



Code: QA416  
Title: **Email Search**  
Date:  
Approval:

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the criteria under which a search of a user's mailbox will be performed by Information Solutions & Services (ISS). This policy covers both mailbox searches which reveal the contents of individual emails and email message tracing which only reveals the subject line of an email. This policy applies to both staff and student mailboxes and relies on the discovery and auditing capabilities provided by the service provider's platform that hosts both staff and student email for the University.

## 2. Description

The criteria under which a mailbox search or message trace will be performed are as follows:

### 2.1. Criteria under which ISS will perform a mailbox search

Any mailbox searches will be performed in accordance with the NUI Galway ICT regulations and are subject to the obligations of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Mailbox searches are only performed in the following circumstances:

- 1) In response to a Freedom of Information request the University has received and subject to the approval of the Data Protection Officer. The specific search criteria should be clearly described (e.g. mailboxes to search, period to search, key words, etc)
- 2) In response to an official request from the Gardai or other relevant authorities
- 3) In response to a user request that has been ticketed, reviewed and approved. Again the specific search criteria should be clearly described and only the requesting users mailbox or a shared mailbox that the user has rights to may be searched
- 4) To maintain the operational integrity of the service (e.g. to detect phishing emails or abuse of the system)
- 5) To determine if there has been a violation of the NUI Galway ICT Regulations
- 6) In response to a written request from the Director of Human Resources

Where these criteria are met email searches may only be performed by the ISS Email Service Owner, ISS Deputy Service Owner, ISS Service Manager or relevant ISS Senior Manager. It is important to note that Email searches may return a large number of messages, many of which may not directly relevant to the specific query. Furthermore the search results can vary considerably with even a minor variation in the search query (e.g. a slightly different spelling of a word) and the results of the same search query can also vary significantly over time as the users mailbox can grow or shrink over time and the service provider may also make changes to their search engine logic.

If the results of an email search are returned to someone other than the user (e.g. the Data Protection Officer) then the recipient has a duty to protect the confidentiality of the data and treat it in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy

## 2.2. Message tracing criteria

Message tracing functionality is used to determine if a specific message has been sent or received and to provide details of the path the email message took in being delivered. Message tracing does not reveal any message content other than the email subject line. Message tracing can be performed in the following circumstances:

- 1) In response to a user request that can be either verbal or ticketed
- 2) To monitor the operational state of the email service
- 3) To determine if there has been a violation of the NUI Galway ICT Regulations

Where these criteria are met message traces may only be performed by ISS Service Desk Level 2 personnel, the ISS Email Service Owner, ISS Deputy Service Owner, ISS Service Manager or relevant ISS Senior Manager.

## 3. Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director ISS	Policy Owner, Revisions and Updates to the Policy
ISS, HR and Data Protection Officer	Approval of the policy
Data Protection Officer	Approval of Freedom on Information requests
ISS Service Desk	Tracking of requests for mailbox searches and message traces
Appropriate ISS personnel	Performing the mailbox search or message trace

## 4. Related Documents

- QA400 Data Protection
- QA401 Data Handling
- ICT Regulations (<http://www.nuigalway.ie/information-solutions-services/ictpolicies/ictregulations/>)
- Email Discovery and Access Auditing in Office 365
- Requirement to access another Staff Computer Account (<http://www.nuigalway.ie/information-solutions-services/ictpolicies/isspoliciesprocedures/accessanotheraccount/>)