Microsoft 365 for Education updates

Storage Changes

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated in **December** 2023

Microsoft

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QUESTIONS

Storage changes

What are the changes Microsoft is making to Microsoft 365 storage?

Microsoft is introducing changes to our storage offerings across our Microsoft 365 for Education suite. Beginning at your next contract renewal, but no sooner than August 1, 2024*, all institutions' tenants will receive 100TB of free pooled storage across OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange, with an additional 50GB or 100GB of pooled storage per paid user for A3 and A5 subscriptions, respectively (not including Student Use Benefits). With pooled storage, an institutions' total storage limit is the maximum amount of storage all users combined can use.

In addition, effective February 1, 2024, users of Office 365 A1 (free subscription) will be limited to a maximum of 100GB of OneDrive storage within the institutional tenant's 100TB of pooled storage. Institutions will have the option to purchase additional incremental storage based on their needs. Some of the benefits we expect to see include helping institutions reduce some of the security risks associated with legacy storage and data sprawl, a top concern for most chief risk officers, while also reducing our shared environmental footprint.

*Important Note: Technical enforcement will begin August 1, 2024. Today, most institutions (99.96%) are well below their storage allotment. For any mid-enrolment customer over that storage limit on August 1, 2024, Microsoft will provide additional storage to address pooled storage overage at no cost through the length of the customer's current term. To avoid any disruptions to services, customers will need to contact your Microsoft representative to acquire additional storage.

Why is Microsoft making these changes to Microsoft 365 storage?

With the move to the cloud, stored files, data, and unused accounts have increased significantly over time, as more and more stored files and data have proliferated without a plan for end-of-life. This is not sustainable from a cost perspective, and it puts education institutions and their students at risk for a data breach. Today, education is the most affected industry by cybercrime, with K-12 receiving [over 80% of workplace malware attacks](#) alone.

In addition, stored files no longer in use have an impact on our carbon footprint, with over half of all data stored by organizations not serving a useful purpose. Storage of this "dark" data takes up space on servers and results in increased electricity consumption, generating 4% of global greenhouse gas

emissions in 2020 alone.[1] Microsoft is committed to both the security and privacy of institutional and student data as well as reducing our collective carbon footprint. Already, our datacenters are built with the highest environmental standards in mind. With this change, education customers can help do their part.

Finally, Microsoft's mission in education is to empower students, faculty, and education institutions to achieve more. To achieve this mission, Microsoft continues to innovate on new technology, tools and services for educators, such as the new [Learning Accelerators](#) introduced earlier this year to help students with reading and other essential skills. Today, Microsoft provides Office 365 and Microsoft 365 for Education suites built for education through free software grants or at significant discounts from commercial pricing. With these new updates, we can continue to invest in meaningful innovation while offering those services to more institutions around the world.

What does this mean for institutions?

To help institutions with this transition, Microsoft is delivering a set of free tools to help manage the process end-to-end, including tools to visualize current storage allocation and usage across OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange, and tools to more easily manage stored data and end-of-life stored files that are no longer needed. Today, most institutions (99.96%) are well below their storage allotment. With new tools, all institutions can now better manage their information and set thoughtful policies for governance. To see your institutional tenant's current storage profile and access the new storage management tools, go to the Microsoft 365 Admin Center. For storage guidance, download the [Microsoft 365 Storage Guidance eBook](#).

When will my storage limits go into effect?

The storage limits go into effect Aug 1, 2024. For institutions whose contracts were signed prior to August 1, 2023, and are approaching or over their storage limit, you can request storage packs through the end of your current contract period through your Microsoft representative. See the table on the next page for more detail.

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Pooled storage limit enforcement

Contract signing date	Pooled storage	Office 365 A1	Microsoft 365 A3	Microsoft 365 A5
Prior to August 1, 2023	• Storage technical limit goes into effect Aug 1, 2024 • Storage calculated as 100TB + 50GB x A3 paid user + 100GB x A5 paid users + Paid Storage Packs • Customers approaching or over the limit can request storage packs through end of current contract period.	• Consumes, but does not add to, pooled storage • 100GB max limit beginning Feb 1, 2024 • IT can set lower limits to manage pooled storage	• Adds 50GB to pool* • Limit set by IT	• Adds 100GB to pool* • Limit set by IT
After August 1, 2023	• Storage technical limit goes into effect Aug 1, 2024 • Storage calculated as 100TB + 50GB x A3 paid user + 100GB x A5 paid users + Paid Storage Packs • Student Use Benefits (SUB) and alumni do not contribute to the pool			
O365A1-only tenant	• Storage technical limit goes into effect Aug 1, 2024. • 100TB pooled storage		N/A	N/A

*Student Use Benefit (SUB) does NOT contribute to the pooled storage; it consumes against the pooled storage.

