ICTS Policies

UCT email naming standard

Document summary

Effective date	January 2002	**Last updated**	28 May 2013
Policy owner	ICTS		
Approved by	UICTC		
Enquiries	ICTS		

Table of Contents

Background

UCT implemented a new email system, Novell GroupWise, in 2006. As part of the conversion from the old system to the new, UCT implemented a naming standard for UCT email addresses approved in 2002 via Principal's Circular (PC 01/2002).

Email addresses are made up of two parts separated by "@": local part @ domain.

An examination of existing UCT email addresses showed that a standard existed only for student addresses: student number @ mail.uct.ac.za.

Staff addresses, on the other hand, varied widely in format:

- first initial surname @ Novell server or virtual domain.uct.ac.za
- surname initial @ Novell server or virtual domain.uct.ac.za
- organisational unit initials @ Novell server or virtual domain.uct.ac.za
- given name @ Novell server or virtual domain.uct.ac.za
- surname @ Novell server or virtual domain.uct.ac.za

In 2002, a proposal to adopt firstname.surname@uct.ac.za as the naming standard for UCT staff email addresses was approved via Principal's Circular (PC 01/2002). Due to the technical limitations of the IMAP email system, fewer than 50 addresses could be created in this format. During the implementation of GroupWise in 2006, UCT gave effect to the approved policy, such that all staff will have an email address conforming to the approved standard.

Policy details

1. Naming standard

1.1. UCT implemented the following naming standard for UCT email addresses:

1.1.1. Undergraduate, Honours, Masters and doctoral students: studentnumber@myuct.ac.za

1.1.2. Staff and Post-doctoral fellows:

- PreferredFirstName.Surname@uct.ac.za, e.g joe.soap@uct.ac.za

- 1st instance of duplication: Full initials.surname@uct.ac.za, e.g jhl.soap@uct.ac.za

- 2nd instance of duplication: Full initials.surname2@uct.ac.za, e.g jhl.soap2@uct.ac.za

- 3rd instance of duplication: Full initials.surname3@uct.ac.za, e.g jhl.soap3@uct.ac.zaNo UCT website may be used to contravene the constitutional rights of any person or persons.

1.2. Domain

Adopting a single domain name "uct.ac.za" for both staff and students offers the following benefits:

- It promotes a single institutional identity and unity.

- It is far more intuitive and predictable, particularly for people external to UCT, as it requires no knowledge of UCT's organisational structure or IT infrastructure.

- Because it is independent of the organisational structure, it would not need to be changed when departmental names change or when employees change jobs within UCT.

- It reduces administration in a number of ways. Most importantly, having a unique domain name allows for automated email account administration. It would also decrease the work required to maintain backward compatibility for addresses that need to be changed when departmental names change.

1.3. Local part: students

1.3.1. The student number (CampusID in PeopleSoft) continues to be used as the local part of the email address for students. This guarantees uniqueness, clearly differentiates a student email address from a staff address, and allows for automatic mailing from systems that contain the student number such as PeopleSoft.

1.4. Local part: staff and Post-doctoral fellows

For staff, the local part takes the form of PreferredFirstName.Surname. The information used to derive email addresses would come from SAP, PeopleSoft or the Third Party System.

To ensure that other systems can process our email, we must handle special characters as follows:

1.4.1. Surnames containing multiple words will consist of the full surname with no spaces. e.g: John van der Merwe will be john.vandermerwe@uct.ac.za.

1.4.2. Surnames containing special characters not allowed by the email system will be formatted without the special character. (e.g.: Patrick O' Brian will become patrick.obrian@uct.ac.za).

1.4.3. While most systems would accept hyphens or underscores, the "." differentiator has advantages: it is easier to remember, has become widely used, is easier to communicate verbally, and does not become obscured when the email address is hyper-linked with an underline (e.g. jo_andersen@uct.ac.za)

1.4.4. Because email addresses aren't case-sensitive, using "." is also a better option than trying to use caps to differentiate between first and last names (e.g. JoAndersen@uct.ac.za). When typed in lower case only, the name becomes difficult to interpret (e.g. joandersen@uct.ac.za).

