**University of Alabama at Birmingham**

**MINIMUM SECURITY FOR COMPUTING DEVICES RULE**

Approved and Implemented: July 1, 2017

Reviewed/Updated: June 28, 2021

**Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources**

[Acceptable Use Policy](http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-IT-POL-0000004.aspx)

[Data Protection and Security Policy](https://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-IT-POL-0000038.aspx)

[Data Classification Rule](https://www.uab.edu/it/home/component/k2/item/801-data-classification-rule)

[Data Protection Rule](https://www.uab.edu/it/home/component/k2/item/818-data-protection-rule)

[Vulnerability Management Rule](https://web.ad.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/Vulnerability-Management-Rule.aspx)

[Patch Management Rule](https://www.uab.edu/it/home/patch-rule)

**1.0 Overview**

The UAB Acceptable Use Policy outlines acceptable use of computing and network resources at UAB. The Policy states that computing devices must meet specific technical and security standards before connection to the University network and that computing devices must meet specific protection requirements before storing or transmitting sensitive or restricted data.

**2.0 Objective/Purpose**

This document outlines the minimum security standards that are required for all computing devices owned by UAB and/or connected to the UAB network, along with all devices that store or transmit Restricted or Sensitive data, as defined by the UAB Data Classification Rule. This document also governs all enforcement procedures and exception requests tied to the Minimum Security for Computing Devices Rule. The purpose of these requirements is to reduce the risk to the security of individual systems and data while mitigating risks to the operation of the UAB network.

**3.0 Security Standards Rule**

UAB Information Security has adopted the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) [Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Security](https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework) as the basis for the university-wide set of security standards and guidelines.

**4.0 Minimum Security for All Computing Devices**

**4.1 Physical security** — Computing devices shall be protected from unauthorized physical access and theft.

**4.2 Operating Systems** — Up-to-date, vendor-supported operating systems are required for all computing devices.

**4.3 Applications** — Up-to-date, vendor-supported and open-source applications are required for all computing devices.

**4.4 Patching and updates** — All computing devices shall have patches and updates applied on a consistent and regular schedule. Computing devices shall have all applicable security updates installed as soon as practicable, or as defined within the UAB Vulnerability Management Rule.

**4.5 Endpoint protection software** — UAB Enterprise endpoint protection software shall be used and kept up-to-date on devices where the use of such software is practical.

**4.6 Software firewall** — Firewall software shall be used and kept up-to-date on devices that have firewall software capabilities.

**4.7 Access control** — Devices shall require sign-on or login for users. Users shall be authenticated by means of unique ID and passwords/passphrases or by other authentication processes (e.g. biometrics or smart cards). In general, only encrypted authentication mechanisms or protocols shall be used. When passwords/passphrases are used, their construction and management shall comply with the UAB Password/Passphrase Standard.

**4.8 Un-authenticated email relays and proxy services** — Devices shall not operate as an unauthenticated email relay or proxy service.

**4.9 Unnecessary services, protocols and ports** — Services, protocols, and ports that are not necessary for the device to perform its function or mission shall be uninstalled.

**4.10 Encryption of laptop computers used for UAB Business** — All laptop computers used for UAB business must be encrypted to protect data from unauthorized disclosure.

#### **5.0 Minimum Security for Computing Devices that store or transmit Restricted/PHI and/or Sensitive data**

Responsibility for the security of a device covered by this rule and its data shall be assigned to the individual who is designated as its primary user or owner.

Restricted/PHI data must be stored on servers located in the UAB data center or UAB Health System data center and centrally managed.

#### **5.1 Servers**

In addition to the requirements outlined above in section 4.0 for all computing devices, all server-class devices that store or process Restricted/PHI and Sensitive data shall meet the following minimum security requirements:

**5.1.1** **Physical security** — Server-class devices shall be placed within a protected and monitored area with a secure perimeter (e.g. walls, lockable doors, lockable server racks and windows) that protects the system from unauthorized physical access.

**5.1.2 Limit network access** — Network access to Restricted and Sensitive systems shall be limited to the least access necessary for the device to perform its function/mission.

**5.1.3** **Access control** — User accounts and users shall have a unique identifier (user ID/login name) that is assigned for their personal use only and not shared. Privileges shall be restricted and controlled in accordance with the principle of least privilege to reduce opportunities for unauthorized access or misuse of the system.

Access and privileges shall be authorized by an appropriate authority and reviewed at regular intervals.

**5.1.4 Protection against brute-force login attacks** — Controls shall be put in place to limit failed login attempts. (Back off algorithms)

**5.1.5** **Session controls** — Controls shall be put in place to ensure that inactive sessions shall expire after a defined period of inactivity.

**5.1.6 Logging, monitoring and review** — System administrator, user activities and system events shall be logged, forwarded to the UAB Enterprise Security Incident and Event Management (SIEM), and reviewed daily. Logs shall be retained for a period of at least one year or a period deemed practicable by the University department/unit responsible for the security of the device. Relevant logs include, but are not limited to Windows Application, Security, and System event logs, system and application authentication logs, and webserver logs.

**5.1.7** **Identification and management of vulnerabilities** — Devices shall be hardened prior to implementation. Security updates shall be applied and unnecessary services uninstalled in order to minimize potential technical vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities shall be identified and evaluated using a repeatable, documented, routine process, and appropriate measures shall be taken to remediate significant vulnerabilities.

**5.1.8** **Change management** — A formal process shall be adopted to review, approve, and test configuration changes before the changes are implemented to ensure that the changes do not adversely impact the operation or security of the device.

**5.1.9** **Encrypted transmission of data** — Encrypted protocols or secure channels shall be used to transmit Restricted and Sensitive data to and from the device. A UAB-approved VPN shall be used to access to UAB resources from outside the UAB network.

