

Regulations for the use of Computers and Voice and Data Communications Networks

1. Background

The use of computers is regulated by three Acts of Parliament - The Data Protection Act 1998, The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and The Computer Misuse Act 1990. Similarly the use of the public data telephone networks is regulated by The Telecommunications Act 1984.

These and several other Acts (including The Obscene Publications Act 1978 as amended by The Criminal Justice Act 1994) identify a number of prohibited actions related to the use of computers which, if proven in a Court of Law, may lead the perpetrator to a fine or imprisonment or both, or to a suit for damages in the Civil Courts. The following regulations are framed to remind all members of the University of their legal obligations under these Acts of Parliament. In addition, the use of computer software may also be subject to the terms of licence agreements into which the University has entered and which are enforceable by the licensor in the Civil Courts.

These regulations have the status of Regulations for Discipline which apply to all members of the University. Any breach of these regulations will automatically be considered a breach of discipline. In this context 'Members of the University' encompasses all staff, students and accredited visitors.

2. Data Protection

Members of the University are allowed only to hold, obtain, disclose or transfer personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 1984) as permitted by the University's current registration on the Data Protection Register and in accordance with Data Protection Principles as set out in that Act. If in doubt, the University's Data Protection Officer should be consulted before any personal data is stored in a computer system.

3. Copyright

Members of the University will comply with the provisions of the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) in relation to any computer program or data set, and shall not act in any way contrary to the terms of any licence agreement applying there to.

4. Computer Misuse

- i. Members of the University are allowed only to use those computing resources, data or voice communications facilities which have been allocated to them by the responsible computing management. The responsible computing management is the Head of School/Professional Service or Dean of Faculty concerned. For groups which are not organised as a School or Service, the Head of the Budgetary Group shall determine at what level the duties of the responsible computing management shall be discharged.
- ii. Computing resources, including data and voice communications networks, may only be used for properly authorised purposes.
- iii. Computing, data and voice communications resources may only be used by the person to whom they are granted. Members of the University may not lend or give resources to any other person unless they are explicitly authorised to do so by the responsible computing management.
- iv. Members of the University may not access, alter, erase or add to computer material which has not been generated by them unless they are explicitly authorised to do so by the responsible computing management.

- v. Authorised users of computer systems must take reasonable care to prevent unauthorised use of the computing resources allocated to them.
- vi. Members of the University may not use computer systems or networks in such a way as to compromise the integrity or performance of the systems or networks.

5. Data and Voice Networks

- i. Members of the University must abide by any 'Conditions of Use' of data or voice networks which are published by the responsible computing management for the protection of the integrity and efficiency of the network.
- ii. Members of the University must not cause obscene, pornographic, discriminatory, defamatory or other offensive material, or material that otherwise infringes a right or inherent right of another person, to be transmitted over the University national or public networks or cause such to be stored in University computer systems.

6. Codes of Conduct

Members of the University must observe fully the terms and conditions set out in codes of conduct by which the University has agreed to abide, copies of which are available in iSolutions.

7. Withdrawal of Service

- i. The responsible computing management may withdraw access to facilities from any user for the purposes of investigating a breach of these regulations. Any withdrawal of service lasting for longer than 2 weeks must be notified to the user's Head of Academic Unit or Service.
- ii. The responsible computing management may withdraw access to facilities from any user found to be guilty of a breach of these regulations.

8. Additional Regulations

Individual Faculties or Services may lay down additional regulations at the discretion of the Head of School or Director of Service. These additional regulations have the same status as the University Regulations.

9. Liability

- i. The University accepts no liability for the correctness of any results produced using computer facilities or data or voice networks, for any failure of equipment to produce results, nor for any consequential loss or damage.
- ii. The University will hold the individual user personally liable for any costs or claims which may arise from any use of University computing and/or communications facilities, whether authorised or not by the responsible computing management.