2. Generic email addresses and mailboxes

2.1. Faculties and departments may request generic email addresses. Dedicated mailboxes will be allocated for each faculty (dean) and department (HOD).The logo must be sourced from the central repository via hyperlink.

2.2. Responsibility

2.2.1. The accountability and responsibility for generic addresses resides with the Dean/Head of Department/Executive Director or Director responsible for the faculty or department requesting the generic address.

2.2.2. It is the responsibility of the faculty and/or the department concerned to validate that they are able to adopt the address and that no conflict with any other faculty or department generic email address exists.

2.2.3. Provided that the request has been authorised by a Dean/Head of Department/Executive Director or Director, and no obvious clash or problem exists, the address and mailbox will be authorised and provided.

2.2.4. ICTS will only veto a request if it is technically impossible to implement, and/or encompasses another academic or administrative function or service.

2.3. Format of generic email addresses

2.3.1. Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors

The generic email address for the Vice-Chancellor will be vc@uct.ac.za.

2.3.2. Academic functions

Deans

- dean.@uct.ac.za. e.g. dean.humanities@uct.ac.za for the Dean of Humanities and dean.hs@uct.ac.za for the Dean of Health Sciences.

- Where the title of the faculty is exceptionally long, it may be abbreviated e.g. dean.ebe@uct.ac.za for the Dean of Engineering and the Built Environment and dean.hed@uct.ac.za for the Dean of Higher Education Development.

Graduate School of Business

- director.gsb@uct.ac.za for the Director of Graduate School of Business

Heads of Department

- head.@uct.ac.za e.g. head.archaeology@uct.ac.za for the head of the department of Archaeology and head.computerscience@uct.ac.za for the head of the department of Computer Science.

- Where the title of the department is exceptionally long, it may be abbreviated e.g. head.mcb@uct.ac.za for the head of department of Molecular and Cell Biology.

2.3.3. PASS departments and university-level functions

For example:

- registrar@uct.ac.za for the registrar's office;

- director.finance@uct.ac.za for the Executive Director Finance;

- director.hr@uct.ac.za for the Executive Director Human Resources;

- human.resources@uct.ac.za for the human resources department:

2.3.4. Functional offices

@uct.ac.za e.g. admissions@uct.ac.za for the admissions office, and fees@uct.ac.za for the fees office.

2.4. Existing Generic Email Addresses

2.4.1. Where generic email addresses have been implemented as aliases to selected accounts, such addresses will be retained and linked as an alias to a dedicated mailbox associated with a standardised generic email address upon request.

2.4.2. Published generic email addresses which do not conform to the standard must be replaced by an address which conforms to the generic email address standard outlined above.

3. Maintaining existing email addresses

3.1. Aliases to existing email addresses can be established, so that email messages sent to the old addresses aren't lost. However, this should only be maintained for a limited time. The simplest and most cost-effective solution would be to use the existing email system infrastructure to forward mail to new addresses for a minimum of twelve months.

3.2. After the 12-month period, the email system could generate automated replies to people who have sent mail to old addresses, to inform them of the new email address naming standard implemented a year previously and to provide a URL for obtaining current UCT email addresses.

3.3. All web content owners must designate a web content manager or managers to maintain the content.

3.3.1. Web content managers are tasked with the actual day-to-day maintenance of the content concerned.

3.4. The responsibilities of website or web content owners and web content managers must be written into their job descriptions; where this does not happen accountability and responsibility must be assigned to the owners or managers in writing.

3.4.1. This accountability/ responsibility must be detailed and followed up on in the Personal Performance System and appraisals. Appropriate action must be taken should the responsible person not perform the task as required and agreed on.

3.5. All web content managers must be UCT staff members or registered third parties.

3.6. CMD must be kept informed of the identity of all website and web content owners, and web content managers.

4. User-centricity should be the guiding principle behind UCT web publishing

4.1. UCT web content should be structured, organised and composed in a manner that does not require prior knowledge of the institution's organisational structure or terminology on the part of website users.

5. All content on official websites must be kept up to date and accurate at all times

5.1. Due diligence must be exercised by designated web content managers to ensure the currency and accuracy of all content they are responsible for.

