

Duke Office of Information Technology

Duke OIT - Shared Mailbox FAQ

- ? [What is a departmental mailbox?](#)
 - ? [Why would my department want a shared mailbox?](#)
 - ? [How can my department request a shared mailbox?](#)
 - ? [How much does a shared mailbox cost?](#)
 - ? [How do I access my department's mailbox?](#)
 - ? [Which email client should I use to administer the shared mailbox?](#)
 - ? [Do I need a separate password for the shared mailbox?](#)
 - ? [Can I access a shared mailbox with an email client other than Mulberry or Pine?](#)
 - ? [Who controls access to the shared departmental mailbox?](#)
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What is a departmental mailbox?

The campus email system supports accounts for both individuals and groups (for example, academic or administrative departments, or student organizations). Unlike individual mailboxes, shared mailboxes are accessible by a list of users who are identified by their Duke NetIDs. Users on the list may have different permissions; some may only be able to read mail, and others may have permission to modify and delete messages.

Shared mailboxes can only be accessed by an email client that uses the IMAP4 protocol (for example, Mulberry, Thunderbird, Outlook Express, Outlook, Mac Mail).

Each shared mailbox user must have a valid NetID.

[Return to Top](#)

Why would my department want a shared mailbox?

A departmental (shared) mailbox is a more effective way of distributing email messages to a group than a mailing list. Mailing lists can become cumbersome. They use more computing resources than shared mailboxes, and they may end up flooding a user's mailbox with unwanted messages.

Departmental mailboxes work much like newsgroups, but they do not require the configuration of a news client because they run on the current IMAP email servers.

Features of shared mailboxes include:

- ? Authenticated access to shared folders – Only users who can log in to the mail server and have explicit permissions can read a folder.
- ? Access by DukeNet users only – Users not associated with Duke cannot access the shared mailbox.

- ? Access by non-Duke IP addresses – Unlike newsgroups, access is not restricted to Duke IP addresses. You can access the shared mailbox using an Internet Service Provider (ISP).
 - ? Mail is not broadcast to a list of subscribers (unlike mailing lists) – A single copy of the message is stored in the folder and can be read by all users with permission.
- Shared mail:
- o does not affect your personal mailbox quota.
 - o does not get mixed with your personal mail.
 - o is not subject to mail delivery failures (for example, where some users get a message and others do not).
 - o cannot cause email loops or mail "storms" (no more finding 1,000 bogus messages in your inbox).
- ? Access by unlimited number of users – Unlike mailings lists (where we strongly discourage more than 100 subscribers), the number of users who have access to a shared mailbox doesn't matter.
 - ? A central storage location for messages – Unlike departmental mailing lists, which use closed-subscription mailing lists to resend incoming messages to subscribers' individual mailboxes, shared mailboxes maintain messages in a central location that users can access as they desire.
 - ? Ability to create subfolders and manipulate messages – You can centrally manage "old" mail within the mailbox, move messages around, delete messages, create new folders, etc.

[Return to Top](#)

How can my department request a shared mailbox?

Simply [submit a request to the OIT Help Desk](#). Include the following information:

- ? The official name of the department or group requesting the mailbox.
- ? An email address where mail should be sent. Please include a first and second choice in case your first choice is unavailable. Example: violins@duke.edu for the Duke Orchestra violin section.
- ? The name of the shared mailbox. The name is not formatted like an email address, nor is it part of the email address. It will look something like dept.orchestra.violins.
- ? The first part is usually either dept or org, depending on whether the shared mailbox is for a department or an organization. The second part is a form of the department's or organization's name (oit, econ, fuqua, etc.). The part(s) that follow are more specific; there can be as many parts as you like. We reserve the right to change the entire name of the shared mailbox as needed, in order to keep our name space manageable. So, if you request dept.deptofredundancydept.redundancy.mailbox.redundancy, we may abbreviate it to dept.rdr.redun.
- ? The phone number of the person initiating the request.
- ? The name, phone number and Duke NetID of the person responsible for managing the mailbox.

[Return to Top](#)

How much does a shared mailbox cost?

There is no charge for a shared departmental mailbox.

[Return to Top](#)

How do I access my department's mailbox?

You can access your department's shared mailbox via several email clients (we recommend using Mulberry). For directions on how to use Mulberry, click on the link below.

? [How to Access a Departmental Shared Mailbox Using Mulberry](#)

[Return to Top](#)

Which email client should I use to administer the shared mailbox?

We recommend that you use Mulberry or WebMail (webmail.duke.edu) to administer your shared mailbox.

See [How to administer your shared mailbox in Mulberry.](#)

See [How to administer your shared mailbox using WebMail.](#)

[Return to Top](#)

Do I need a separate password for the shared mailbox?

No. You always log in to the Duke mail system with your personal Duke NetID and password. The DukeNet servers maintain a list of mailboxes you're authorized to access. This avoids the accountability problem that would arise if multiple users shared a username and password. Remember, never share your Duke NetID and password!

[Return to Top](#)

Can I access a shared mailbox with an email client other than Mulberry or Pine?

Yes. Any email client that supports IMAP4 and SSL should work. POP clients are not able to read from shared mailboxes. Lotus Notes does not allow access to shared mailboxes.

[Return to Top](#)

Who controls access to the shared departmental mailbox?

Any user with administrative privileges may grant or revoke access to other users. When a mailbox is created, someone (usually the person requesting the mailbox) is granted administrative privileges. The administrator may choose to share these privileges with others.

[Return to Top](#)

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