1. Purpose
Consistent procedures are important for ensuring that electronic communication contributes positively to the operation of the organization as a whole and to enhance student satisfaction. This policy does not replace other policies, procedures or guidelines concerning the use of specific electronic resources but rather sets out a minimum standard for acceptable use. This policy describes how employees are to use voicemail and email services to serve the best interests of the College on a consistent basis.

2. Application and Scope
This policy applies to all individuals who have been granted an email and/or voicemail account by the College; namely, all full-time and part-time employees of the College, all active full-time and part-time students in good standing, and any other authorized person maintaining an agreed upon affiliation with the College.

This policy applies to all Electronic and/or Telephony communication resources that are owned or leased by Mohawk College and any personal equipment connected in any fashion to Mohawk College’s data network.

3. Definitions
“Authorized Users” refers to all full-time and part-time employees of the College; all active full-time and part-time students in good standing; any other authorized person maintaining an agreed upon affiliation with the College.

“Email” is a system for sending and receiving messages electronically over a computer network.

“Telephony” is the technology associated with the electronic transmission of voice, fax, or other information.

“Voicemail” is a computerized, electronic system for answering and routing telephone calls; telephone messages can be recorded and stored and relayed.
4. **Principles**
Mohawk College recognizes that electronic communication plays an increasingly significant role in today’s technology-driven society. College telephony and email services are established to be a primary medium for internal and external employee communication. The information and impressions that employees present through these services may either enhance or detract from the reputation of the College.

5. **Accountability and Compliance**

5.1 **Accountability Framework**
This policy has been approved by the Senior Management Team.

5.2 **Compliance**
The Chief Information Officer will monitor and ensure compliance with this policy.

6. **RULES**

i. The College will not support, condone, or accept the following activities respecting Authorized Users:

   a. Activities which violate this and other College Policies;
   b. Activities which violate Municipal, Provincial, or Federal laws; and/or
   c. Commercial and unauthorized personal business activities.

ii. Every employee bears the primary responsibility to ensure all electronic communications either verbal or written are prepared in a professional and businesslike manner.

iii. Non-compliance with College IT policies could result in disciplinary action.

7. **Policy Revision Date**

7.1 **Revision Date**
February 2017.

7.2 **Responsibility**
The Chief Information Officer is responsible for monitoring this policy every three years or more frequently in response to feedback from the College community.

8. **Attachments**
Appendix A- Electronic Communications Procedure

9. **Specific Links**
CS-1502-2002 Information Technology Use and Security Policy
CS-1500-2013 Web Posting and Electronic Notifications Policy
CS-1306-1979 Conflict of Interest Policy
CS-1504-1996 World Wide Web Page Policy
GC-4200-2013 Social Media Policy
CS-1310-1985 Copyright Policy
Employee Code of Conduct
Electronic Communications Procedure

1. Voice Communications
Quality customer service along with communicating time sensitive messages at Mohawk College is achieved with the effective use of the College Voicemail system. The following standards and procedures apply to employees having voicemail services associated with their College telephone number, extension and/or their college assigned cell phone.

1.1 Greeting Message Currency
To be useful, voicemail greeting messages must be current, complete, accurate, and must convey useful information in a concise format. Messages not meeting these basic criteria are not acceptable.

1.2 Greeting Message Content
Voicemail greetings contain information concerning your College affiliation (School, Campus, department, etc.), the day and date, and your availability during office hours. Your voicemail greeting is normally changed each working day with information concerning your schedule and availability during the day. However, a simple “I am in the college today” message is acceptable so long as the message is changed when you are not in. Staff must ensure that voice mail greetings are accurate and up-to-date, clearly identifying day-long absences when necessary, extended absences, and an emergency contact for urgent situations.

1.3 Private Messages
When people call a personal extension at the College, they generally expect to speak with the person listed for the extension. If you have a business need for someone else to answer your extension, be certain that the person receiving your calls is able to forward the caller to your voicemail should the caller wish to leave a personal or confidential message for you.

1.4 Individual or Shared Voicemail
Individual voicemail boxes are intended to be confidential to the owner. Do not share an individual voicemail box, or have others take messages from it on your behalf, unless you indicate in your greeting that others may access your messages. Where a voicemail box is shared among employees, the voicemail greeting will indicate that the mailbox is shared.

1.5 Forward to Voicemail
Call-forwarding to voicemail (if available) is used when you are temporarily away from your phone during the working day. As well, call-forwarding to voicemail is to be engaged when you depart for the day. By doing so, you show respect for your callers’ time by not requiring them to listen through multiple rings before reaching your voicemail when you are not available.
1.6 Standard for Response to Voicemail
Except in instances where your voicemail greeting makes it clear to the caller that you are unable to do so, voicemails that require a response are answered normally within one business day, or at the very least within 24 hours. Incoming voicemail messages are to be checked and cleared on a timely basis that achieves this response time standard.

If you are away from the College for an extended period and unable to check your voicemail, indicate in your greeting that you are unable to access messages and state when you expect to be able to do so.

Failing to respond to voicemail messages is not an acceptable business practice.

1.7 Screening Calls
College telephone services are provided to facilitate communication. Use of voicemail to avoid answering calls or to screen calls is not an acceptable business practice.

