

How to resolve Email Over Quota warnings

When the college mail server sends an "Over Quota" warning it means your mail account has exceeded (or will soon exceed) the default email account space limitation of 3GB (3000MB). The first notice is issued when an account reaches 2GB. If the issue is not addressed and the 3GB quota is reached, you will not be able to send mail and new mail addressed to you will be returned to the sender.

While the best strategy to avoid getting close to the quota is to be vigilant about managing your mail on a daily basis, if you get an "Over Quota" warning, follow the suggestions below for some relatively quick relief.

Suggestion #1: empty your trash

In Outlook, right-click the Trash folder and select Empty "Trash" Folder from the popup menu. In Webmail, right-click the Trash mailbox and choose Empty Trash.

To have Outlook automatically empty the trash every time you exit the program, click Tools, select Options, then click the [Other] tab. Check "Empty the Deleted Items folder upon exiting", then click the [OK] button.

Suggestion #2: delete copies of mail already sent

Most of us don't need to retain a copy of every message we've sent. To delete all sent mail in Outlook, right-click the Sent mailbox and select Delete All key. This will move the items to your Trash which you can then empty. In Webmail, click the Sent mailbox to open it, click the checkbox at the top of the checkbox column to select all messages in the mailbox, then click the Delete button.

To delete some, but not all, sent mail, open the Sent mailbox and select individual messages before deleting. To select a range of messages, click the first one in the range then shift-click the last one. (Hold the [Shift] key and click the message.) To select multiple individual messages, control-click each message. (Hold the [Ctrl] key while clicking each message.)

Note that every time you send an attachment to someone, a copy of the attached file is created in your Sent folder. Sending multiple versions of the same document to colleagues can quickly add up to a lot of unnecessary files in your Sent mailbox. An easy strategy for quickly cleaning up your mail account is to delete the attachments in your Sent mailbox. (Remember—the originals already exist somewhere else.)

If you need to save sent messages, consider how long you need to retain them, then sort the mailbox by date and use the range selection method above to easily delete messages that are no longer needed. If you need to retain all sent messages, consider archiving them on your hard drive instead of leaving them on the mail server. (See Suggestion #6 below.)

Suggestion #3: get tough where it will count the most

The biggest bang for your cleanup buck will come from weeding folders with lots of mail. To identify the mailbox folders with the most content in Outlook, click Tools, select Mailbox Cleanup, then click "View Mailbox Size." After a few minutes of calculation, a list of all folders and their sizes will appear. Although most people prefer to clean up each folder individually (see the next suggestion), a more general clean up can be done by using Find items older than [xx] days or Find items larger than [xx]MB. (And after using one method, use the other.) When the list appears, review it and move critical emails to another folder before clicking Edit, Select All, then hitting the [Delete] key. If you want to archive messages, DO NOT use the "AutoArchive" method that's offered.

Suggestion #4: pick a reason...any reason

You can usually find some criteria to aid in deleting messages, e.g., old stuff, large messages, messages with a common subject line, all those "just saying hi" messages from family members, etc. To identify messages ripe for deletion, open any mailbox in Outlook and click on a column heading to sort its messages by that criterion. The default column that Outlook sorts by is "Received", but you can also sort by "From", "Subject", "Size", or whether the message has an attachment that you might want to save to a local or network drive.

In Webmail, mailboxes can be sorted by To/From, Subject, and Date, but the Advanced Search feature allows you to find messages based on just about any criterion, including presence of an attachment, age, and message size.

No matter how you identify messages for potential deletion, use the selection techniques in Suggestion #2 to select multiple messages before deleting.

Suggestion #5: get rid of attachments

Attachments tend to be in file formats that take up lots of space. Getting rid of unwanted attachments or multiple copies of attachments can free up lots of space really quickly. (And really, how many photos of Grandpa Bill and the kids do you need?) To get rid of an attachment and its message, just delete the message. To retain the message but delete the attachment, open the message in Outlook, right-click the attachment name in the header of the message, and select Remove from the popup menu. When prompted to save the changes, click the [Yes] button.

If you want to retain an attached file but don't need its message, save the attachment to a local or network drive. To do so in Outlook, open the message and right-click the attachment name in the header of the message. From the popup menu select Save As..., browse to the location where the file is to be saved (e.g., Documents\Email Attachments), then click the [OK] button to save the file.

In Webmail, open the message then click the Download link off to the right of the attachment filename. Save the file to your preferred location.

After saving the attachment, delete the message so the attachment is removed from the mail server.

Suggestion #6: get some help

Contact the help desk and ask to schedule an appointment with someone from ICT Services. We can help you figure out the best approach for managing your mail.