

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

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Office of Computer Services

# Policy Manual

OFFICE OF COMPUTER SERVICES

# Policy Manual

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## Policy 1: Nature of this Policy Manual

*The purpose, scope, and status of this document.*

This manual exists as a guide to maintain consistency, quality, and the performance level of the Office of Computer Services. In addition, this manual outlines the policies concerning computer use for the School of Law community.

This policy manual is meant to reflect the normal operations of the School of Law as they pertain to the use of computers, audio/visual equipment, and other related matters. If any portion of this manual contradicts either School of Law or Northeastern University policy, that policy should be used instead of the one contained in this manual. It is not possible to create policies that cover every possible circumstance, and this document is not an attempt to do so. At times it may be necessary to deviate from the policies mentioned here. It is expected that any deviation will be made in the best interests of the School of Law. It is not necessary to gain approval for all deviations from this policy manual. However, the individual who does so must be prepared to justify that action.

The Office of Computer Services maintains this policy manual in cooperation with the Information Technology Committee. The IT Committee is composed of a variety of members of the School of Law community and encourages open communication concerning the use of information technology at the School of Law. Anyone who would like to comment on these policies should submit suggestions or criticism to Eric Zago, Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator, 325 Knowles. All submissions will be considered by the Office of Computer Services and/or IT Committee for their impact on School of Law operations.

## Policy 2: Governing Principles

*Describes the guidelines for maintaining a secure, reliable network while respecting an individual's right to privacy.*

This policy acts as an umbrella policy guiding the creation of the rest of the policies, as well as all actions of the Office of Computer Services staff. From the Northeastern University ATS Appropriate Use Policy (AUP):

The goal for Northeastern University's technological resources is to provide the greatest opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to conduct their work and exercise their curiosity freely. Because informational technology has become a critical catalyst for communications, research, and learning, all members of the University community have the right to expect their privacy, access to information, and freedom of inquiry to be protected -- even when employing University-owned hardware and networks.

Within this broad opportunity to use Northeastern's resources, there are extreme circumstances where freedom can be abused and the University forced to constrain the use of its computer systems. Restricting freedom of individuals is only permissible when the freedom of others is jeopardized. The following guidelines are provided to help members of this academic community understand, anticipate, and appreciate those limits and to protect their own computer files and privacy. Rather than presuming to prescribe acceptable behavior, these guidelines proscribe only those unique circumstances where computer systems might be considered as used inappropriately.

Northeastern University computer and network personnel do not routinely or systematically review or monitor system usage looking for inappropriate use; these staff members will take appropriate initial action in response to complaints or significant degradation of system or network performance. (Excerpt from the preamble to Appropriate Use Policy, January 28, 1998)

The remainder of the AUP is incorporated into this policy by reference, and supercedes any policy contained within this manual. The full text of this policy is available from:

<http://www.help.neu.edu/chl/appropriate-use.htm>

Please refer any discrepancies between the AUP and the remainder of this Policy Manual to the Office of Computer Services.

## Policy 3: Account Security

*Maintaining the security of the network must start with account security*

Account security is a critical component of overall computing security. It is impossible to maintain the security and privacy of individual users if critical account information is exchanged. Passwords or other software/hardware tools used to uniquely identify a user are not to be shared with anyone else for any purpose. If there is a need to share information between various users, please speak with a member of the Office of Computer Services staff. There are other means to make data available to a variety of users if necessary.

The Office of Computer Services and Northeastern University will not be responsible for any loss of data that occurs due to shared passwords.

## Policy 4: Assistance with student-owned computers

*Describes the level of assistance the Office of Computer Services will provide for student-owned computers*

It is not the role of the Office of Computer Services to provide support for student-owned computers. It is the responsibility of the student to perform all maintenance, installation of new software, most hardware items, and other associated tasks – or find a person or company to provide this service for them. However, the Office of Computer Services will provide assistance with the installation of PC Card Ethernet Cards (see policy 5, *Installation of Ethernet Cards in Laptops*).

