higher Education Area in relation to data protection and appropriate use of ICT in online environments. Its content has been informed by many similar policies published within the Irish HEI sector.

Section 3 - Policy Statements

Part A - Principles for Acceptable Use

Professional Conduct

(14) Hibernia College expects all students, Staff and external parties to apply a professional attitude towards their individual working environment, including the use of Hibernia College's ICT resources.

(15) All individuals must demonstrate courtesy and respect at all times when using ICT resources.

(16) Normal College regulations apply to the use of all ICT resources including, but not limited to, the Student Charter, Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy , Establishing Overarching Standards for Student Conduct Policy and Engaging in Online Communication Policy.

(17) Normal College regulations also apply to the use of all ICT resources by Staff as outlined in their terms and conditions of employment combined with the College's associated employment policies and procedures.

(18) ICT resources and Internet facilities should never be used in a way that breaches any of Hibernia College's policies. Specifically, and not exclusively, individuals will not:

   a. Breach any obligations relating to confidentiality, data protection and other laws or ethical standards
   b. Represent themselves as another person
   c. Use ICT resources to obtain, store and/or transmit confidential Hibernia College information without appropriate authorisation

User Accounts and Passwords

(19) Users may not disclose their login credentials to another person or allow use of their account by another person.

(20) Individuals are responsible for maintaining their user account and password details.

Integrity, Performance or Reliability

(21) Reasonable care must be taken by all Staff, Adjunct Faculty, students and third parties to assure the integrity, performance and reliability of Hibernia College resources.

(22) Specifically, individuals will not:

    a. Use ICT resources in a manner that results in a denial of service to others

    b. Improperly/maliciously interfere or attempt to interfere in any way with information belonging to, or material prepared by, another end user

    c. Participate in unauthorised activity which results in heavy network traffic and thereby interrupts the legitimate use by others of Hibernia College resources

    d. Interfere with other computers or network users, services or equipment (Intentional disruption of the operation of computer systems and networks is a crime under the [Criminal Justice legislation](#).)

    e. Engage in any behaviour that brings the name of Hibernia College into disrepute; defames, harasses, disparages or bullies another individual or group in any way; or unlawfully discriminates against another individual or group.

Licensing and Copyrighted Materials

(23) All Staff, Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, students and third parties are required to respect the legal protections to data and software provided by copyright and licensing agreements.

(24) Specifically, it is not permitted to use Hibernia College ICT resources to:

    a. Load unauthorised and/or unlicensed software

    b. Inappropriately obtain, store and/or distribute copyrighted material including music files and movies

    c. Infringe intellectual property rights including trademark, patent, design and/or moral rights

    d. Obtain/download, store and/or distribute text or images which contain any materials prohibited by law, or material of an inappropriate or offensive nature including material of a pornographic, racist or extreme political nature, or which incites violence, hatred or any illegal activity

    e. Make unauthorised entry into any other computer or network

Personal Use

(25) A limited amount of personal use of Hibernia College resources is acceptable provided it:

    a. Does not interfere with the College's productivity

    b. Is not for private commercial gain

    c. Does not prevent others with genuine Hibernia College related needs from accessing the facilities

    d. Does not violate the principles as set out in this policy and other College policies

System-Based Controls

(26) To protect the interest of students, Staff and Hibernia College, system-based controls are in place to prevent inappropriate use.

(27) It is forbidden under this policy to intentionally attempt to circumvent these controls.

Part B - Principles of Monitoring

Right to Privacy and Information Security

(28) Hibernia College respects the right to privacy of students, Staff and external parties. However, this right is to be balanced against Hibernia College's legitimate right to protect its interests. Hibernia College also reserves the right to monitor and audit the College ICT resources for possible breaches to this acceptable usage policy.

(29) Hibernia College is committed to ensuring robust information security and to protecting students, Staff and external parties from illegal or damaging actions carried out by groups and/or individuals either knowingly or unknowingly.

Monitoring Information Resources and Data

(30) Hibernia College reserves the right to monitor all Hibernia College ICT resources and Hibernia College data including, but not limited to:

a. Internet access
b. Office 365 email and associated applications
c. The virtual learning environment
d. All network traffic
e. Server and file access
f. Video-conferencing
g. Social media activity
h. Any other Hibernia College licensed applications

(31) Any monitoring of Hibernia College data and/or Hibernia College ICT resources may be random or selective depending on circumstances at that time.

System Monitoring

(32) All Hibernia College system activity is monitored and logged for the following reasons:

a. Monitoring system performance
b. Monitoring unauthorised access attempts
c. Monitoring the impact of system changes and checking for any unauthorised changes
d. Monitoring adherence to the acceptable use rules outlined in this policy

Academic Freedom

(33) Academic members of Staff, students and/or external parties will not be disadvantaged or subjected to less favourable treatment as a result of Hibernia College's monitoring provided they exercise their academic freedom within the law and can demonstrate that their teachings, research or qualifications are relevant to material detected and results revealed by Hibernia College's monitoring.

