MIT Kerberos Account Deactivation FAQ

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MIT Kerberos accounts are deactivated every year in January. This page contains some information about the deactivation process.

Users can always be directed to contact User Accounts at servicedesk@mit.edu or x3-1101. (see also When are Athena accounts deactivated?)

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Deactivation Notifications

When will accounts be deactivated?

The third week of January.

Who is on the list?

- Students who graduated in January or June.
- Students who are not registered for the current term, according to the Registrar's office.
- Guest accounts who have sponsored accounts and the sponsor did not respond to a renewal request from IS&T
- Visiting scholars who do not have an appointment for the fall semester prior to the January deactivation

(September degree candidates appear on the following year's list.)

When was the list generated?

The initial list was generated 30 days after Add Date (see the academic calendar for Add Date). People whose status changed after the list was generated will still appear on the initial list. The list is re-checked before each email warning is sent out, however, and people whose status has changed in the meantime will be safe.

What is the difference between suspension and deactivation?

Suspension prevents you from logging into your account; deactivation gets rid of the account (and automatically removes the mailbox a month later). We start by suspending the account so that if there is a mistake, it can be easily fixed without your mail bouncing or your web pages being removed; after a month of suspension, we convert the account into full deactivation.

When were users notified?

Users are sent a first warning email, usually the 2nd week in November, and a second e-mail, usually in the first week of January.

How can users who are still at MIT keep their accounts?

Any faculty or staff member can sponsor the user's account by visiting Sponsoring an Account or sending an e-mail to servicedesk@mit.edu and telling us who they would like to sponsor.

- If a student was not registered but is still at MIT, the professor they are working with should send e-mail.
- Temporary staff and contractors should have their supervisor send e-mail.
- Students taking a leave of absence should have their advisor or a CSS dean sponsor their account.

Is there a charge for sponsoring an account?

No.

How long are accounts sponsored for?

They can be sponsored for one year, renewable indefinitely. We need to hear from the sponsor at least once a year.

How can I tell if someone else's account has been deactivated?

If you run the following commands on Athena:

```
add consult
hes USERNAME
```

then a deactivated user will have an entry like so:

FILSYS: ERR Locker deactivated: contact the service desk for help.

Can users who are no longer at MIT keep their accounts? Can they pay to do so?

Unfortunately, for both technical and legal reasons, we cannot provide continuing accounts for people who have left MIT and no longer have an affiliation with it. We do not offer a paid version, either.

Can users keep their accounts while on a leave of absence?

Our information comes from the Registrar's Office, so if they are not a registered student, their account will be flagged for deactivation. The user should have their advisor, departmental administrator, S^3 dean, or other suitable person send an e-mail to accounts@mit.edu requesting that the account is sponsored until they return. They should also provide the estimated date of return. This must be done manually - we have no other source of information about medical leaves or leaves of absence.

Can users keep their accounts for access to MIT libraries resources or to finish out their thesis?

Users need their professor to send an email message to accounts@mit.edu asking to sponsor the account as a guest. There is no charge for sponsoring a guest account, but they have to be willing to take responsibility for the account. Alumni can still visit the MIT Libraries and access some electronic resources on-site, without an Athena account. See "Library Services for MIT Alumni/ae" for more information.

Resources for Deactivated Users

E-mail Forwarding for Life (EFL, alum.mit.edu)

E-mail forwarding for life creates a new @alum.mit.edu address; it does NOT extend the user's @mit.edu address. Users who want to sign up for EFL should visit http://alum.mit.edu and register for the Infinite Connection.

Users who are currently forwarding their e-mail to another address (chpobox)

Forwarding will continue for one month after deactivation, while the account is "suspended." After that, when the account is fully deactivated, mail which is addressed to the account will be bounced back to the sender, regardless of whether the user is currently forwarding their mail or not. One reason that we notify account holders several months before deactivation is so that they can contact their email correspondents to let them know about a change of address.

Getting a copy of all their e-mail

Any e-mail client (Apple Mail, Outlook, Thunderbird, etc.) should be able to copy folders to the local computer. More detailed information on backing up emails and files can be found here.

Getting a copy of their files in their Athena account

They can use SecureFX or Fetch to transfer files to their Windows or Mac computer. Alternatively, users can use Athena machines to move files to a USB drive or upload files to a personal Dropbox or Google Drive account. We do not provide backup services for deactivated users. More information on backing up files in an Athena account can be found here.

Copying all their existing e-mail to Gmail

We no longer encourage this migration directly. Instead, users should configure an e-mail client (Outlook, Apple Mail, Thunderbird, etc.) on their personal computer and copy their mail to that computer. They can then upload to Gmail using IMAP at a later date. If they try and send their entire Inbox directly from MIT to Gmail, it will be very slow, possibly will get their account blocked or rate-limited or may not work at all.

What if a deactivated user returns to MIT? Will their files be gone?

For about a year after deactivation, the account is not purged from the system. If they return to MIT, then their account can be quickly reactivated, and all files will still be there.

Will their email be lost?

The account will be removed from the mail servers a month after it is converted from "suspended" to "deactivated". So, it will be purged two months after the initial suspension, around mid-March. If the user returns to MIT after that point, they will be set up with a new mailbox. If the account is reactivated, the password will be the same as it was before the account was deactivated.

What about MIT Dropbox?

After an account is deactivated, the user will no longer be able to use Touchstone to log into their MIT Dropbox for Business account, and the MIT Dropbox folder will be shut down. Shared folders that other people have access to will still be available to them in their own Dropbox accounts. If a user wants us to transfer the contents of their MIT Dropbox folder to another MIT Dropbox user or to a new personal Dropbox account, they can let us know by contacting the Service Desk. Team folders are another option for groups wishing to avoid data loss during account deactivation. For more information on Dropbox team folders, please contact the Service Desk at servicedesk@mit.edu.

Users can also use SecureFX or Fetch to transfer files to their Windows or Mac computer. Alternatively, users can use Athena machines to move files to a USB drive or upload files to a personal Dropbox or Google Drive account. We do not provide backup services for deactivated users.

What about MIT GitHub Accounts?

After an account is deactivated, GitHub repositories will no longer be available. Please see this article: Github Accounts After Graduation or Leaving MIT for more information on transferring ownership to another account.

What about GSuite (Google Apps) accounts?

GSuite accounts are suspended when your Kerberos account is suspended. You should back up any files in Google Drive to your personal Google drive, Personal Dropbox, or removable media, such as a USB drive.