

July 20, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair, Academic Senate

From: Matthew Gunkel, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

Subject: Request for Assistance: Safeguarding Faculty Research Data in Google Workspace

Key Takeaway

Faculty must take action by September 20, 2024, to identify and secure important files shared with them by students and colleagues who have left UCR, as these files risk deletion due to upcoming changes to Google Workspace.

Dear Sang-Hee,

I am writing to seek the assistance of the Academic Senate in addressing a critical matter related to the [upcoming changes to Google Workspace storage](#) that may significantly impact some valuable research data and other important files stored within the platform.

Since [November 2023](#), ITS has proactively engaged in outreach efforts to inform faculty about the potential impact of the storage reclamation process and provide [data storage solutions](#). This has included direct email communication detailing the risks and necessary actions associated with shared data. Due to the decentralized nature of data sharing within Google Workspace, however, it is not feasible for ITS to comprehensively identify every instance of shared data that may be affected. Therefore, we urge all faculty to take proactive measures to safeguard their work by reviewing their files and taking the necessary steps to secure and ensure continuity of data that is shared with them.

Specifically, I seek your assistance in communicating the following:

- Files and folders shared with faculty by students and colleagues who have left UCR are at risk of being removed if faculty don't make copies of the files to change in ownership.
- Faculty need to act now to review Google Workspace files and folders, identifying any at-risk files. In particular, faculty are encouraged to review data in the "Shared with me" section of their Workspaces.

- To prevent data loss, faculty may make copies of desired files and save them to a *Shared Drive* they manage (recommended for data continuity) or to *My Drive*. Detailed instructions can be found in [this Knowledge Base article](#).
- The removal of expired Google accounts will commence soon. **Faculty must make copies of any data they do not currently “own” that they wish to keep (see below for explanation of ownership) by September 20, 2024, in order to preserve data. After this date, the recovery of such data will not be possible.**

Background

As part of our university's transition to comply with new storage limits for education imposed by Google and Microsoft (please refer to the original email notice dated November 8, 2023), ITS is removing expired Google accounts associated with individuals who have left UCR. While this is a necessary step, it inadvertently puts at risk files or folders “owned” by these former colleagues and students.

What is “ownership” in the context of Workspace files and folders?

In Google Workspace, ownership of a file determines who has the ultimate control over that file. Even if a file is shared with you, you do not own it unless it is explicitly transferred to you. If the original owner's account is deleted, the file will also be deleted, even if you have access to it.

There are two main types of file ownership in Google Workspace:

- *My Drive* Ownership: Files in your My Drive are owned by you. You have full control over these files. These files will become obsolete in the event your account is deleted.
- *Shared Drive* Ownership: Files in a shared drive are owned by the shared drive itself. The members of the shared drive have varying levels of access to the files, but the ultimate control lies with the shared drive managers. These files remain accessible so long as the drive is managed by at least one active account.

The location of stored data has implications for adherence to the UC Research Data Policy, which stipulates that the University of California Regents own all research data generated or collected during university research. As a result, any research or university data stored in Google Workspace should be stored in a *Shared Drive* with multiple drive managers to ensure access and continuity. It should be noted, however, that ITS recommends using a long-term storage solution for research and other university data (visit its.ucr.edu/storage or [request a consultation](#) for information).

Why can't ITS move the data for me?

My Drive is designed for personal storage. As a result, students, faculty, and staff often use this space for both university-related documents and personal files. Due to data privacy policies and regulations, ITS cannot access the files to differentiate between university-owned and personal data. This restriction ensures the privacy and confidentiality of your personal information. Therefore, it's crucial for you to review and manage your own files to [safeguard any university-related data that others may have shared with you](#) from their *My Drive*.

Why must this change take place now?

As I wrote in my November 8 email last year, the need to adjust UCR's storage quotas is directly tied to Google and Microsoft's decision to move away from unlimited and low-cost online storage offerings ([read more about it on the ITS website](#)). UCR must be in compliance with the new campus-wide storage limitations by November 1, 2024. Removal of ineligible Google accounts is one of the many steps we are taking now to ensure the campus meets this enforcement deadline.

I appreciate your continued support and collaboration as we navigate these changes together. If you have any questions about storage options, please contact ITS at (951) 827-4848 or [submit a storage consultation request](#).

Sincerely,

Matthew Gunkel

Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

Information Technology Solutions

University of California, Riverside

List of previous faculty communication

Description	Subject line/Title	Channel	Audience	Date
Official campus announcement	Upcoming Changes to Storage, Email, and Calendar Services	ITS blog	All campus	Nov. 6, 2023
Resource: Google workspace guidance and policies	<i>N/A (many)</i>	ITS Knowledge Base	All campus	Nov. 6, 2023
Faculty notice	Notice: Upcoming Changes to Storage, Email, and Calendar Services	Email	All faculty	Nov. 8, 2023
Resource: campus storage options	Storage at UCR	ITS webpage	All campus	Dec. 10, 2023
Letter to Academic Senate	RE: Upcoming Changes to Storage, Email, and Calendar Services	Email	CHASS faculty	Dec., 2023
Follow-up communication	Update on the Upcoming Changes to UCR's Storage Quotas	Email	All faculty	Feb. 28, 2024
Request to review shared data	Action Required: Review Google Drive Files Shared With You to Prevent Data Loss	Email	Faculty with <i>known</i> shared data with former students	Apr. 5-8, 2024
Reminder communication	Reminder: June 15 Rollout of New UCR Google Workspace Storage Quotas	Email	All faculty	Jun. 11-12, 2024
Reminder announcements	Reminder: June 15 Rollout of New UCR Google Workspace Storage Quotas	R'Space	All employees	Jun. 14-17, 2024
Confirmation of quota implementation	New Storage Limit for Your UCR Google Workspace	Email	All faculty	Jul. 11-12, 2024