(34) When reviewing the results of any monitoring conducted in accordance with this policy, Hibernia College will bear in mind that academic members of Staff, students and external parties may be in possession of certain material for legitimate teaching, learning and/or research purposes.

Part C - Acceptable Use Rules for Electronic Communication

Appropriate Use of Communication

(35) Individuals should:

a. Actively seek to use the most appropriate means of communication
b. Not use Hibernia College resources to participate in unsolicited advertising ('spamming')
c. Actively seek to use email distribution groups or lists in an appropriate manner
d. Use CC or BCC appropriately in the use of email

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Forwarding Emails

(36) Individuals should not:

    a. Forward inappropriate email messages to others

    b. Forward email messages where permission has been withheld by the originator

    c. Without prior notification to IT Services, forward email messages with attachments to large internal mail distribution lists

    d. Remove any copyright, trademark or other proprietary rights notices contained in or on an email message

    e. Use email to enter into legally binding contracts without proper authority being obtained beforehand

Part D - Additional Acceptable Use Rules for Students

Online Communication Forums

(37) Use of online forums is provided to students for activity pertaining to their pursuit of an academic programme with Hibernia College. This may include the provision of College social media applications.

(38) Hibernia College reserves the right to investigate forum activity, regarding alleged breaches of Hibernia College regulations, in the case of legal proceedings or the establishment of legal advice.

(39) Forum administrators reserve the right to remove or amend any post deemed irrelevant or in breach of the regulations. Users may report posts which are deemed to be in violation of the regulations.

(40) Users are responsible for all content created, transmitted or disclosed from their account.

Video-Conferencing

(41) To assure the integrity of the online learning environment, intellectual property and copyright practices, students are not permitted to individually record any online activities without written permission from the College. Video-conferencing licences provided by the College are provided for professional purposes.

(42) All individuals are required to use their full names in online meeting activities, including online classes, and the use of pseudonyms is not permitted.

(43) Chat boxes and discussion spaces in video-conferencing should be used for on-topic conversations only, and individuals should remember that 'private' messages appear in the chat transcript and should be treated as public messages.

(44) Video-conferencing should not be used for any purpose that is not explicitly permitted by the College. Guidance and/or ethical approval should be sought, as appropriate, for the use of any video-conferencing outside normal scheduled activities, such as meetings and online classes.

Hibernia College Email

(45) Hibernia College students are provided with an email account as a means of communicating with Hibernia College.

(46) Students are expected to check their Hibernia College email on a regular basis. Official communications sent by the College include important notices and instructions.

(47) Students should also be aware that certain emails may require urgent action on their part.

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(48) The College cannot accept responsibility for a student deleting, overlooking or failing to act upon an important communication.

(49) Students should use their Hibernia College email account to contact the college. If there are any difficulties accessing the provided Hibernia College email account, the IT Helpdesk should be contacted at helpdesk@hiberniacollege.net or 01 661 0168.

(50) Students are advised against redirecting their official email address to a personal address. However, those choosing to do so should be aware of the risks. These risks include messages being stored on an insecure unsecure server, full mailboxes and loss of access to mailboxes.

(51) The College is not responsible for problems caused by outside email servers.

Part E - Breaches of Policy

Data Protection in the Use of Email

(52) All individuals are advised to exercise caution during email communication.

(53) Communications should only be sent to the intended recipient — in particular, where personal data is involved.

(54) Care is always advised when using the reply command during email communications.

(55) In the unlikely event that an email intended for someone else is received, please do not forward the email to any other individual. Contact the Data Protection Officer as soon as possible and await further instructions.

Disciplinary

(56) Contravention of any part of this policy will lead to the removal of Hibernia College resource privileges and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Hibernia College's disciplinary procedures for Staff or students, as appropriate.

(57) The College may require the removal of Internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary action.

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th May 2023
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Eoin Crossen Quality Assurance Administrator Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Policy" - Policies are principled statements adopted by the College at a high level to enable decisions about actions and desired outcomes to which the College is committed. They clearly articulate the formal position of the College on specific issues in order to guide internal decision-making. Policies set out 'what to do' on a given issue. They have a medium- to long-term review cycle.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

"ICT resources" - Hibernia College provides resources to students, staff and external parties to assist them in their studies and in performing their duties. These resources are used for educational, research and administrative purposes. These ICT resources can include, but are not limited to email, Internet, Virtual Learning Environment(s), video-conferencing, social media, on-premise and cloud file storage as well as all hardware and/or software provided to Hibernia College staff.

"Acceptable use" - Acceptable use refers to the rules and guidelines outlined by the College to set out acceptable use of College ICT resources.

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