

Why some universities don't allow professors to use university email accounts upon retirement?

ChatGPT 05.02.2026

A few overlapping reasons - most of them pretty mundane, not personal.

1. Security and risk management

University email accounts are tied into a big ecosystem: internal systems, shared drives, research data, student records. Once someone isn't an employee anymore, IT wants a clean break to reduce the risk of breaches, phishing, or accidental access to things they shouldn't see. From their perspective, fewer active accounts = fewer doors to guard.

2. Legal and compliance issues

Emails sent from a university address can be considered official institutional communication. If a retired professor keeps using that address, the university could still be legally exposed—to public records requests, lawsuits, or policy violations—without having any authority over the person's actions anymore.

3. Brand and authority control

An email ending in @university.edu carries implied authority. Universities worry about retired faculty speaking "on behalf of" the institution—intentionally or not—especially on controversial topics, grant matters, or student issues.

4. Cost and administrative simplicity

Individually, email accounts are cheap. At scale, managing thousands of exceptions is not. IT departments tend to prefer clean, uniform rules over nuanced "this person can keep it, that person can't" arrangements.

5. Data ownership and records retention

Universities often have obligations to archive or produce emails. Letting retirees continue generating email inside that system complicates who owns those messages, how long they must be retained, and who can authorize access later.

6. Cultural assumptions about employment

Some institutions still treat retirement as a hard stop rather than a transition. Even if a retired professor is still publishing, mentoring, or collaborating, policy may not reflect how academic life actually works.

That said, many universities do allow continued email access (sometimes with limits), especially for emeritus faculty—precisely because cutting it off disrupts research networks, professional identity, and external collaborations.

So when it happens, it's usually not punitive. It's bureaucracy + risk aversion + one-size-fits-all IT policy colliding with the reality that academic careers don't really end at retirement.

What are the (estimated) costs of using university email account per person (professor or student) per year?

There is no evidence that retired professors pose a security problem if they continue to use university email accounts

There's No Major Peer-Reviewed Study Specifically on "Retired Professors + Email Risk". So far, the evidence does not include academic research specifically measuring the security risk of retired professors' continued access. Rather:

The security risk is inferred from general IT practice (unused accounts = attack surface).

Institutional policies treat retirees' accounts the same as ex-employee accounts for security reasons.

Higher education cybersecurity reports highlight credential theft and compromised .edu accounts broadly.

There simply isn't an established, peer-reviewed study proving that retired professors' accounts are uniquely risky compared with any other dormant account type.

How much does it cost in dollars (estimation) a university to provide email account services to student or professor?

The cost of licensing & hosting services (in dollars - estimate) a university has to provide email account to students or faculty

Most universities don't run their own email servers these days; they use a third-party hosted platform such as Microsoft 365 Education or Google Workspace for Education.

Microsoft 365 Education

- Microsoft offers an Office 365 A1 (Education) tier that can be provided *free* to eligible educational institutions, which includes Outlook email and other web-based tools.
- Higher tiers (e.g., A3/A5) with desktop apps, enhanced security and management tools *can* incur licensing costs if a university chooses them, though many institutions negotiate volume or site agreements. According to third-party pricing data, academic subscription plans sometimes run on the order of ~\$40–\$80 per user per year for premium tiers, but *these are list/reseller prices and not necessarily what universities pay in volume deals.*

Google Workspace for Education

- The Education Fundamentals edition (which includes email via Gmail) is *free for eligible schools.*

- Paid tiers (e.g., Education Plus) add security/AI capabilities, and require per-user licensing; pricing is negotiated and not publicly posted.
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Summary for licensing costs:

- Basic email for students/faculty can cost \$0 per user per year if using the free education tier from Microsoft or Google.
- If a university opts for premium services, a rough *list-price estimate* might be \$30 to \$100 per user per year, but large schools often pay less thanks to volume pricing deals.