Depending on the nature of the issue, the Computer Services staff may provide some brief information to students about their computer difficulties, as time permits. However, the student is cautioned not to rely on this information exclusively. The student takes all responsibility for any actions taken based on that information. The decision as to whether to provide assistance (and the exact degree of that assistance) is left to the Computer Services staff member.

As always – students are cautioned to take appropriate steps necessary to insure the reliability of their computing resources. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping backup copies of all important documents and files – both on and off the computer used to create them.
- Having a pre-determined plan for how to deal with hardware and software issues. This may involve the manufacturer's warranty (if that is still in effect) – or another company that performs repairs on your type of hardware. It is much better to have this information worked out ahead of time rather than having to scramble to find it during a crisis.
- Remember Murphy's Law – failures will often occur at the worst possible moment. When working on an important project or document – keep current copies, on paper, multiple floppies – and maybe somebody else's hard drive too! It is much better to be over protected than have to recreate everything at the last minute. However, remember, it is the individual student's responsibility to choose (and follow) the appropriate level of protection for his or her computing needs.

## Policy 5: Installation of Ethernet Cards in Laptops

*Describes the level of assistance the Office of Computer Services will provide for the installation of Ethernet Cards in student-owned laptops.*

The Office of Computer Services will provide limited assistance in the installation of PC Card Ethernet Network cards. The reason for this exception to the general rule described in policy four is that improper installation of a network card can cause interference on the network. The Office of Computer Services only recommends the purchase of the 3c589 family of network cards from 3Com corporation. These cards are the 'industry standard' and have proven reliable on the Northeastern Network. PC Card Ethernet Cards from other manufacturers sometimes do not work on this network.

If a student purchases a 3c589-network card, the Office of Computer Services will provide the following assistance:

- Initial installation of card
- Configuration of appropriate network settings
- Demonstration of how to use the card

However, this assistance will be provided only if the student's laptop is working properly. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- PC Card drivers are installed and working properly
- Floppy drive (A:) is working (or CDROM drive if drivers are included on CDROM)
- There are no other issues (such as video or keyboard problems) preventing normal operation of the laptop.

If one of the above issues is present, the Office of Computer Services will not provide assistance until the student has remedied the above issues. As stated in policy four, above, the Office of Computer Services will not repair or adjust the configuration of machines beyond that specified in this policy.

## Policy 6: Software Licensing

*Describes the general policies governing what usage is covered under current Northeastern University Software Licensing.*

The Office of Computer Services follows the policies of Northeastern University's Academic Technology Services (ATS) department concerning the issues of software licensing. The Office of Computer Services' current understanding of the ATS policy on software licensing is:

Any computer that is a participant in the NUNET domain is licensed for installation of the NU32-standard desktop.

This means that all computers that are configured to the NU32 standards are covered under this policy for software installations. ATS has extended this policy to include faculty- and staff-owned laptop computers that a) are configured for NU32, and b) have their own dedicated ethernet card. If these conditions are met then the entire NU32 application suite can be installed on that laptop.

However, faculty- and staff-owned desktop computers at home cannot be covered under this policy, because they cannot reasonably be participants in the NU32 domain. Student-owned laptops are not eligible for installation of NU32.

The Office of Computer Services will not violate the university's software licensing agreements by installing software on machines that are not covered. Any questions concerning this policy should be addressed to the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator.

## Policy 7: Repair of Faculty/Staff Personally Owned Computers

*Describes the level of support that the Office of Computer Services will provide for the repair of Faculty/Staff Personally-Owned Computers*

The Office of Computer Services cannot provide support for all issues relating to computers owned by the Faculty and Staff members of the School of Law.

As a courtesy and depending on the nature of the issue, Computer Services staff may provide some brief information about personally owned machines. However, the faculty/staff member is cautioned not to rely on this information exclusively. The faculty/staff member takes all responsibility for any actions taken based on that information. The decision as to whether to provide assistance (and the exact degree of that assistance) is left to the Computer Services staff member.

