

Microsoft Office 365 Education

Missouri State University faces the complex challenge of fostering an information services environment that promotes efficiency, innovation, and capability while also ensuring reliability, security, and compliance. Missouri State is positioned to leverage the existing Microsoft Campus Agreement to deliver such an environment.

In 2011, Missouri State students were transitioned from in-house email services to the Microsoft Office 365 environment. Outsourcing these services for students allowed the University to deliver enhanced email services as well as a robust set of collaboration tools to students for no additional cost, as part of the Microsoft Campus Agreement. This initiative has proven to be a tremendous success, resulting in numerous requests from faculty and staff members for similar resources.

Unfortunately, the Office 365 environment provided by the Microsoft Campus Agreement did not include the features required to adequately support faculty and staff members without additional annual costs to the University. However, this changed on September 1, 2015, when Microsoft rolled these features into our Microsoft Campus Agreement at no additional cost. The list of benefits and features of the Office 365 Education environment can be reviewed at:

<https://products.office.com/en-us/academic/office-365-education-plan>

Transitioning all faculty and staff members to Office 365 creates an enhanced email and collaboration environment across the Missouri State University system. In addition to enhancing the email and collaborative services for all employees and students, an additional mission-critical benefit gained with the Office 365 environment is the ability to significantly improve the University's capability to better remediate multiple IT-related risk factors identified by the Enterprise Risk Management Committee.

Layers of information security where improvements are expected to be realized include:

- Email Encryption - Email encryption is critical to Missouri State's business functions and regulatory compliance efforts.
- Email Archiving and E-Discovery - Electronic archiving and discovery capabilities of specific electronic communications is required for many regulatory compliance programs.
- Email Filtering Protection – Filtering services provide inbound and outbound email protection by eliminating phishing scams, spam, viruses and malware.
- Storage Services - Data encryption, access, and backup services will be provisioned securely and efficiently, thereby providing the productivity tools students and employees need without the current risks to data storage or policy compliance.

- Disaster Recovery - Data (including electronic mailboxes) is replicated across multiple, geographically dispersed data centers, enabling business continuity during the critical hours and days after a disaster.
- Data Loss Prevention (DLP) - By identifying at-risk information such as credit card numbers, social security numbers, student ID numbers, and HIPAA records, DLP has the ability to alert the computer user when a data compromise is imminent.

The highlights described above emphasize some of the significant enhancements to customer service and the additional value of the integration of risk management capabilities realized by transitioning faculty and staff members into the Office 365 Education environment. To this end, Computer Services partnered with the Alexander Open Systems (AOS) consulting firm to perform the two phased approach needed for this migration.

Phase One: Computer Services engaged with AOS in late July 2015 to enable the Office 365 OneDrive for Business feature for all University employees. Once this phase is complete, OneDrive for Business will provide up to one terabyte of secure storage for each employee. As part of this project, synchronization of user account information between the University's Active Directory system and Office 365, as well as single sign-on capability were configured. This work has positioned Missouri State to more easily move forward with the utilization of additional Office 365 Education services, such as employee email, collaboration toolsets, and additional security and compliance capabilities.

Phase Two: Although Missouri State is well positioned to migrate all employees to the Office 365 Education environment, there is still considerable planning to be completed. Computer Services will continue to work with IT Council, the Enterprise Risk Management Committee, other distributed IT support staff members throughout the University community, and AOS to determine and clearly define the processes needed to migrate the 5,000+ mailboxes and configure the information security and compliance services.

As migration plans are finalized and an associated timeline for Phase Two is completed, a recommendation will be brought forward to Administrative Council for approval.