STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

02. Creation and removal of computer accounts

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TAMU SAP 29.01.99.M1.03
TAMU SAP 29.01.99.M1.04
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DEFINITIONS

1. **Information resource**: The systems (procedures, equipment, and software) that are designed, employed, operated, and maintained to collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display, and transmit information or data. In the College of Architecture this includes systems such as personal workstations, networked file storage, web applications, and email/groupware services.

2. **Information resource owner**: a person or entity responsible for:
   a. a business function; and
   b. determining controls and access to information resources supporting that business function.

   In the College of Architecture an example of an information resource owner would be the Department of Construction Science, or the Business Office.

3. **Information resource custodian**: A person (or department) providing operational support for an information system and having responsibility for implementing owner-defined controls and access privileges. In the College of Architecture an example of an information resource custodian would be Information Technology Services (ITS).
4. **End-user:** a person who uses an information resource, usually accessed by means of a computer account, and identified by a username and password. In the College of Architecture, both students and employees are end-users.

5. **Computer account:** Usually identified by a unique username, a computer account is the means by which end-users authenticate themselves to the information system, and the mechanism by which they are granted authorization to use that system. All students and employees at Texas A&M University are able to claim a *NetID* which serves as their primary computer account for most university and college information systems.

**PROCEDURES**

1. **UNIVERSITY COMPUTER ACCOUNTS**

   **NetID discussion**

2. **END-USER ROLES AND ACCOUNT TYPES**

   There are three broad classifications of end-users that use computer accounts within the college, separated by the sources that supply the account information:

   a. **Student accounts,** which are created and disabled automatically each semester based on data supplied by EIS.
   b. **Employee accounts,** which are created as needed based on instructions from the college Human Resources office.
   c. **Sponsored accounts,** created for guests as needed based on requests from COA faculty or staff.

3. **STUDENT ACCOUNTS**

   a. The college receives data feeds with student registration records on a regular basis from Enterprise Information Systems (EIS). This data is used to create and update student accounts at the beginning of each semester. ITS is responsible to ensure that the correct data is obtained from EIS in a timely and appropriate manner.
   b. College information systems use university NetID accounts to grant access to enrolled students. Computer accounts are automatically created in college systems
that link to the student’s NetID, and authentication is handled by university systems (passwords are not stored on college information systems).

c. Students are not provided email accounts by the college. All TAMU students are provided a Google mailbox through the university, and their netid@tamu.edu address is recorded with their account information.

d. Student accounts are only active as long as the student is enrolled in college classes. Once the student no longer appears in the data feeds from EIS, access to college resources is removed (there is a grace period sufficient to maintain access during the semester break for students continuously enrolled across successive semesters). Department heads are required to notify ITS if the course designations change for any program under their administration.

e. The resources granted to students may vary based on the student’s classification; e.g. graduate students may be given a longer expiration policy than undergraduates, or granted access to systems restricted to general use.

4. EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTS

a. There are two types of employee accounts, distinguished by the classification of the employee by Texas A&M:

   i. **Non-temporary employee accounts**, which are granted to faculty and staff hired to an indefinite appointment, and contain no account expiration date

   ii. **Temporary employee accounts**, which are granted to student employees (both graduate and undergraduate) and staff or faculty on limited appointments, and are always created with an expiration date

b. Employee accounts (both non-temporary and temporary) are created based on instructions from the college HR office. When normal systems are insufficient and manual intervention is necessary for the creation of an employee account, authorization must be provided to ITS in writing.

c. Temporary employee accounts are always created with an expiration date. For faculty or staff, this expiration date should be the day the appointment terminates. For student employees, this expiration date will be the end of the current semester,
unless the supervising manager has provided a specific date in writing to ITS.

d. ITS will send an email to all supervising managers of temporary employees 30 days before their temporary employee accounts expire. To extend the account authorization, the supervisor must confirm that the individual is still employed by the college by indicating the same in the account management system (http://myaccount.arch.tamu.edu/).

e. Because the college relies on university-provided NetID accounts for authentication, many individuals will use the same computer account to fulfil more than one role (such as a student who is also an employee). In the case of student employees, they are granted additional entitlements to their NetID account. When the employment ends, this entitlement is removed, but this does not affect any other entitlements that may exist on their account (such as a student entitlement granted based on enrollment data).

f. Employee accounts are deleted 30 days after they expire. ITS will send an email to the supervisor 14 days before the account removal, with instructions on how to access any data stored on COA systems that may have been owned by the employee.

g. Non-temporary employee accounts are expired and removed at the direction of the college HR office. It is the responsibility of the college HR office to inform ITS in writing within five (5) business days of any employee termination or retirement.

h. Terminated or retired employees can retain access to some college resources in special circumstances. These resources are:

   i. A college computer account with login to college computers
   ii. Access to file resources on networked file storage
   iii. Mail forwarding from a college address to an external email address

   ITS must be provided a list of which resources the former employee will be granted. This list must specify a time period for this special access, include a justification for why granting the individual this access provides “a benefit to the University” (Texas A&M ISCC AC-2), and must come directly from the unit head.

5. SPONSORED ACCOUNTS
a. Sponsored accounts are computer accounts granted to guests of the college. Sponsored accounts are created on an as-needed basis, and can be requested by any college faculty or staff employee, who will then be recorded as the sponsor for that account. Sponsored accounts are typically used to allow guests access to college resources like open access computers or classroom podiums.

b. To create a guest account, the sponsoring employee must provide the guest’s full name, an email address, an expiration date for the account, and—if the guest is affiliated with Texas A&M University—their UIN. This information must be provided to ITS in writing with at least 24 hours notice for the account to be usable.

c. Sponsored accounts are always created with an expiration date. If a date is not provided by the account sponsor with the initial request, the account will be created with an expiration date for seven (7) days after the request.

d. Sponsored accounts are deleted 30 days after their expiration date. ITS will send an email to the sponsor 14 days before the account is removed, with instructions on how to access any data stored on COA systems that may have been created by the guest.

6. ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

a. Computer accounts will always require a password. This password will conform to industry best practices for complexity and expiration length. The college has elected to use the default password complexity requirements established by Microsoft for the currently implemented version of Active Directory, and has elected to match the expiration length for NetIDs used by CIS (currently 180 days).

b. Whenever possible, tools will be created to allow for self-service management of end-user computer accounts, including password resets, unlocking accounts, and editing personal information stored in the user’s profile.

c. Passwords for computer accounts can be reset at the ITS Helpdesk. The end-user must appear personally at the Helpdesk in Langford A 122, and show a valid picture ID to verify their identity. The account will be set to a temporary
password, and the end-user will be forced to reset the password again upon their next login.

d. Passwords will never be reset over the phone, due to the difficulties of validating an end-user’s identity remotely.