Pooled storage

How much storage is our institution currently entitled to?

Every institution's tenant has a 100TB base storage capacity. Microsoft 365 and Office 365 A3 and A5 paid user licenses add 50GB or 100GB respectively to the pool of storage. In addition, institutions can purchase additional pooled storage in 10TB increments for $300 estimated retail USD monthly to add to the tenant pool.

To find your capacity, use this calculation: 100TB + (#A3 paid users x 50GB) + (#A5 paid users x 100 GB) + (additional storage purchased) = capacity/limit.

Here's an example:

      100 TB Default Limit (102,400 GB)

+ **500 A3 Faculty Licenses** (25,000 GB)

+ **1,000 A5 Faculty Licenses** (100,000 GB)

+ **3x 10TB Storage Packs** (30,720 GB)

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= **Total Pooled Storage Allocation/Limit** (258,120 GB)

For details and a [full list of licenses that contribute to pooled storage](#), visit the [Office 365 Education Service Description Update](#) web page.

How do I find out how much storage we are using today?

To find out how much storage your institution's tenant is using, you can pull the storage report from the Microsoft 365 Admin Center. To do so, visit [admin.microsoft.com](#) and follow this path: Microsoft 365 Admin Center > Reports > Storage.

Which role-based access control roles are required to view the Microsoft 365 Admin Center storage page?

Admins need to be assigned either the Global Admin role or the SharePoint Admin role to view the storage dashboard.

What services are included in the pooled storage?

Pooled storage is specifically across OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange. For SharePoint, the storage includes all sites. For Exchange, it includes user, shared, and group mailboxes. However, archived, public, and discovery mailboxes are not included in the storage limit.

Will archive mailboxes be included?

No, pooled storage only counts and includes user, shared and group mailboxes. Archive mailboxes, public folders and discovery mailboxes are not included in the pooled storage limit. Enabling Archive Mailboxes with MRM policy in Exchange is often one of the best methods to reduce your overall storage profile and consumption against the EDU pooled storage limit.

What counts towards EDU pooled storage if retention policies are enabled?

All content retained within a user's primary mailbox will count toward the EDU pooled storage limit. All content retained within the user's Archive Mailbox will not count against the EDU pooled storage limit. If you enable retention policy with the default Policy Tag (DPT) of Move Item to Archive, the items retained will not count against the EDU Pooled storage limit. For more detail, see Create a Retention Policy in Exchange Online.

What counts towards EDU pooled storage if In-Place Hold or Litigation Hold are enabled?

All items and content within the user's Primary Mailbox will count against EDU pooled storage, while all items and content in the user's Archive Mailbox will not count against EDU Pooled Storage. For more details on In-Place hold and Litigation hold, see In-Place Hold and Litigation Hold in Exchange Online.

What counts towards pooled storage when users are inactive, de-licensed, or deleted?

When a user becomes inactive, all content for the user counts against the EDU pooled storage limit in the same way as when they were active. Microsoft recommends removing inactive users when they are no longer needed, or enabling archive policy to reduce inactive users' overall storage consumption against the EDU Pooled Storage Limit if they must be retained.

When a user's Exchange Online license is removed, the user's mailbox will be triggered for deletion. The mailbox will be soft deleted when the license is removed, and the mailbox will then be retained for 30 days, before the mailbox is permanently deleted. When a user's OneDrive license is removed, the OneDrive becomes orphaned. IT Admins may delete the orphaned OneDrive using the Remove-SPOSite and Remove-SPODeletedSite PowerShell cmdlets and reclaim the space against the EDU Pooled Storage limit.

