



Fax Confidentiality and Security

1. Policy Statement

Valdosta State University Associates may not use or disclose confidential information except in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures. In furtherance of these policies and procedures, it is the policy of the University to protect the confidentiality and integrity of patient, student, employee, and business information when using fax machines to transmit or receive that information as required by law, professional ethics and accreditation requirements.

2. Definitions and Acronyms

Associates: includes, but is not limited to, all residents, physicians, volunteers, affiliated students, vendors, contractors and any external agencies that have access to confidential information about VSU or its patients.

3. Process and Procedures

Questions about faxing information should be directed to the University Privacy Officer. Valdosta State University's Privacy Officer is Catherine Wills. She is located in the Department of Human Resources. She can be reached at 333-5709.

A. Fax Restrictions

The following types of medical information are given special protection by federal and/or state law, and therefore it is the University's policy that such information may NOT be faxed or photocopied for use outside the University without specific written patient authorization or approval of the University Privacy Officer:

- Confidential details of:
 - Psychotherapy (from records of treatment by a psychiatrist, licensed psychologist or psychiatric clinical nurse specialist)
 - Other professional services of a licensed psychologist
 - Social Work Counseling/Therapy
 - Domestic Violence Victims Counseling
 - Sexual Assault Counseling
- HIV test results (written patient authorization required for EACH release request)
- Records pertaining to sexually transmitted diseases
- Alcohol and drug abuse records that are protected by law.

B. Fax Requirements

Department Directors are responsible for locating fax machines in secure areas that have limited access.



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1. Sending Faxes

The first page of each fax transmission should be a departmental fax cover page which should include the University logo, University name, department name, address, contact numbers, and the following information: sender's name, sender's voice number, sender's fax number, recipient's name, recipient's voice number, recipient's fax number, transmission date and time, and number of pages including the cover sheet and the University standard confidentiality statement:

This transmittal and any attachments may contain confidential, privileged, or sensitive information and is solely for the use of the intended recipient. If you are not intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this transmittal and any such attachments in error and any review, dissemination, distribution or copying thereof is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmittal and any attachments in error, please notify the sender and immediately destroy the message and all its attachments. Any opinions herein expressed may be those of the author and not necessarily of Valdosta State University. The University accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any information herein contained.

- a. The sender must limit the information transmitted to the minimum necessary to meet the requestor's needs.
- b. For confidential documents, all pages, including the cover page, must be marked confidential before they are transmitted.
- c. The sender must make reasonable efforts to ensure the fax is sent to the correct destination. The sender must verify the fax number before sending the fax and verify the recipient's authority to receive confidential information. Frequently used numbers should be programmed into the fax machine to prevent misdialing errors. After a number has been programmed, a test fax must be sent to the new number and receipt of that fax must be verified before confidential information is transmitted using the programmed number.
- d. A sender must report any misdirected fax to the Privacy Officer immediately.

2. Receiving Faxes

- a. Each department is responsible for ensuring that incoming faxes are properly handled. A fax should not be left sitting on or near the machine, but rather should be distributed to the proper recipient expeditiously while protecting confidentiality during distribution, such as by sealing the fax in an envelope.



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- b. Destroy confidential information faxed to the University in error, and immediately notify the sender.

C. Enforcement

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action including termination, and may be subject to penalties under state and federal law.

4. Affected Stakeholders

Indicate all entities and persons within the university affected by this policy:

- Alumni
- Graduate Students
- Undergraduate Students
- Staff
- Faculty
- Student Employees
- Visitors
- Vendors/Contractors
- Other: _____

5. Policy Attributes

<i>Responsible Office(s)</i>	Information Technology, 1410 N. Oak St., 229-245-4357, itvsu@valdosta.edu
<i>Approving Officer or Body</i>	President, President's Office, West Hall Suite 1004, 229-333-5952, president@valdosta.edu
<i>Date Approved</i>	before 2009
<i>Last Review Date</i>	07/01/2020
<i>Next Review Date</i>	07/01/2022