E2.xxx  Security and Protection of Sensitive Information

I.  Philosophy

The University of Hawaii makes substantial use of personal and confidential information in achieving its mission. In the wrong hands, such information can be abused for improper and illegal activities. Identity theft provides the best but not the only example of how sensitive personal information can be misused. The University is committed to handle all sensitive information carefully and responsibly. The first tenet of the University’s philosophy is to limit the use of, storage of and access to sensitive information to those situations where it is required for the operations of the institution. Then in those situations where access to sensitive information is required, the University must provide appropriate guidance and controls to protect the information it uses in its pursuit of teaching, learning, research, service and administration.

II.  Purpose

This policy is intended to provide the framework for specific practices and procedures associated with systems and files that contain sensitive, personal and confidential information (hereinafter referred to as “sensitive information”) within the University of Hawaii System. The scope of this policy includes categorization, provision of access, storage, handling and destruction of such information. This specific policy does not address issues related to public information that may need to be protected from modification, corruption or loss, and does not address issues related to information that may be classified by governmental agencies such as the National Industrial Security Program or the Bioterrorism Special Agent Program, which have their own requirements.

Nothing in this policy is intended to constrain open and direct communication, including communication through electronic means. Such communications may include the exchange of sensitive information about an individual to that individual or others as may be necessary for institutional purposes and in compliance with applicable privacy regulations.

III.  Data Categorization

For purposes of this policy, data is simply categorized in two ways.

A.  Public information
Public information is any information to which access need not be restricted.

B. Sensitive Information

Sensitive information is information that is subject to privacy considerations or that has been classified as confidential and subject to protection from public access or inappropriate disclosure.

Examples of Sensitive Information include but are not limited to:
- Student records (especially anything protected by FERPA)
- Health information (especially anything covered by HIPAA)
- Personal financial information such as credit card numbers, bank account information, debit cards numbers, etc.
- Social Security Numbers
- Dates of birth
- Private home addresses and phone numbers
- Drivers license numbers and State ID Card numbers
- Access codes, passwords and PINs for online information systems
- Answers to "security questions" such as "what is the name of your favorite pet?"
- Confidential information subject to attorney-client privilege
- Detailed information about security systems (physical and/or network)
- Confidential salary information

IV. Social Security Number

The Social Security Number may not be used as an identifier in any new University information system and its use shall be phased out in all existing systems. The SSN may be included as a data element in an information system only where it is required for financial processing (e.g., payroll or student tax reporting) or other uses consistent with State and Federal law. The University may require the use of the SSN as part of the essential process of identifying and disambiguating individuals, such as those who may have the same name. In none of these cases shall the SSN be used as a primary identifier.

V. Roles & Responsibilities

A. Information Resource Stewards

Institutional information resources shall have one or more designated stewards. Institutional information resource stewards are typically senior administrators responsible for functional operations such as Finance, Human Resources, Student Services and other activities that involve institutional information processing. At the University of Hawaii, offices such as the Institutional Research Office (IRO) and Information Technology Services (ITS) also have stewardship responsibility for institutional information. Producers and collectors of original data, e.g. researchers, are considered the stewards of those information resources.
Information resource stewards are responsible for classification of their data consistent with applicable federal, state and UH policies, standards, regulations and laws. Information resource stewards are also responsible to minimize the use, storage and exposure of sensitive information, especially the Social Security Number. They shall restricting the use and exposure of such information to those specific situations where it is essential and appropriate.

Information resource stewards may have multiple responsibilities if they also serve as the data custodians.

B. Data Custodians

Data custodians are the managers and/or administrators of any systems or media on which sensitive data resides, including but not limited to: personal computers, laptop computers, PDAs, smartphones, departmental servers, enterprise databases, storage systems, magnetic tapes, CDs/DVDs, USB drives, iPODs and any other removable or portable devices. Any individual who downloads or stores any sensitive information onto a computer or storage device becomes a data custodian through that act.

Data custodians are responsible for implementing and administering controls over the resources according to policies and parameters provided by the information resource stewards. Data custodians are responsible for the technical safeguarding of sensitive information, including ensuring security transmission and providing access control systems approved by the information resource steward to prevent inappropriate disclosure.

All data custodians for sensitive information are required to sign the UH General Confidentiality Notice (Attachment I).

C. Users

Users are any individuals who are granted access to sensitive information as required to perform their professional responsibilities.

All individuals who are provided with access to sensitive information must be briefed on their responsibilities and agree to accept these responsibilities. Users are responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable University policies, procedures, and standards for dealing with sensitive information and its protection.

Specific questions about the appropriate handling or usage of a specific information resource should be directed to the information resource steward.
All users of sensitive information, including data custodians and information resource stewards, are required to sign the UH General Confidentiality Notice (Attachment I) before such access is granted.

VI. Collection of Sensitive Information

Sensitive information is only collected and stored when essential to the function and operations of the institution. Information resource stewards should minimize the use of sensitive information in the systems and services for which they are responsible.