When a user account is deleted, the user's mailbox will be triggered for deletion. The mailbox will be soft deleted when the license is removed, and the mailbox will then be retained for 30 days, before the mailbox is permanently deleted. When a user is deleted, the user's OneDrive is also tagged for deletion. The OneDrive is first moved to the Recycle bin for 30 days, and then retained for an additional 93 days before being permanently deleted. For more information on the OneDrive deletion process, see OneDrive retention and deletion.

What are the differences in storage across Microsoft 365 licenses?

Office 365 A1 is a free license that does not add to the pooled storage allotment. Microsoft has set a maximum limit of 100GB for free Office 365 A1 users beginning in February 2024. Free Office 365 A1 users consume against the total pooled storage, and IT Admins have the flexibility to set a lower limit to better manage pooled storage across users.

Microsoft 365 A3 and A5 users contribute 50GB and 100GB respectively to the pool of storage for the institution. The 100GB maximum limit ONLY applies to Office 365 A1 users, and A3/A5 users will not receive limits unless set by the IT admin.

For details and a full list of licenses that contribute to pooled storage, visit the Office 365 Education Service Description Update web page.

	Pooled storage	Storage limits
Office 365 A1	No contribution	Limited to max 100GB for OneDrive Current limit of 50GB for Exchange
Microsoft 365 A3	Adds 50GB per paid user	Admin sets limits
Microsoft 365 A5	Adds 100GB per paid user	Admin sets limits

Do Student Use Benefit users or alumni users count against the storage pool?

Paid users contribute to the storage pool. Student Use Benefits (SUB) and alumni do not contribute to the pool. However, all users—including SUB and alumni—consume storage from the pool. Microsoft recommends setting limits across user groups to better manage the pool of storage in the institution's tenant.

🔧 Managing storage

What tools and resources is Microsoft providing to help me manage storage?

To help institutions with this transition, Microsoft is delivering a set of free tools to help manage the process end-to-end, including tools to visualize current storage allocation and usage across OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange, as well as tools to more easily manage stored data or end-of-life stored files that are no longer needed. The following new tools are available to help IT manage storage:

View current storage	Manage and clean up storage	End-user storage management
• View pooled storage limit and breakdown of consumption by services • View top storage consumers of OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange	• Set OneDrive storage limits in bulk • Generate a report of inactive users to delete in bulk*	• Enable users to view and manage OneDrive storage

For storage guidance, download the Microsoft 365 Storage Guidance eBook.

*Available 2024

Can I tell who is overusing their storage allocation?

There is a top storage report that shows the limit and consumption for the top 1,000 mailboxes, OneDrive and SharePoint sites. You will be able to identify anyone who appears as a top 1,000 consumer of storage.

If I'm under the storage limit, how does this impact my institution?

You can work with the sales team and/or your Microsoft partner to examine your current data consumption, your rate of consumption growth and any plans you have in the future for information management. You can determine whether or not you will approach this shared data cap in coming years so you can plan appropriately. Microsoft recommends that all institutions begin to plan and implement thoughtful storage policies for managing storage in the long term. Get the Information Lifecycle and Management whitepaper for guidance to start planning.

What should I do if I'm approaching or over the storage limit?

If your institution's tenant is over the storage limit or approaching the storage limit, you have a few options:

- Set limits and clean up existing storage, referencing the [Microsoft 365 Storage Guidance eBook](#)
- Purchase additional paid user licenses to add to your pool of storage (50GB for Microsoft 365 A3 and 100 for A5 licenses)
- Purchase additional storage in increments of 10TB ($300 USD estimated retail/month)

What happens if my institution's tenant is over the storage limit?

Admins will receive warning notifications at 80% and 90% tenant storage capacity. At 100% capacity, the admin will receive another notification and 30 days to take action. After 30 days, the storage will be locked in a read-only state for both SharePoint and OneDrive if no action has been taken.

In addition, new SharePoint sites and OneDrive sites cannot be created while the services are locked. Exchange will remain unaffected. Your users can continue to receive and send information. You will be able to delete content from OneDrive and SharePoint. Microsoft recommends either cleaning up storage and removing sites or content or increasing your storage capacity through additional A3 or A5 licenses, additional storage packs, or cold storage options like Azure Files or Azure Blob storage.

