

## [Diving into the data pool: Navigating the upcoming O365 storage changes for higher education](#)

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## Diving into the data pool: Navigating the upcoming O365 storage changes for higher education

The way that storage works across Microsoft O365 is changing significantly for all educational tenants from August 1st 2024 (upon contract renewal). Depending on your organisation's usage, procedures and data policies, there may be some necessary preparation ahead of these changes to avoid incurring substantial additional costs, and prevent immediate data loss. Of course, we at Waterstons are here to prevent any such disasters occurring – and this is what you can do right now to be best-prepared.

Categories

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*Public service announcement:* Though the pooled storage changes are only publicly scheduled for educational tenants, there is a *possibility* that similar changes may be announced more broadly in the future, so some of the steps outlined here should provide food for thought on a handful of processes that can often be useful in general for the management of O365 tenants.

Although our focus – in this article – is on higher education institutions, data governance is important across all sectors. There has never a better time to understand the important role data governance can play in managing and securing data.

As the data that organisations hold continues to grow, data governance can help to keep data organised, consistent and secure – ensuring that any data compliance standards and regulatory thresholds are met.

We touch on some basic governance processes here, however, there are many more that we have at our disposal – and data governance is generally an area that (rightfully!) demands a lot of planning and understanding. If you need help in taking control of your data, please get in touch. With our experts we will use our experience in this field to transition your organisation toward data bliss.

## Understanding the upcoming changes

Microsoft is rolling out significant changes to the way that storage is handled specifically in Microsoft 365 Education tenants, impacting how educational organisations will need to manage data storage.

Up until now, storage across different Microsoft services such as OneDrive, SharePoint and Exchange have been split per service – with each having their own separate quotas. Data that is therefore stored within OneDrive, does not impact the available storage within Exchange, for example.

However, the clear distinction between the services and their own respective storage quotas will be no longer from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. These services will utilise what is known as ‘pooled’ storage; sharing a storage quota between said services.

It may be that some organisations will operate comfortably under the new pooled storage quota limits when this transition takes place, but where this is not the case, there is a risk that data above this threshold may be restricted or lost. It’s therefore critical that preventative actions are taken prior to the transition date – with some suggestions in the following section. Please see below for an outline of the anticipated storage that any education tenant will receive:

- All educational tenants will be granted 100TB of pooled storage
- For each of the paid licenses that exist, an additional volume of storage will be available:
  - A3 License (paid): 50GB of pooled storage
  - A5 License (paid): 100GB of pooled storage
- Additional storage packs are available to purchase, at a monthly cost

## Preparing ahead of time

Luckily, Microsoft does provide some reports that can be a quick way of getting a general consensus of data usage, providing an idea of whether immediate actions need to be taken, or if the upcoming transition is simply something to keep on the radar over the medium to long-term. To quickly get a snapshot of what data the services in question are using, we can access their own respective reports within the O365 Admin Centre:

- OneDrive
- Exchange
- SharePoint

In addition to the reports available, there may be some preventative steps appropriate to ensure that the pooled storage limits will not be exceeded – based on your organisation’s volume of licenses, as outlined in the section above:

- Modify the default OneDrive/SharePoint/Exchange storage quotas that are granted to new user accounts
- Reduce the OneDrive/SharePoint/Exchange storage quotas for existing user accounts
- Enable archive mailboxes to reduce the overall usage that Exchange will consume across the organisation
- Limit Microsoft Teams recording sizes and/or automatically delete old recordings
- Utilise retention policies across the organisation – ensuring that data is retained where necessary, and redundant data that is no longer required from a practical or regulatory standpoint is handled appropriately
- Ensure that inactive user accounts are reviewed and deleted where appropriate – which will also remove the likes of their respective OneDrive files

With the upcoming changes on the horizon, now is the ideal time to (finally) take control of your data within Microsoft M365. This transition period presents a golden opportunity to reassess your storage strategies, requirements, and policies. It’s crucial to ensure that you’ve taken all necessary steps before August 1<sup>st</sup> / when your contract renews.

We’re here to help you navigate these changes, enhance your data management practices, and prepare for what’s next. Don’t miss out on this chance to optimize your data ecosystem. Reach out to us at [billy.pickin@waterstons.com](mailto:billy.pickin@waterstons.com) for more information and assistance. Let’s seize this moment to transform your data management together.

