

How much does it cost a university annually to provide a university email account after a professor retires?

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The annual cost to a university of keeping a retired professor's email account active is usually very small, but it depends on the email system and storage provided. In most cases, it falls roughly in the range of: \approx \$0 to \$100 per year per account (often much less). Here's why.

1. Many universities pay almost nothing per account

Most universities use large institutional services like:

- Google Workspace for Education
- Microsoft 365 Education

The base versions can be free for institutions. For example, Google Workspace Education Fundamentals is listed at £0 per user for core services like email and basic collaboration.

So if a retired professor keeps an account with minimal storage, the direct licensing cost can literally be \$0.

However, the university still has indirect costs.

2. Typical paid education licenses

Some universities pay for upgraded plans (for storage, security, or Office apps).

Typical education pricing is roughly:

- Microsoft 365 Education A3: about \$38–\$55 per faculty user per year
- Microsoft 365 Education A5: about \$65–\$96 per user per year
- Some Google education upgrades: about \$33–\$48 per user per year depending on features.

So if a retired professor keeps the full license, the university might pay \$40–\$100/year.

3. Many universities reduce retired accounts to “email only”

To save money, universities often:

- Limit storage (e.g., 15 GB for emeritus accounts)
- Remove extras like cloud storage or collaboration tools
- Keep email forwarding only

In those cases, the real cost is mostly:

- a tiny portion of the institutional license
- storage
- IT management

That often works out to a few dollars per year per user.

4. Why universities still keep them

Universities often keep retired faculty emails because:

- publications still list that email

- ongoing collaborations and peer review
- emeritus status
- alumni relations and donations

The goodwill is usually worth the small cost.

Typical real-world estimate

Scenario	Approx annual cost
Free education license	\$0–\$5
Email-only / minimal storage	\$1–\$10
Full Microsoft/Google faculty license	\$40–\$100

Bottom line:

For a retired professor, maintaining an email account usually costs a university somewhere between almost nothing and about \$100/year, with \$1–\$10/year being common when it's just basic email.