USA Student Computer Use Policy

USA provides student access to computer resources through the wireless, JagMail (email), web servers, and departmental labs located throughout campus. Students using these resources must adhere to all policies of the University of South Alabama regarding the use of computers and computer networks.

Lab privileges can be denied to anyone using University equipment for illegal or unethical purposes. Any illegal behavior observed in the labs will be reported to appropriate University officials or law enforcement agencies. Anyone using the lab computers in this way, or any other generally inconsiderate manner, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Such behaviors/activities include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

Illegal Activity

- **Uploading or downloading copyrighted material**, violating the intellectual property rights of others, or illegally sharing trade secrets. (Please note that MP3 and other music files frequently fall into this category.) Accessing, downloading, or printing out articles solely for educational and research purposes, however, may be permissible under the fair use clause of the Copyright Law. See USA Software Policy for more specific guidelines on using copyrighted software.
- **Illegally sharing computer software** via Internet, the local network, personal disks or any other media
- **Copying or transmitting material contained in copyrighted databases** such as Infotrac, without permission from the source.
- **Buying or selling weapons or illegal substances** via computer network.
- **Threatening or "stalking"** others via computer network.
- **Knowingly replicating or transmitting computer viruses**, or otherwise deliberately damaging the systems or files of other people.

Strictly Prohibited Behaviors/Activities

- **Trafficking in pornography** of any kind via computer network. Please note that redistribution of pornography, even though web page links, is often illegal.
- **Activity that violates state or federal law**. This may include viewing, downloading, posting, printing or sending pornography, or other sexually explicit, profane, obscene, hostile, or blatantly offensive and intimidating

material, including hate speech, threats, harassing communications (as defined by law), or information that violates any state or federal laws.

- **"Spam"**, the practice of indiscriminately sending unsolicited email (e.g., commercial advertisements, chain mail, pornographic materials, political lobbying, hate speech, racial diatribes, and religious proselytizing) to persons who have not indicated interest in receiving such materials.
- **"Hacking" or "Cracking"**, i.e., deliberately invading the privacy of others by attempting to gain unauthorized access to any account or system.
- **Obtaining/distributing confidential information**. Deliberately and inappropriately observing, recording, accessing, using or transmitting passwords, account numbers, e-mail addresses, phone numbers or credit card numbers belonging to other people is prohibited.
- **Downloading executable programs**, which might interject computer viruses into lab computers, is generally prohibited. Further guidance with regard to safe sites and appropriate downloads should be sought from the lab facilitator. (The University takes no responsibility for damage to your work or your own equipment resulting from viruses or files you might download via the Internet.)
- **Using University equipment, including the University's Internet lines, servers or web pages, for commercial gain** .
- **Unauthorized wiring, altering or damaging of University-owned computer equipment,** including hardware and software.
- **Tampering** with lab machine settings.

Considerate Use

- **"Surfing the Net"** on lab machines for academic enrichment is permitted; however, precedence is always given to students needing access for assigned course work. Classes in the lab with a faculty member also have precedence. Otherwise, lab access is allocated on a first-come basis. Individuals who have been on a computer for more than two hours should yield if others are waiting.
- In consideration of other network users, students should **limit bandwidth-intensive activities** (e.g., playing or downloading games, music, and video) to those required by their curriculum.

Violations/Consequences

In addition to all guidelines in the policies stated here, all USA students are subject to the rules outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct* and the *Student Academic Conduct Policy*, which are both published in The Lowdown.

Violations of any USA computer policies incur the same types of disciplinary measures as other University policies or state or federal laws (up to and including criminal prosecution).

Additional Guidelines for Students

Sexually Explicit Material. All students are expected to effectively discriminate between professional and unprofessional portrayals of nudity and sexuality. This is an important aspect of professional judgment in many fields of study. Dealing with nudity, the examination of the human body and the full range of human sexuality are relevant and appropriate to those in medical and other professions. A number of Internet sites (e.g., The National Library of Medicine and NIH) portray some such materials. Individuals working in medical school and nursing labs should expect to occasionally encounter nudity and professional portrayals of sexually explicit material.

Appropriate Activity. While the full range of free speech is supported and encouraged, USA students should always be mindful of the fact that the computer labs are located in public areas. Materials on screens visible to others working in the lab, materials that are deliberately or inadvertently left behind on the hard drive, and materials posted to the Internet from this lab should reflect well on the professionalism of our programs. Imposing exposure to inappropriate sexual materials upon student or faculty colleagues working nearby (or using the lab at a later time) might be construed as sexual harassment. Those in doubt about appropriate activity should seek faculty advice.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is another issue affecting students using the labs. Under no circumstances should students leave, post or transmit confidential material such as research data, case reports or private notes about patients (or case studies) on these computers. The University takes no responsibility for student work left on lab machines, even if the lab facilitator gave permission for it to be on the machine. Any such work may, at any time, be erased accidentally or in routine clean-up activities. Students should not leave private work or communications on these computers, nor should they read any private information accidentally left by others. No material should be left on these computers without permission from the lab facilitator.

Reliability of Information. Students should remember that material on the Internet may or may not be accurate and reliable. It is critical that any information found on the Internet is carefully evaluated, especially with regard to pharmacology and health information.