VII. Access to Sensitive Information

A. Granting of Access

Individuals may only be granted access to sensitive information by an information resource steward, or their designee in support of necessary function or operations. Access to sensitive information is granted on a “need-to-know” basis to as limited a portion of sensitive information as is feasible to allow individuals to be effective and efficient in their activities.

B. Access Procedures

For multi-user systems, access procedures that are approved by the information resource steward must be in place before access is granted to others. Access procedures should address:

- how access is requested by a prospective user or their supervisor
- types of access available including read, write, copy and extend access to 3rd parties
- how access requests are reviewed and approved
- how those who are granted access are advised of their responsibilities
- what authentication and authorization processes are in place to ensure that only authorized users have access;
- whether or how access is limited only to the portions of sensitive information required by the individual
- how access is revoked in a timely manner when no longer required
- how access is reviewed on a regular basis
- how confidentiality is managed in any cases in which access is granted which includes extension to 3rd parties
- availability of audit trails for when and how access was granted

VII. Transmission of Sensitive Information

A. Security of Digital Transmission
Sensitive information should be strongly encrypted whenever transmitted over public networks or carriers in digital form. This includes the transmittal of sensitive information via email, file transfers (FTP), web transactions, instant messaging or terminal login sessions.

B. Security of Fax Transmissions

When transmitting sensitive information by facsimile (fax), arrangements must be made to ensure that the information is promptly retrieved and properly protected at both the sending at receiving locations.

C. Email and Sensitive Information

Given the very real possibility of an email message going astray due to human error or otherwise, transmission of sensitive information by email is strongly discouraged unless protected by strong personal end-to-end encryption such as PGP or GPG. Exchange of sensitive information over networks should be done using the secure electronic “filedrop” service, which enables the secure exchange of information between members of the UH community.

In those cases when it is necessary to transmit sensitive information by standard email, the sender should absolutely minimize the inclusion of sensitive information and take special care to ensure that the message will only be received by authorized users. Both sender and receiver should delete all copies of the sensitive information as soon as practicable, and the sender should include a notice informing any recipient that the message contains sensitive information and requesting appropriate handling. A sample is provided as Attachment II. Similar language should be used when transmitting any sensitive information via the filedrop service or other means.

VIII. Use and Storage of Sensitive Information

A. Limited Use and Storage

Sensitive information should be stored only where it is specifically required and in as few systems as possible.

B. Security of System with Sensitive Information

Systems on which sensitive information is stored must minimally comply with all basic computer security standards (patch management, anti-virus protection, password controls, etc.).

Unencrypted sensitive information should be stored only on systems that are housed in secure and controlled environments. Where desktop systems access sensitive information, they must not be left logged in on an unattended basis or be available for casual perusal by unauthorized individuals.
C. Encryption of Sensitive Data in Mobile Formats

Sensitive information stored on any system or media that is subject to loss or theft -- including laptops, USB drives, CD/DVDs, personal computers, departmental servers -- must be encrypted whenever not in active use.

D. Decoupling of Personal Information

Wherever possible (e.g. for any research studies), sensitive data should be de-coupled from all personally identifiable information. If it is necessary to maintain such linkages, a unique identifier should be used to “crosswalk” sensitive research information back to personal identities.

E. Security of Non-Electronic Information

Paper documents and files containing sensitive information must be secured at all times. Such documents should not be left in open view on desks and when not in use must be stored in locked files with access limited to authorized users.

IX. Disposal of Media Containing Sensitive Data

When disposing of media containing sensitive information the custodian must ensure that information is unrecoverable.

A. Erasable Media

Electronic and magnetic media such as hard drives, USB devices, magnetic tapes and optical tapes should be erased using secure deletion tools before transfer or disposal.

B. Unerasable or Unerased Media

Media that are not or cannot be securely erased should be destroyed before disposal.

C. Paper

Paper documents and printouts containing sensitive information must be shredded before disposal using a crosscut shredder.

D. Contracting for Disposal

These requirements may be fulfilled by contracting with a professional disposal firm engaged in the business of record destruction using methods consistent with this policy, provided that the data custodian conducts appropriate due diligence on the company.
X. Notice of Sensitive Information Breach

In accord with State Law, the event of a security breach involving sensitive personal information, the University shall notify all affected individuals. Such disclosure shall be made without unreasonable delay, subject to any delays requested by law enforcement agencies to support legal investigations or broader security concerns and consistent with any immediate need to restore and ensure the integrity of any breached information system(s).

Such notices shall be clear and conspicuous and shall include a description of the following: (1) The incident in general terms; (2) The type of personal information that was disclosed; (3) How the personal information will be protected from further unauthorized disclosure; (4) A telephone number and email address that can be called for further information and assistance; and (5) General advice on protection against identity theft that directs the person to remain vigilant by reviewing account statements and monitoring free credit reports.

