NWU ®

Information Technology

Password Rules

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Information Technology

1   Background

Passwords are the first line of protection against unauthorised access and use of information systems.

Unauthorised access to the University's information or systems has been identified as a significant information security risk that must be proactively managed.

Access to our IT resources by unauthorised persons or computer processes can result in:

- The University's sensitive information (personal, staff, and students; research; financial) being compromised.

- Non-compliance to legal and regulatory requirements.

- Prosecution through non-adherence to legislation; and

- An adverse impact on the University's image and reputation.

2   Purpose

The purpose of the Password rules is to establish a standard for creating strong passwords, protecting those passwords, and the frequency of change.

3   Application

This Password rules apply to all persons who have or are responsible for an account (or any form of access that supports or requires a password) on any system that resides at any North-West University facility and/or has access to the NWU network and/or stores any non-public NWU information. Refer to IT Fair use rules (*http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/information-technology/documents/IT_Fair_Use_Rules_Sept2019_for_publication.pdf, Addendum A, section1,1.1*)

4   Exceptions

Non-NWU IT managed systems, whether or not they are cloud-based or on-premise.

5   Rules

5.1   All system authentication credentials assigned to users are for personal use and must not be shared or disclosed to any third party, staff member, or student. See IT Fair use rules (*http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/information-technology/documents/IT_Fair_Use_Rules_Sept2019_for_publication.pdf*)

5.2   Users should not use e-Mail services to transfer sensitive data over the Internet, such as usernames, passwords, and account numbers. See e-mail rules and guidelines (*http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/information-technology r/sc/email/GWRules-and-guideline-for-the-use-of-Electronic-Mail.pdf, Heading 5.1*)

5.3   The following are prohibited:

- Obtaining or using another user's password without that user's consent, in writing.

- Development, ownership, or possession of programs with which passwords may be obtained or guessed

- Attempts to change another person's password using his ID card.

- Disclosure of user credentials (own or that of another colleague) to colleagues, friends, or family members may not be concluded without the written permission of the relevant head of department (HOD);

- Announcement or documentation of credentials may not be concluded without the written permission of the relevant head of department (HOD); See IT infrastructure rules *(http://services.nwu.ac.za/sites/services.nwu.ac.za/files/files/information-technology/documents/Rules-guidelines-ITinfrastructures.pdf page 2).d*

5.4   All users of university information systems must abide by the minimum password protection standards outlined for password creation on the official password change website. Strong password creation hints are also available here. (https://password.nwu.ac.za).

5.5   Password-based authentication credentials expire by default every 3 (three) months.

5.6   It is the user's responsibility to change passwords using the NWU password change website. Should they suspect their credentials have been compromised, notify IT of any suspected compromise of their assigned authentication credentials.

5.7   Making use of the remember password feature is a security risk. IT recommends not using this feature under any circumstances.

5.8   In the event that a line manager needs to access a staff member's credentials for any business process to continue, and the staff member can not be reached or does not want to consent to give their credentials, the HOD can log a ticket with IT requesting access. This will only be done when no other option is available to gain the same outcome, due to it being in the best interest of the NWU for business to proceed as normal.

6   Rule violations

Violations of these rules will be handled by NWU procedures established for the staff or student discipline.