Faculty/staff members are free to approach Computer Services personnel about arranging for after-hours support. The details of this arrangement (including level of service provided, times and fees) are left to the parties involved to negotiate. Northeastern University and the School of Law do not have any responsibility for actions taken by Computer Services personnel during such an arrangement.

## Policy 8: Repair of Faculty/Staff School of Law-Owned Computers (home usage)

*Describes the level of support that the Office of Computer Services will provide for the repair of computers purchased by the School of Law for faculty/staff usage at home.*

Computer Services will provide limited support for the repair of home Faculty/Staff machines that are owned by the School of Law. This includes machines purchased with faculty allotments. Every effort will be made to solve the problem remotely, with Computer Services personnel advising the faculty/staff member on specific steps or diagnostics to aid in repairing the malfunction. If that is not possible, the faculty/staff member is requested to bring the malfunctioning unit back to campus to allow Computer Services staff to repair the machine. Under rare conditions, a home visit may be scheduled if other arrangements are not feasible. The decision about whether to make a home visit will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Policy 9: Local Installations of Software Applications

*Describes the rules and procedures governing the distribution and licensing of the various software applications available for Northeastern University-owned machines.*

The Office of Computer Services can now provide a licensed copy of a variety of software applications for use on all Northeastern University-owned computers. This includes:

- All networked (NU32) computers on campus.
- All non-networked, university-owned computers on campus.
- All university-owned computers located at off-site locations for school business.
- All university-owned computers located at staff/faculty residences.

The Office of Computer Services will manage and support all installations of software installed on university-owned computers on campus as standard practice. University owned-computers located at off-site locations will be supported according to the Policy 15, *Off-Site Support Policy described further on in this manual*. Installations located at staff/faculty residences will be supported according to *Policy 8: Repair of Faculty/Staff School of Law-Owned Computers (home usage)*.

Requests for installation for all off-campus installations will be directed to the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator. The request will be reviewed to insure that the use of the software will be primarily for “**university-use.**” If the request is denied based on the nature of the usage, the faculty/staff member may appeal this decision to the Director of Computer Services.

Once the request has been approved, the faculty/staff member involved will be asked to complete and sign the ATS provided **Software Request Form**. This is used to track the use of the software license. In most circumstances, the faculty/staff member will then be provided with a copy of the media for the software package, as well as instructions for how to perform the installation. If there are any difficulties during the installation process, the Office of Computer Services will provide support as described in the appropriate policies, outlined above. If, in the future, the University’s licensing agreement for copies of these packages changes, the faculty/staff members who have installed this software will be advised on how to proceed.

Such circumstances might dictate installing a new version of the software, or, deleting the software (and confirming the deletion in writing).

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator.

## Policy 10: New Equipment/Technology Purchases

*Describes the process used to identify, select, evaluate, approve and purchase new equipment/technology for the School of Law.*

This policy applies once an apparent equipment need is identified by a member of the School of Law community (requestor). For this policy, the term *equipment* refers to computers, printers, computer peripherals (including ergonomic devices and adaptive technology), software, audio/visual equipment, and other related devices generally managed by the Office of Computer Services. When a member of the School of Law community has identified a need that may potentially require the purchase of new equipment, they should contact the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator (CITSC).

The CITSC will meet with the individual to examine the need. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine if it can be met with equipment that is currently available, or if it is necessary to consider the purchase of new equipment. If there is equipment available, and the request is feasible, the CITSC will take the appropriate steps to meet that need. If current equipment cannot meet the need, the CITSC will identify and recommend specific pieces of equipment capable of performing the functional need. When appropriate, the CITSC will consult with the Director of Computer Services (DCS) to determine if there are additional points to be considered.