1.8 Sample Voicemail Scripts

Sample 1: Hi, you have reached the voicemail of First and Last Name in the Departmental Name at Mohawk College. Today is Day of Week, Month, Date, and I am scheduled to be in the College throughout the day but will be in meetings for most of the afternoon. I’m sorry that I’ve missed your call. Please leave me a message, along with a number that you can be reached at and I will return your call as soon as possible. If your call is urgent, please call Name and Number of the person acting on your behalf for assistance.

Sample 2: Hello, this is First and Last Name in the Departmental Name at Mohawk College. It’s Day of Week, Month, Date, and I’ll be out of the office all day today without access to voicemail. I will be returning to the College tomorrow. If you’d like to leave me a message along with a number you can be reached at after the tone, please do so, and I will get back to you when I return. If you require immediate assistance, please call Name and Number of the person acting on your behalf for assistance.

Sample 3: You’ve reached the confidential voicemail of First and Last Name in the Departmental Name at Mohawk College and I am on holidays from Day of Week, Month, and Date through Day of Week, Month, and Date. While I am away, First and Last Name will be acting for me and can be reached at Contact Number and extension. If you’d like to leave me a message with your number, please do so, and I will get back to you when I return.

1.9 Voicemail Best Practice
If the receiver of the message is not available, the sender should leave a concise voicemail message that clearly communicates the nature of the message and the desired action. When leaving messages in the voicemail boxes of people you have called, provide your telephone extension number in addition to the subject. This courtesy saves them having to spend time looking up your number and allows them to prepare before returning your call.
1.10 Voicemail Broadcast Messages

Voice mail broadcast messaging is a key tool reserved for very important and/or very urgent messages that must reach all employees. Both criteria must be met before considering use of the voice mail broadcast system. Such messages could include campus closure announcements or security bulletins, or other important messages that are relevant to the entire Mohawk community. Voice mail broadcast messaging must not be used for solicitations on behalf of third parties.

To request the use of the voice mail broadcasting system:
1. Contact the Director of Communications at Mohawk College who will determine if the message is considered appropriate for College Communication. Messages deemed potentially sensitive or controversial will not be considered for broadcasting.
2. The Director of Communications will then take action, in a timely manner, to ensure the appropriate script is then broadcasted.

2. E-Mail/Scheduling
To ensure effective and efficient use of e-mail applications as a quality tool for customer service, the following Standards and Guidelines for employee use of College email services are to be adhered to:

2.1 Acceptable Use
College email services include Microsoft Outlook and Mohawk Online email systems. These systems are provided to support the achievement of College objectives and are the property of the College. Refer to CS-1502-2002 Information Technology – Use and Security Policy for further guidance.

2.2 Email Response
The College standard for responding to business email is normally one business day. In some situations a shorter response time is appropriate. In specific cases, individuals may prefer to use e-mail as their mode of urgent communications. Such cases should be treated as exceptions and the individuals should make that preference known to anyone who may be required to communicate with them urgently.

If a preferred response time is required, indicate the preferred response time in the body of the message.

2.3 Email Signature Block
A signature block with your name, position, organization (i.e., your School, department, etc., and ‘Mohawk College’), postal address, telephone number(s), and email address is a mandatory part of outgoing email. This courtesy gives email recipients the information necessary to contact you without having to search for your coordinates. Signature blocks can be programmed once for inclusion in all messages by accessing the help menu for the applicable email application.

2.4 Email Subject Field
Always fill in the Subject field and be as descriptive as possible and contains a relevant reference when composing your messages. Use FYI in the Subject heading when content is for informational purposes and does not require a response. In a series of
communications on the same subject, maintain the subject heading text so that related 
messages can be easily found.

2.5 Out of Office Email Message
Use the “Out of Office” feature whenever you will not access your e-mail for one 
business days or longer to advise those who send email to you that you are unavailable. 
This ensures that those attempting to contact you regarding an urgent matter will be 
advised of your absence.

2.6 Scheduling Meetings Using the Electronic Calendar
Wherever practical, use the electronic Calendar to create and manage all meeting 
requests sent and received. Ensure if you are the recipient of a meeting request, to 
acknowledge and respond in a timely manner – i.e. Accept, Tentatively Accept or 
Decline. If declined or tentatively accepted ensure details are provided accordingly to 
the meeting requestor.

2.7 Multiple responses to an email
Do not participate in protracted e-mail “volleys”. If you have to send more than two e-
mails to clarify an issue, consider a phone call or visit. When responding, use the “reply 
to” or “forward’ options to maintain history.

2.8 Clarity of the Message
Be as clear and concise as possible in your e-mail communications. Avoid unnecessary 
verbiage. Write in paragraph or point form rather than continuous text. Try to avoid 
addressing multiple subjects in a single e-mail.

2.9 Recipient List of an Email
Use CC (carbon copy) for information purposes only. CC should be limited to only those 
that need the information but are not expected to respond. If multiple recipients are 
addressed in the “TO:” field, be clear who is expected to respond to what. Avoid the 
use of “Reply All” unless absolutely necessary.

2.10 Insertion of an Attachment
Avoid attaching large documents to e-mails particularly when there are multiple 
recipients. In your e-mail, utilize the “groups” function in MOCOmotion to store and 
access common documents. Other alternatives to share and manage larger documents 
include shared network drives, Sharepoint etc.