When the limits go into effect on August 1, 2024, if the tenant reaches 125% capacity, the SharePoint and OneDrive will be immediately moved to a read-only state. For any mid-enrolment customer over that storage limit on August 1, 2024, Microsoft will provide additional storage at no cost through the length of the customer's current term. To avoid any disruptions to services, customers will need to contact your Microsoft representative to acquire additional storage.

What happens if my Office 365 A1 users exceed the 100GB limit?

Users will receive warning notifications when approaching the storage limit. The default notification level is at 90% storage capacity. At 100% capacity, the user's OneDrive will be limited to read-only access. Users won't be able to upload, edit or sync new files to OneDrive, and existing files will remain as read-only. However, users can still download files, delete files and empty recycle bins.

What guidance should I provide to my students to better manage their storage?

Get the [User Guidance](#) to share with your students. This guide provides end users prescriptive guidance to manage their OneDrive storage and Outlook email.

How do I manage graduating student licenses and content in Microsoft 365 Education?

See the following knowledge base (KB) article: [Manage graduating student licenses and content in Microsoft 365 Education.](#)

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Should I deploy multiple tenants vs a single tenant?

Microsoft recommends deploying into a single tenant whenever possible. Multiple tenants are difficult to manage effectively, requiring duplication for every operational task. It's easy to end up with incongruent settings across tenants. You will also get additional storage capacity limits against your pool. Office 365 A1 in every tenant will receive the same max limit in Exchange, SharePoint and OneDrive.

To learn more, visit [Design Multi-Tenant Architecture.](#)

What happens if I have commercial licenses (E3 or E5 licenses) in my education tenant?

If your tenant has assigned a majority of (greater than 50%) EDU licenses compared to non-EDU licenses, or if your tenant has purchased more EDU licenses than non-EDU licenses, the tenant will be managed as an EDU tenant and will be subject to Education Pooled Storage. The pooled storage limit is in addition to other various service level and user level limits specified within this service description documentation. For the full list of licenses being considered as EDU vs. commercial, along with their expected storage allocations, visit [this link](#).

Can I allocate space to a specific user?

IT admins can allocate OneDrive and Exchange mailbox storage at an individual user level. All storage consumed in both locations will count against the tenant's storage pool.

Pooled storage cannot be allocated at the individual user level, because non-user specific storage locations that aren't attributed to an individual (like group mailboxes, shared mailboxes, and SharePoint sites) also consume against the centralized pool of storage.

Is this limit a technical limit or a licensing limit?

Both. Admins will receive warning notifications at 80% and 90% tenant storage capacity. At 100% capacity, the admin will receive another notification and 30 days to take action. After 30 days, the storage will be locked in a read-only state if no action has been taken. The tenant will be locked for both SharePoint and OneDrive. Also new SharePoint sites and OneDrive sites cannot be created while the services are locked. Exchange will remain unaffected. Your users can continue to receive and send emails. You will be able to delete content from OneDrive and SharePoint.

*Note: technical enforcement will begin August 1, 2024. Today, most institutions' tenants (99.96%) are well below their storage allotment. For any mid-enrolment customer over that storage limit on August 1, 2024, Microsoft will provide additional storage at no cost through the length of the customer's

current term. To avoid any disruptions to services, customers will need to contact your Microsoft representative to acquire additional storage.

What is the OneDrive deletion process and how does it affect storage consumption?

When a user account is deleted, their respective OneDrive is tagged for deletion. 30 days after the user account is deleted, the OneDrive is moved to the Recycle Bin. This 30 day setting can be configured by IT using the Set-SPOTenant PowerShell cmdlet. The OneDrive will remain in the Recycle Bin for 93 days more before it is fully deleted and no longer recoverable. Once a OneDrive is fully deleted, it will no longer be counted against the EDU pooled storage limit. Any OneDrive which has not been fully deleted will count against the EDU pooled storage limit. See OneDrive retention and deletion for more detail.

What happens if I remove a user's OneDrive license, and how does it affect storage consumption?

When a OneDrive license is removed, the OneDrive is retained indefinitely without an owner. The only action which triggers a OneDrive for deletion is when a user account is deleted. IT admins can forcibly delete an orphaned OneDrive and reduce their overall storage profile using these two PowerShell cmdlets: Remove-SPOSite and Remove-SPODeletedSite.

