

GUIDANCE ON THE TRANSFER OF DATA TO HONORARY ACCOUNTS AND USE OF STAFF ALIASES

Introduction

This guidance has been prepared to explain the process when:

- 1) A request is received when a member of staff is provided with an honorary/emeritus account and wishes to transfer information from their former staff account to the honorary or emeritus account.
- 2) A request is made by a school or directorate to transfer information to an honorary/emeritus member's account
- 3) A request is received from an honorary member of staff to re-use the alias from the former staff account.

This Guidance has been prepared to ensure that University of Aberdeen Schools and Directorates understand the process to be followed when the requests above are made. It is essential that there is a consistent approach to how these requests are managed.

Scope of data

The following requests are in scope of this Guidance:

- Requests from staff who have been provided with an honorary or emeritus account who wish information held in their former staff email accounts or electronic files to be transferred to the new accounts. These requests may be received directly from the individuals their selves, or from the school/ directorate on their behalf.
- Requests from schools/directorates who wish to transfer information to an emeritus/ honorary member's account
- Requests from staff who wish to re-use the alias from the former staff account on their honorary or emeritus account.

Policy

The award of honorary or emeritus status includes access to IT facilities including a University email account. The provision of the IT facilities places a responsibility on the individual to ensure that they comply with University of Aberdeen policies and procedures on Information Security and Data Protection. Access to Information Technology facilities is subject to the University "Conditions for using Information Technology Facilities" and may be withdrawn at any time if the conditions are not met.

The University Conditions of Using Information Technology Facilities states: “Use of these facilities for personal activities, if it does not infringe any of the regulations, is permitted on a limited basis. This is a privilege that may be withdrawn at any point and University of Aberdeen email addresses should not be used to set up personal accounts for services including banking and social media”. Therefore, whilst individuals may hold information relating to their personal life within University systems, this should be limited.

The Policy on Leavers and University Owned IT Devices states: “Departing staff must return all information assets and equipment belonging to the University, unless otherwise agreed with the designated owner responsible for the information asset”, Therefore staff leaving the employ of the University should return all information that belongs to the University. This would include ensuring that information belonging to the University is not manually transferred from former staff accounts to honorary and emeritus accounts.

Deciding to transfer data to the honorary/emeritus account

Before deciding to share data, the University will need to consider all the legal implications of doing so, for example, the legal requirements under the UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the law of confidentiality.

Requests for data need to be assessed on their appropriateness; for example, an individual may not be entitled to the entirety of the data held on their staff accounts being transferred to the honorary/emeritus account.

The default position is that a new blank account with a new email address is provided. The default size of the honorary mailbox is 50GB which is smaller than the staff account.

It is important therefore that where data is being transferred from a staff account to an honorary account that consideration is given to whether it is essential to transfer all information. Staff should consider undertaking housekeeping and only identify information that is required.

The data being shared would need to be assessed against the following:

Any requests to transfer information from the former staff account to the new honorary account should only be granted where there is a legitimate business reason for the individual to continue to have access to that data. It may be that the individual has applied for a research grant or funding or be part of a supervising team for a Post graduate research student. An individual with honorary status may also undertake separate ad hoc work paid on a claims basis which is not directly related to their honorary status.

The following should be considered when deciding when to transfer data to the honorary account.

Personal Data

The information being requested may include the personal data of third parties; for example, students and colleagues. Consideration needs to be given to whether it is reasonable for this information to be shared with the individual.

Example: If the individual has been involved in supervising Postgraduate research students but is not continuing to do so once they have left the University, then it would not be appropriate to share the student's data. However, if the individual is to continue providing supervision once they have left via an honorary account, it may be reasonable to provide.

Confidentiality and sensitive University Business data

The information being requested may also include information that is of importance to the University.

- Information about University budgets and other financial information
- Information about the University's strategic plans and commercial interests
- Information that is the intellectual property of the University.
- Confidential information
- Legal advice received by the University
- Information that is exempt from being disclosed under a legal obligation

Once an individual has left the employ of the University, they are unlikely to be entitled to retain this information. However, if the individual is to continue to provide a service to the University once they have left via an honorary account, it may be reasonable to provide.

Research Data

Where a postgraduate research student/staff member processes personal data whilst working on a project led by a university research group, the University is the data controller for personal data. On this basis, a staff member will not be entitled to receive a copy of the data on leaving the employment of the University. However, if the individual is to continue to be involved in a research project, once they have left via an honorary account, it may be reasonable to provide.

Deciding to reuse an alias from a staff account on an honorary account

Where a request is made to apply the original staff email address to the honorary account, there is a significant risk that this account may still receive emails from the University or from other third parties. This may result in sensitive or confidential data

being shared with an individual who is not authorised to receive this and who has no reason or purpose to receive it.

Examples may include individuals being forwarded personal information about students, receiving requests for approval from University systems and receiving copies of confidential meeting minutes. Consideration needs to be given to removing email addresses from – not only mailing lists but university systems.

Heads of School/ Directorate leads should only consider approving the use of the original staff alias if the individual has a continued relationship with the University e.g. the individual has applied for a research grant or funding or be part of a supervising team for a Post graduate research student.

Making a request

All requests for the transfer of information from staff accounts to honorary accounts or the re-use of a staff alias should be raised via MyHR.

It is recommended that requests are made timely, as information may be deleted in line with retention periods and no longer available.

Approval/Review History

Version	Date	Action
1.0	Prepared by Assistant Director (Information Governance & Security)	
2.0	Prepared by Assistant Director (Information Governance & Security) August 2025	Review as required
3.0	Change following introduction of MYHR process May 2026	