

Keeping a University Email Account After Retirement: A Big Problem for Many Retired Professors in 2026

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As of 2025, the retention of university email accounts upon retirement is a recognized global issue, often framed by advocacy groups as a matter of "digital ageism" or a failure to uphold "age-friendly university" principles, according to reports in late 2024 and 2025. The broader academic community is heavily engaged in advocating for this access to support retired researchers. The focus of the eRegion/Emeriti Initiative aligns with broader European initiatives on active aging and digital participation.

Current Context & Position (2025):

The "Emeriti Initiative": Launched in October 2025, this initiative directly aims to convince university administrations to allow all retired professors to retain their email accounts and access IT infrastructure to foster active aging, community engagement, and scientific collaboration.

Discrimination Concerns: The Professors Emeriti Network has labeled the termination of access for non-emeriti retired professors as "digital ageism". They argue that it hampers ongoing scholarly activity, mentorship, and connection to the academic community.

University Autonomy: Retention policies vary widely, with some universities providing lifetime access to all, while others cut off access entirely for non-emeriti, forcing reliance on private emails, which hinders access to journals, ResearchGate, and academic databases.

Shift Towards Restriction: Some institutions are tightening rules due to security, cost, or storage concerns. For example, some universities are implementing strict, short, one-month grace periods for email access after the end of employment.

Alternative Solutions: Where full access is not provided, some institutions are transitioning retired staff to restricted @alumni.eu or @former.eui.eu domains to maintain connections.

Key Findings on 2025 Landscape:

Active Aging Support: The initiative promotes the use of digital technologies (AI, online meetings) to enhance the well-being of seniors 55+.

International Disparity: Email retention is more common in the U.S. and Canada for retired staff, while European retired professors frequently face restrictions, limiting their ability to *continue research collaborations*.

Call for Inclusivity: The movement calls for administrations to treat retired faculty as valuable, ongoing contributors rather than liabilities, particularly highlighting that not all active researchers hold the "Emeritus" title.