Once the recommended equipment has been reviewed by the requestor, the request will be submitted to the appropriate person(s) for purchase approval. Depending on the nature of the request, the approval process may include the DCS, the Director of Information and Research Services, the department head involved, the Director of Fiscal Affairs, and/or the Associate Dean. Once the appropriate approvals have been received, the item will be purchased following appropriate university policies. Once the item is received, the CITSC will facilitate the installation/deployment of the new equipment.

## Policy 11: Installation of Software on Lab Machines

*Describes the restrictions placed on the installation of software on School of Law Computer Lab Machines*

With the exception of the software available from the NUnet installation menus, students are prohibited from installing software on lab machines.

For this policy, a *lab machine* is one located in an area for general student use, including the computer labs, library carrels, student lounges and student offices. For this policy, *software* includes, but is not limited to application programs, screen savers, and games. An exception to this policy is made for the software updates required to use the Westlaw and/or Lexis legal research web sites, as well as the Computer Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) software.

If there are specific situations that require the installation of other software, please contact the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the licensing issues involved, duration of need, purpose, and impact on normal computer operations.

## Policy 12: Instructional Technology Availability

*The Office of Computer Services has several pieces of equipment that are available for loan to the School of Law Community.*

The School of Law has instructional technology equipment that is available for short-term loan to members of the School of Law community. This equipment includes both fixed and portable units. This equipment is listed in Appendix 1: Instructional Technology Equipment Inventory. All equipment will be signed out via the Library/Information and Research Services Administrative Assistant. Equipment may be signed out by the staff, faculty, and students of the School of Law. Requests made by other parties must be approved by the Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator. Priority will be given to requests for direct educational uses. All requests must be for School of Law business/educational purposes, or other use as approved by the School of Law administration.

All members of the School of Law community borrowing equipment will be required to sign a statement stating they are responsible for loss or damage of the equipment (and accessories) borrowed. A request may include multiple pieces of equipment, as needed for a particular event. Each request must be made using a separate request form. Faculty may submit one request for a particular piece of equipment that will be required throughout the quarter; such requests must include a list of all times/dates required.

## Policy 13: Data Ownership and Access

*Governs the access rights management for data stored on School of Law systems.*

Guiding Premise – *the data in question belongs to the School of Law.* The Office of Computer Services (OCS) acts as a steward of this data, but is not its owner. For the purposes of this policy:

**Ownership:** the right to control who can read, modify and delete data/files.

**Permissions:** the list specifying who can access/modify particular files. (Permissions can be set at the file or directory level).

**Systems:** refers to both individual machines, as well as the School of Law's network space.

**Administration:** the dean and associate dean of the School of Law.

Data 'ownership' occurs at several layers:

- School-owned
  - Department-owned
  - User-owned

The School of Law administration owns all of the data created/stored on School of Law systems. They may direct changes to the permission rights of any files stored on School of Law systems, including personal space, as needed for School of Law business.

Department heads own the data generated by their department. A department head may direct changes for the data stored in their departmental space, including personal space. Such changes might include management of shared files, restricting shared file access to particular users, or removing files that are no longer needed. Each department head should also designate an alternate person who can make these decisions when the department head is unavailable.

Individual user's own the data stored in their personal space. Each staff/faculty member at the School of Law may have a directory on the network that only they can access on a routine basis. All users should be aware that upon request, OCS **will** make data stored in these locations available to authorized staff members (department head/designate, School of Law administration). If appropriate, notice will be given to the user that the authorized party has accessed their data.

In addition, several cross-departmental groups have data storage on School of Law systems. In these cases, OCS will maintain a list of who owns this particular data. An example of this is the Student database, that is

'owned' by Student Services – however this database is used by various other departments at the School of Law.

The Computer Information Technology Services Coordinator (CITSC) will manage the permissions list(s) for all files stored on the School of Law systems. If the CITSC is unavailable, the Information Technology Support Specialist (ITSS) will be able to manage the permissions.

OCS will also cooperate with any authorized law-enforcement investigation. Should this circumstance arise, OCS will notify and work with the appropriate member of the School of Law administration.

