

Email Forwarding External FAQ

What is happening to alumni email forwarding?

Starting in the summer of 2022 and over the next few years, Harvard will be slowly phasing out all central @post.harvard.edu and @alumni.harvard.edu alumni email forwarding addresses.

As of spring 2021, new email forwarding addresses can no longer be created (meaning any alumni who don't currently have an @alumni.harvard.edu or @post.harvard.edu email forwarding address will be unable to set one up at any time in the future), and, starting in fall 2022, existing addresses will be slowly deactivated over the next few years after advance notice is provided. Anyone with an existing email forwarding address will be given notice far in advance of deactivation. This does not refer to School-specific email addresses or inboxes. Please reach out to your School with questions about School-based offerings.

I have an @post.harvard.edu or @alumni.harvard.edu email forwarding address. What steps should I be taking now?

If you are actively using your email forwarding address, you will be notified well in advance of when your address will be deactivated. This process will involve comprehensive outreach to all active email forwarding users.

As an immediate next step, we recommend you make plans to remove your email forwarding address from any place it's currently listed (for example, your website, your LinkedIn profile, etc.), and replace it with a work or personal email. In turn, we also suggest updating your contact information now with any people who regularly use your email forwarding address so they can start reaching out to you through a different email.

Moving forward, you should also refrain from sharing your @post.harvard.edu or @alumni.harvard.edu email forwarding address with new contacts.

I'm graduating this year. What other email options are available to me?

The [Alumni Directory](#) is a comprehensive and verified network of alumni across the globe. Built into each alumni profile is an email tool that allows you to message your classmates and fellow alumni directly. This is a great way to keep in touch with classmates, seek out alumni mentors, and connect with alumni who are working in your field.

Why is the University phasing out the central alumni email forwarding program?

We hear and understand many of the concerns alumni have expressed about email forwarding addresses. Email forwarding, in general, is becoming obsolete as email service providers like Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook, etc. develop new security protocols. New spam rules and policies make it very difficult to offer a reliable forwarding-only service at this point, and many institutions have migrated off email forwarding. More specifically:

- Email forwarding for alumni was first set up in the late 1990s when email was in its nascence. In the past 20 years, email services and service providers have matured.
- In 2022, email forwarding has become an obsolete service—not just at Harvard but across the board.

- As spam filtering policies are getting more aggressive, email service providers routinely flag forwarded mail as spam and block these emails coming from forwarding addresses; in short, emails that are sent to an email forwarding address, like your @post.harvard.edu or @alumni.harvard.edu address, are often not delivered. Many users don't even realize this until a sender has reached out to ask about an email that was never received.
- Email forwarding addresses are only an alias from which emails can be received, but not sent. Therefore, responses to emails sent to email forwarding accounts in most cases come from your personal email inbox—therefore subsequent communication is likely to occur through your inbox.
- Many alumni have been frustrated with the service and report concerns about emails they never received, spam and phishing inquiries through their forwarding accounts, and more. Due to the nature of email forwarding technology, in most instances we cannot resolve their complaints.

Will you be offering email inboxes to Harvard alumni?

Harvard will not be replacing alumni email forwarding with a University-wide email inbox option.

Why aren't University-wide inboxes for alumni an option?

Offering inboxes for the more than 400,000 alumni worldwide is not without both legal and security risks. In turn, our research revealed two lessons. First, alumni email inboxes are not often used. Many of our peer institutions that do offer alumni inboxes report that after initial set-up they are underutilized in favor of existing personal inboxes.

Users also tend to only focus on one or two inboxes at a time—work and personal. For these reasons, alongside customer service impact, Harvard is not pursuing a University-wide email inbox.

In lieu of an inbox, Harvard supports a variety of tools that allow you to easily communicate with other Harvard alumni without having to set up a separate email inbox. You can directly access the more than 400,000 alumni from across Harvard's Schools through the [Alumni Directory](#). You can find and email most other alumni through their Directory profiles and you can also use the Directory to post to discussion boards or submit a class note update. Several Schools offer their own directories as well.

What's the timeline for email forwarding to go away?

The functionality to create new email forwarding addresses is no longer available to alumni who do not have email forwarding. This means that both first-time graduates *and* any alumni who don't currently have an @alumni.harvard.edu or @post.harvard.edu email forwarding address will be unable to set up an email forwarding address at any time in the future.

Starting in fall of 2022 and taking place in phases over the next two years, email forwarding addresses will be slowly deactivated. Email forwarding users will be notified *well in advance* of their address being turned off. If you have an active email forwarding address that you currently use, your email may be deactivated between late 2022 and spring 2024. In the meantime, we encourage you to start migrating your current and future contacts to an alternative email.

What if I am a volunteer and have an email forwarding address associated with my Club or Shared Interest Group or my work as a College Class Secretary?

We recognize that many Clubs and Shared Interest Groups use email forwarding as their organization's email account. We're currently looking into an alternative solution and will be back in touch when we have more to share. While we explore alternatives, your Club or SIG email forwarding address **will not** be deactivated until we have a new option to provide. Whatever solution we implement for Clubs and SIGs we will also offer to all College Class Secretaries.

What if I have more questions?

Please contact the alumni help desk at haa_alumnihelp@harvard.edu or 800-823-2478.