5.1.1. Failure to do this will be regarded as non-compliance with this policy and line managers of web content managers will be required to take appropriate disciplinary steps.

5.1.2. Web content owners and managers should keep in mind that out of date and/or inaccurate information may render the University liable should someone act on it.

5.2. Official University websites must be professional in their presentation and content: web content managers should take care to avoid errors, typos, broken links, missing images or pages, and so forth.

5.3. Actual duplication of content across multiple websites should be avoided.

5.3.1. Content should rather be sourced from a single source where possible.

5.4. Web content managers should follow commonly-accepted guidelines on how to write for the web.

5.4.1. Contact the ICTS Content Architecture team for more information.

6. All official websites must display appropriate contact information

6.1. Every official website must display contact information for the faculty, department, school, centre, group, unit or other UCT entity whose content is published on it.

6.1.1. This must include a physical/postal address, phone and fax number, and an email address or form.

6.2. Every official website must display contact details for the person responsible for its content management.

Additional information
Factors considered when creating this naming standard
All email address formats have advantages and disadvantages. The table below describes important factors to consider in evaluating the various options.

Uniqueness	Each address must be unique; therefore, the naming standard should minimise duplications.
Personalised	Addresses should depersonalise users as little as possible (e.g. an address containing only numbers is less personal than one containing a name).
Intuitive	Addresses should be easy to guess and remember, and should not be too long.
Unchanging	Addresses shouldn't need to be changed when the organisational structure changes (e.g. when a department changes names) or when a user takes on a new post in the University.
Administrative costs	The management (creation, deletion, editing) of email addresses for both staff and students should be automated to reduce administrative costs and improve accuracy. Costs can also be lowered by having unchanging addresses.
Risk of error	Addresses should not cause confusion about the identity of the addressee, or make it likely for someone to receive another's email.

Institutional image	Addresses should present a professional image.
Internationally acceptable	Addresses should follow international standards to the extent required to ensure that other email systems can deal with UCT's mail.

Advantages

Uniqueness & degree of personalisation

- The standard minimises the number of duplicate names that would occur, and personalises addresses as much as possible.
- Using both a given name and a surname generates far fewer duplicates than standards that use less information such as surnames with or without initials, given names only, etc. The SAP data (at the time of implementaion) indicated that given name.surname would lead to 31 duplicates, out of 5404. Using a preferred first name instead (e.g. Andy instead of Andrew, Thanda instead of Thandabantu) would reduce some of these duplications, personalise the address and make it more intuitive.
- Using full initials.surname to handle the first duplicate eliminates the number of conflicts to none (again, based on SAP data, which may not be perfectly accurate). This is preferable to attempting to include both a given name and an initial. A format such as naomi.g.jacobs@uct.ac.za that includes two full-stops would prevent automation.
- The least personal addresses, which include a number, should occur very rarely.
- To personalise the address, name changes (due to marriage for example), would be allowed.
   Intuitive
- The given name.surname is widely used internationally.
- Using names rather than numbers, both a first and a last name, and a preferred first name rather than a "given name" makes it much easier for a sender to accurately predict and remember a recipient's email address.
   Unchanging
- Email addresses would only need to change when an official change of name has taken place (e.g. marriage or divorce). An alias could be created and maintained for six months to the old email address. The time period needs to be brief, so that fewer duplicates are created while additional old addresses are being maintained.
   Risk of error
- Errors occur when senders guess addresses incorrectly. By including both a first and last name, this should happen less frequently than it would if less information was included.
- Errors are most likely to occur in the rare case of an email address containing a number.
   Administrative costs
- The naming standard allows for the highest level of automation, thus ensuring consistency, accuracy and lower administrative costs.

Amendments to this policy

May 2013

The Operations Management Advisory Group (OpsMAG) and other UCT fora discussed the matter of a suitable naming standard related to generic mailboxes (for deans, HOD's and so forth). As a result, the Enterprise Content Management and Email Project Implementation Committee in collaboration with the Registrar amended section 2 of this policy to include specific information regarding generic email addresses and mailboxes. The amendment was approved by University Information and Communication Technology Committee (UICTC) in May 2013.