Purchasing additional storage

How do I get additional storage?

Institutions can upgrade users to paid licenses and additionally have the option to purchase storage in 10TB increments to add to the pooled storage for the tenant.

There are several ways to manage the need for storage:

1) Clean up current storage or delete files or inactive accounts

2) Upgrade or purchase paid Microsoft 365 licenses that add to the pool of storage (A3 provides 50GB/per user, A5 provides 100GB per user).

3) Purchase storage packs that provide 10TB of pooled storage

4) Look at other solutions such as Azure Files or Azure Blob storage to meet storage requirements

What if I don't want to buy more storage?

To help institutions with this transition, Microsoft is delivering a set of free tools to help manage the process end-to-end, including tools to visualize current storage allocation and usage across OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange, as well as tools to more easily manage stored data or end-of-life stored files that are no longer needed. See above section "What tools and resources are Microsoft providing to help me manage storage."

For storage guidance, download the Microsoft 365 Storage Guidance eBook.

❓ Benefits of Microsoft storage

What is the benefit of staying with Microsoft versus moving to Google?

Microsoft and Google both provide no-cost and discounted collaboration and productivity suites for education. Institutions should evaluate which solution is best to meet their teaching, learning and work-related requirements inclusive of platform services like artificial intelligence, security, accessibility and more. Microsoft's premium license, Microsoft 365 A5, provides a comprehensive platform for learning and work with advanced security, analytics and unified communications.

Microsoft 365 differs from Google's solution across a few key areas:

AI is built into the platform and surfaced through applications and tools to help end users with productivity, learning and more. With Microsoft's investments in AI, this is an area that will continue to develop and grow in the future. Following are a few examples of AI-infused technology in Microsoft 365:

- Microsoft 365 A3 empowers faculty and staff to modernize learning engagement and save time with low/no-code applications and workflows right within Teams using Power Apps and Power Automate. See how Lauren Taylor, an Assistant Principal in Tacoma, built a solution to improve the reading assessment process for students and educators. Microsoft was named a Leader in 2023 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Enterprise Low-Code Application Platforms.

- Microsoft released a new category of Learning Accelerators in 2023 to help students build foundational skills with practice assignments

- Microsoft Viva provides an integrated experience platform that empowers students and educators to be their best

- Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365 is available to purchase for A3/A5 faculty users beginning on January 1st, 2024. If your institutional data is stored in SharePoint and OneDrive, Copilot for M365

can tap into that data to respond to user prompts, provide embedded experiences in Teams and Microsoft 365 apps, and help you make the most of your data.

Microsoft 365 provides advanced analytics to keep educators informed on trends in student activity and growth and to enable faculty and staff to realize significant value from institutional data.

- Education Insights, included in all Microsoft 365 education licenses, uses at-a-glance data views to help educators track their students' Teams activity, from assignment turn-in to engagement in class conversations.

- Microsoft 365 A5 analytics adds Power BI capabilities that help you make better business decisions based on your data. For 14 consecutive years, Gartner has recognized Microsoft as a [Magic Quadrant Leader in analytics and business intelligence platforms](#).

Microsoft 365 provides learners with multiple applications for skill building, including game-based learning. For example...

- Minecraft Education is a game-based platform that inspires creative, inclusive learning through play

- Students can learn how to build low-code applications and workflows with Power Platform

- Students can learn critical data and analytics skills using Excel and Power BI

Microsoft 365 is built for security and secure by design.

- With over $1 billion invested in security research and development per year and over 3,500 security experts working around the clock, Microsoft is dedicated to keeping your institutional data safe. Microsoft's integrated cloud platform provides a holistic portrait of your current security pain points and enables you to take quick action. Threat identification and termination can be customized and even automated, taking stress off busy IT teams. And Microsoft is dedicated to never using your data for commercial purposes, disclose it to the government, or even access it at all without express permission. You maintain complete control over where your data is stored and who gets to see it.

- Microsoft was named a [leader for security in Gartner's Magic Quadrant](#) for the ability to execute and completeness of vision across multiple security areas:

  - Endpoint protection

  - Unified endpoint management

  - Content services platform

  - Enterprise information archiving

  - Analytics and business intelligence

  - Access management

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- Cloud app security
- Cloud and infrastructure platform services