If at any time OCS feels a request to grant access to particular file(s) might be inappropriate, OCS will consult the next highest owner (of the data requested) for confirmation.

## Policy 14: Storage of Data

*Provides Guidance for where users should store their data files.*

There are several choices available for where users should store data files. Each of these choices has their own distinctive pros and cons. This policy is not an exhaustive description of each choice. However, it does provide a base for normal operations. Users who have additional questions should contact a Computer Services staff member for more information.

All of the data storage choices can be divided into the local and network categories. Examples of local storage choices are floppy disks, zip disks, and the users hard drive (C/M). The network storage space is housed on the Q: drive. The Q: drive is divided into personal directories (available to a particular user, only) and shared directories. Some shared directories are available to particular departments (example: Q:\SLAW\Admissions\Shared). There are other shared directories that are used by members of various departments; these are located in Q:\SLAW\SLAW-Shared.

Network storage space has one **essential advantage** – it is automatically backed up nightly. There is no automated backup of files stored locally. **Users are encouraged to use the network storage space as their primary storage location.** The one potential hazard to using network storage space is that network downtime would result in the user not being able to access their data. While past performance is not a guaranty of future performance, the current network storage system has proven itself highly reliable with less than 1 day of downtime in the past year.

**Users are free to choose the storage location of their choice.** However, in the event of damage/loss of the data stored on local disks/drives, the Office of Computer Services may not be able to recover that data. **Users relying on local disks/drives for data storage are responsible for developing and following their own data backup plan.**

If you have a question about how to best organize your files, please speak with an Office of Computer Services staff member to insure that you are using an appropriate system for your needs.

## Policy 15: Off-Campus Support Policy

*This document describes the level of service that will be offered to School of Law employees working at office locations that are not on the Boston campus of Northeastern University.*

**Unit:** Any sub-group of Northeastern University School of Law staff/faculty members that work as a cohesive unit on an on-going basis.

If a particular unit within the School of Law determines that to best execute their duties they will be moving off-campus, they should begin the process of working with the Office of Computer Services (OCS) as soon as possible. The Office of Computer Services will work with the requesting unit to develop an appropriate plan of support that meets their particular needs. While the specifics of each support arrangement will differ, the following guidelines will apply.

- In general, off-campus units must be aware that the level of support received would not be equivalent to standard level of support offered to on-campus units.
- One staff member of OCS will be assigned to work with the unit on an on-going basis. This particular staff member should be the primary contact for all support requests. The rationale for this is that due to each off-campus location's unique setup, having one primary contact will insure that accurate information is given as expeditiously as possible.
- Telephone support will be used as much as possible, site visits will be offered only when required.
- In general, site visits will be restricted to the local Boston area, or along the normal travel route of an OCS staff member. If the off-campus location will not be in an accessible area, the unit will be responsible for securing their own on-site support capabilities; the degree of telephone support to be provided (if any) will be determined based on the unique situation.
- A cost may be assessed to the Unit to offset the increased demands placed on OCS staff. This amount should be included in any grant proposals submitted supporting the off-campus location.

## Appendix 1: Instructional Technology Equipment Inventory

### **Fixed Units**

Room 97 Cargill (Lecture Hall):

- LCD Projector
- Video Cassette Recorder (VCR)
- Public Address System (PA)
- Gooseneck Microphone
- Unidirectional Microphone (2)
- Remote Controlled Slide Projector

### **Portable Units**

Room 5 (A/V Closet):

- TV/VCR Cart
- Overhead Transparency Projector

Room 10 (Moot Courtroom Closet):

- TV/VCR Cart
- Overhead Transparency Projector

Library Storage Closet:

- Portable LCD Projector
- Laptop (NU32 Configuration): **On-campus use only**
- Laptop (Windows 98 Configuration) **Travel use primarily**
- Microcassette Recorder
- Meeting/Conference Microphone
- Phone Line Microphone