

**Universities that terminate  
professors' university email accounts upon retirement  
cite high costs as one of the reasons.  
What the *actual likely direct cost range per retiree*?**

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Here's a realistic, evidence-based estimate of the direct per-retiree email cost—based on how university email systems are actually priced.

**Bottom line (short answer)**

For a retired professor whose account is kept active:

Typical direct cost: ~€0 to €100 per year

Most commonly: ~€10–€60 per year

Anything much higher than that is usually not a pure “email cost” but includes broader IT overhead.

**Where that number comes from**

*1) Email licensing (the main real cost)*

Modern university email runs on platforms like Google Workspace or Microsoft 365.

- Entry-level pricing: about \$7–\$8 per user/month (~€6–€7)
- That equals roughly:
  - €70–€100/year per account (retail pricing)

But universities:

- negotiate large discounts
- or use education plans that are free or extremely cheap

Example:

- Google Workspace for Education basic tier: free
- Add-ons or security tiers: only a few euros per user per year

So real marginal licensing cost per retiree is often:

- €0–€30/year

*2) Storage cost (usually small unless extreme users)*

Storage is often:

- pooled across all users (e.g., 100 TB shared)
- not billed per individual retiree

Typical marginal storage cost:

- A few euros/year for normal usage
- Could rise if someone stores hundreds of GB or TB

Realistic estimate:

- €0–€20/year per retiree (for typical usage) 3) Admin / IT overhead (the “hidden” part)

### 3) Admin / IT overhead (the “hidden” part)

This is where universities inflate “cost” narratives.

Includes:

- account management systems
- security monitoring
- password resets / support tickets

But crucially:

These are mostly fixed costs, not per-user costs

Marginal cost per additional inactive retiree:

- often very close to zero

At most:

- €5–€20/year (allocated estimate)

### Putting it together. Realistic marginal cost per retiree

Component	Typical annual cost
License	€0 – €30
Storage	€0 – €20
Admin overhead	€5 – €20
<b>Total</b>	<b>€5 – €70/year</b>

### Why universities claim “high cost”

Because they often mix in:

- full enterprise license pricing (even if not needed)
- average cost per employee (not marginal retiree)
- IT department budgets divided by users

That can produce numbers like:

€100–€300/year

...but that’s accounting fiction, not actual incremental cost.

### Key insight

The true marginal cost of keeping a retired professor’s email alive is very low—often: less than the cost of a single printed letter per year

So when universities cite “high costs,” they are usually referring to:

- policy simplification
- risk reduction
- or budget optics

—not the real per-person expense.