**5.1.10 Data containment** — Controls need to be implemented that govern and prevent unauthorized transmission of Restricted/PHI data from systems that are authorized to process Restricted/PHI data.

**5.1.11 Remove Restricted and Sensitive data when no longer needed** — A process shall be adopted to regularly review archived files and delete files containing Restricted or Sensitive data when the files are no longer needed.

*\*\* Avoid storing Restricted or Sensitive data unnecessarily. \*\**

**5.1.12** **Administrator restrictions —** Server administrators are required to use standard, least-privileged accounts and only will elevate to administrative privileges when necessary to perform a specific job task. Web surfing from a server to the Internet by administrators is prohibited, and email clients will not be installed on a server-class device.

#### **5.2 Desktops**

In addition to the requirements outlined above in section 4.0 for all computing devices, all desktop-class devices that process Restricted/PHI or Sensitive data shall meet the following minimum security requirements:

**5.2.1 Physical security** — Desktop devices shall be placed in reasonably secure areas, such as lockable offices, and not in publicly assessable areas.

**5.2.2 Auto-lock screens** — Desktop devices shall be configured to automatically lock and require a logon after being unattended or inactive for a predefined period of time.

* Areas in scope of regulatory requirements should be configured to lock after 15 minutes of inactivity;
* Conference rooms may be configured to lock after 60 minutes of inactivity;
* Classroom podium systems may be configured to lock after the maximum time of a standard class in that space.

**5.2.3 Least privilege for user accounts** — User accounts shall be configured with the least privileges necessary for the users to perform their job/role.

**5.2.4 Protection from drive-by malware** — Reasonable methods shall be used to prevent or disable web-browsing capabilities on devices that store or process Restricted or Sensitive data. In cases where it is not possible to disable or prevent web browsing, alternative methods — such as application-layer firewalls, proxy servers and web content filters, or application safe-listing — shall be implemented to protect against drive-by attacks and malware.

**5.2.5 Remove Restricted and Sensitive data when no longer needed** — Devices shall be configured to automatically delete temporary files, temporary Internet files, clear web browser caches, etc.

A process shall be adopted to regularly review archived files and delete files containing Restricted or Sensitive data when the files are no longer needed.

Restricted data shall not be stored on desktop-class devices.

**5.2.6** **Encrypt Sensitive data** — Sensitive data stored on the device shall be stored in encrypted files or within encrypted volumes.

#### **5.3 Laptops, tablets, and mobile devices**

In addition to the requirements outlined above in section 4.0 for all computing devices, all laptop and mobile-class devices that store or process restricted/PHI and/or sensitive data shall meet the following minimum security requirements:

**5.3.1 Auto-lock** — Devices shall be configured to automatically lock and require a logon, pin, or other means of authentication after being unattended or inactive for a predefined period of time. A minimum of 15 minutes is required for laptops, tablets, and mobile devices.

**5.3.2 Protection from theft** — Whenever possible, the device should be protected from theft by storing the device in a secure location, anchoring with a security cable, etc.

Tracking/location software shall be installed or enabled on the device, if practicable.

**5.3.3 Least privilege for user accounts** — User accounts shall be configured with the least privileges necessary for the users to perform their job/role.

#### **5.4 International Travel and Export Control**

All laptop and mobile-class devices used for International travel shall meet the minimum security requirements in sections 4.0 Minimum Security for All Computing Devices and 5.3 Laptops, tablets, and mobile devices for International travel with Sensitive data. International travel with Restricted/PHI data requires the submission and approval of an [Information Security Exception Request form](https://www.uab.edu/it/home/images/Information_Security_Exception_Request_Fillable_Form.pdf). Please refer to the [Data Protection Rule](http://www.uab.edu/it/home/component/k2/item/818-data-protection-rule) and the [International Travel Guidelines](http://www.uab.edu/it/home/it-travel-guidelines) for more information. Utilizing a VPN while traveling internationally is essential to protecting your system and your sensitive data to include your username / password for applications you login to.

#### **6.0 Enforcement and Implementation**

#### **6.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

Each University academic and business unit is responsible for implementing, reviewing and monitoring internal policies, practices, etc. to assure compliance with this standard security rule.

The Vice President of Information Technology Office is responsible for enforcing this standard security rule.

#### **6.2 Consequences and Sanctions**

Non-compliance with these standards may incur the same types of disciplinary measures and consequences as violations of other University policies, including progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment. In the cases where students are involved, such issues will result in the reporting of a Student Code of Conduct violation.

Any device that does not meet the minimum security requirements outlined in this standard may be removed from the UAB network, disabled, etc., as appropriate until the device can comply with this standard.

#### **7.0 Exceptions**

Exceptions may be granted in cases where security risks have mitigating controls in place to lessen the intensity from a critical to a minimal level. To request a security exception, complete the [UAB Security Policy Exception](https://uabprod.service-now.com/service_portal?id=sc_category&sys_id=b179a61437d34e8024a67c1643990e80) Request from the UAB IT Tech Help portal.

**Change History:**

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| **Revision** | **Description** | **Approval** | **Date** |
| 1.0 | Initial document | Dr. Curt Carver | 7/1/2017 |
|  | Reviewed - no changes/updates |  | 6/4/2018 |
|  | Reviewed - no changes/updates |  | 6/3/2019 |
| 2.0 | Added 4.3 – applications must be current and vendor-supported  5.2.2 and 5.3.1 added time requirements on locks due to inactivity  7.0 changed exceptions paragraph to match current process  Minor grammar and punctuation changes throughout | Dr. Curt Carver | 3/9/2020 |
| 3.0 | 4.5 – change anti-malware software requirement to UAB Enterprise end point protection agent. | Dr. Curt Carver | 6/28/2021 |