Such notice may be provided by any or all of: (1) Written notice to the last available address the University has on record; (2) Electronic mail notice, for those persons for whom the University has a valid electronic mail address and who have agreed to receive communications electronically; (3) Telephonic notice, provided that contact is made directly with the affected persons. Substitute notice may be provided if the cost of providing notice would exceed $100,000 or the number of persons to be notified exceeds two hundred thousand, or if the University does not have sufficient contact information or consent to satisfy options (1), (2), or (3) above. Substitute notice shall consist of all the following: (a) Electronic mail notice when the University has an electronic mail address for the subject persons (even if consent has not been provided); (b) Conspicuous posting of the notice on the University website; and (c) Notification to major statewide media.

The University must also submit a written report to the legislature within twenty days after discovery of a security breach at the government agency. This report must detail information relating to the nature of the breach, the number of individuals affected by the breach, a copy of the notice of security breach that was issued, the number of individuals to whom the notice was sent, whether the notice was delayed due to law enforcement considerations, and any procedures that have been implemented to prevent the breach from reoccurring. In addition, in the event notice is provided to more than one thousand persons at one time pursuant to this section, the University must notify in writing, without unreasonable delay, the State of Hawaii's office of consumer protection and all consumer reporting agencies that compile and maintain files on consumers on a nationwide basis.

XI. Personnel Issues & Violations

A. Background Checks
Supervisors of employees with extensive access to sensitive information may find it advisable to conduct a background check on prospective employees before finalizing a new hire process.

B. Termination

In any case of employer-initiated termination of employment of personnel with access to sensitive information, such access must be revoked immediately at the time of notification.

C. Due Diligence

Supervisors of individuals with access to sensitive information must be vigilant to behavioral irregularities and report them immediately.

D. Violations

Violation of this policy may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with University policies and procedures, in addition to being subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties.

XII. Regular Audits

The Offices of Risk Management and/or Internal Audit may establish audit procedures to review practices around the protection of sensitive information.

XIII. Technical Guidance

Information Technology Services shall provide technical guidance on recommended means of protecting digital information as required to comply with this policy including but not limited to:

Password selection and protection

Securing personal computers that run commonly used personal computer operating systems

Exchanging files securely between members of the UH community

Secure protocols for login, file transfer and web transactions

Encrypting sensitive information stored via systems that run commonly used personal computer operating systems

Erasing hard disks on personal computers
Attachment I – UH Form 92 (06/96)

University of Hawaii General Confidentiality Notice

I understand that to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of my job, I may need to access personally identifiable information (PII) which is sensitive and/or confidential in nature. Such information may include, but is not limited to:

- Social Security Number, Home and mailing address, Home phone number, Date of Birth/Age, Ethnicity, etc.
- Admission and academic records
- Job Applicant Records (Names, transcripts, etc.)
- Employment and payroll records
- UH Usernames, passwords, “secret questions and answers” or other ID/password combinations for applications that contain or use personally identifiable information
- Credit card or credit-related information
- Bank account information

I understand that confidentiality of PII is protected by Chapter 92F (Uniform Information Practices Act) of the Hawaii State Revised Statutes, the Federal Privacy Act of 1974, Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and other applicable state and federal laws and University of Hawaii policies.

I understand the confidential nature of private information regarding our students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University of Hawaii community and understand that it is my responsibility to respect and protect the confidentiality of this information.

I understand that accessing or seeking to gain access to PII except in the course of fulfilling my job responsibilities is prohibited. I further understand that disclosing, using or altering any such information without proper authorization is also prohibited. If I have any questions regarding access, use, or disclosure of such information, I understand that it is my responsibility to consult with my supervisor prior to taking any action.

I understand that it is my responsibility to keep my own UH Username and password confidential and that I am not to allow others to use my active sessions other than to resolve specific problems. I also understand that using another person’s UH Username and password is prohibited unless given explicit permission to do so to resolve a reported problem. It is my responsibility to keep my Username/password combination(s) for all electronic applications confidential and sharing or transferring it to any other person is not allowed. I understand that it is my responsibility to notify my supervisor and/or the UH Information Security Officer (with Information Technology Services) if my Username and Password, PII data, or personal computer have been compromised.

I understand that electronic transactions on UH information systems may be automatically logged and that the logs of my actions may be routinely reviewed as part of the University’s information security assurance program.

I have read and understand my responsibilities under UH Executive Policy: E2.210 “Use and Management of Information Technology Resources”. (http://www.hawaii.edu/infotech/policies/itpolicy.html)

I understand that if I store any PII on any personal computer or server that it is my responsibility to ensure that the computer is secured and managed in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures.

I understand that failure to abide by this notice may result in disciplinary action in accordance with University policies and procedures, State and federal laws, and applicable collective bargaining agreement up to and including dismissal.

Receipt acknowledged:

Signature:                                      Date:

Name (print):                                   

UH Username:
Attachment II

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The contents of this email message and any attachments are intended solely for the addressee(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information and may be legally protected from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient of this message or their agent, or if this message has been addressed to you in error, please immediately alert the sender by reply email and then delete this message and any attachments. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, copying, or storage of this message or its attachments is strictly prohibited.