# Email transfer procedures for account owners

These procedures are written for owners of email accounts who wish to transfer email to SFU Archives. The Archives' transfer methods for email require that account owners perform certain actions on their end. This guide describes these actions and how to do them.

Anyone considering transferring email to the Archives should make sure they understand the implications of transfer; please read Before you start (section 1).

For a quick overview of the process, jump to section 5, Checklist. For detailed instructions, see section 2 for SFU accounts, section 3 for non-SFU accounts.

Those interested in what happens behind the scenes can find a brief description of the process in Section 4 and (in more detail) in the Archives' general Guide for email archives (in progress).

Note that the email transfer process captures only email messages and attachments. The Archives does not currently acquire other records typically included in email platforms, e.g. calendars, address books, task lists.

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# 1. Before You Start

The Archives is selective in its acquisition of email. Our plan is to develop a more formal acquisition strategy which will set out selection criteria. In the meantime, consult with an archivist to determine whether or not your email can be retained for permanent archival preservation and if so, which parts of it.

In general:

- Emails made or received in your capacity as an SFU employee engaged in university business are university records and may be transferred to the Archives under an applicable Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA).

- Emails as personal correspondence may be transferred to the Archives under a Donation Agreement.

An archivist will advise you on how to proceed.

Please be aware of the implications of transferring your email to Archives. It is not a service to provide you with ongoing access to your own email. Rather you are making a transfer or donation of records to the Archives that we will preserve and manage for the use of future researchers as a historical resource.

Email transferred to Archives is stored offline, outside any active email system. Once you delete it from your active account you not be able to access it through SFU Mail. Currently the Archives provides only offline access to historical email collections through software (ePADD) installed on a dedicated terminal in the Archives reading room.

**If you require continuing access to some or all of the email after transfer do not delete it from your active email account. Consult an archivist to determine what is most appropriate for your own circumstances.**

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# 2. SFU email accounts

This section describes how to transfer email from an SFU account.

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- 2.1 Set up a transfer folder
- 2.2 Add permissions to the Inbox
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- 2.4 Validate transfer
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## 2.1 Set up a transfer folder

The Archives need access to a shared folder in your account in order to transfer email. The Archives works on Mac computers, and Outlook for Mac requires shared folders to be nested under the owner's `Inbox`.

**Steps**

2.1.1 Create a `Transfer folder` in your `Inbox`

- You can name the `Transfer folder` whatever you wish but it must be placed in your `Inbox`

2.1.2 Move all email you wish to transfer into the `Transfer folder`.

- You can move entire folders or individual messages.
- You can add as many folders-within-folders as you wish, but **be aware that you will need to add permissions to every individual folder** (see below step 2.3).
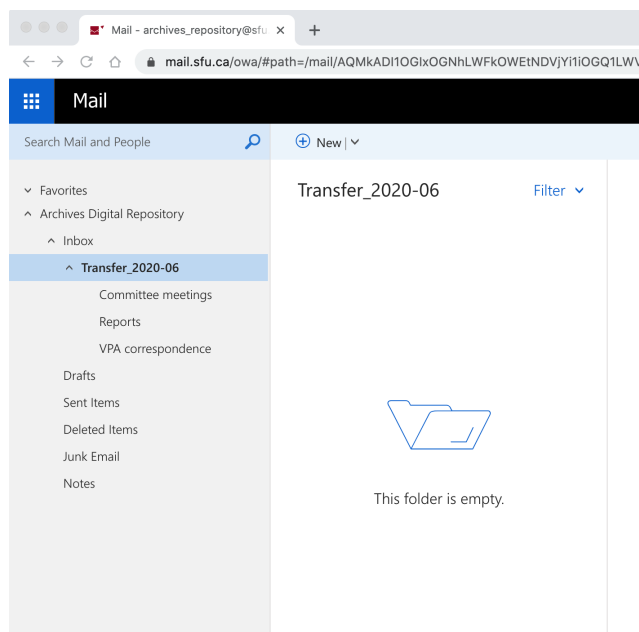
In general you should try to maintain messages in their original folder structure as you used them; this provides valuable context for future researchers that will help them understand your email archive.

## 2.2 Add permissions to the Inbox

You need to add permissions to every folder (including the `Inbox`) to share them with Archives.

- Permissions should be given to the `archeml` account – this is an account used by Archives uniquely for email transfer.
- The permissions needed on the `Inbox` folder are different (more limited) than those for the other folders.
- The instructions below show how to add permissions; see also IT Services' help page on sharing folders in Outlook.

**Steps**

2.2.1 Right-click the `Inbox` folder and from the popup menu select `Permissions`
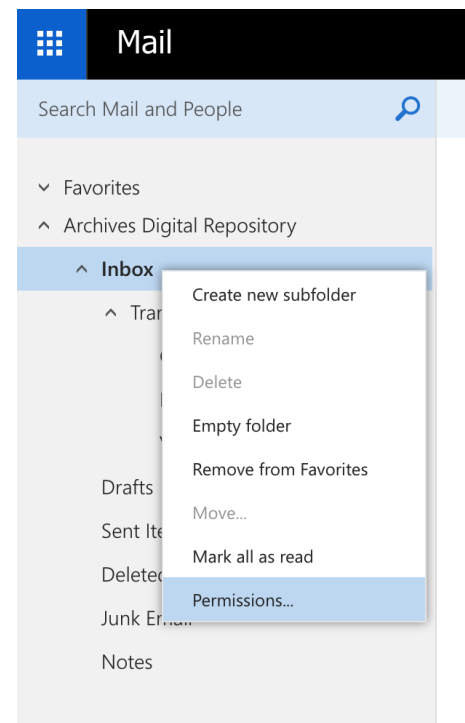
2.2.2 A new dialog box appears, `Permissions for the Inbox folder`.

- Click the `+` button to add a new permission.

**Permissions for the Inbox folder**

+ 🗑

| Name | Permission level |
|------|------------------|
| Default | None |
| Anonymous | None |

**Permissions**

Permission level: None ▾

Read:
- ● None
- ○ Full details

Delete access:
- ● None
- ○ Own
- ○ All

Write:
- ☐ Create items
- ☐ Create subfolders
- ☐ Edit own
- ☐ Edit all

Other:
- ☐ Folder owner
- ☐ Folder contact
- ☐ Folder visible

OK  Cancel

2.2.3 A new dialog box appears prompting you to add the email address of the person you wish to share the folder with.

- Enter "archeml" and click the `Search Directory` button.

## Add permissions

Enter the name or email address of the person you want to give permissions to this folder.

archeml

Search Directory

2.2.4 The name `Archives Digital Repository - archives_repository@sfu.ca` should appear.

- Click the `Add` button.

## Add permissions

Enter the name or email address of the person you want to give permissions to this folder.

Archives Digital Repository
archives_repository@sfu.ca

✕

Add  Cancel

2.2.5 The `Archives Digital Repository` will now appear in the list of permissions.

- Make sure it is selected and highlighted.

- Leave the `Permission level` drop-down selection to "None".

- Check the box `Folder visible`.

- Click the `OK` button to complete.
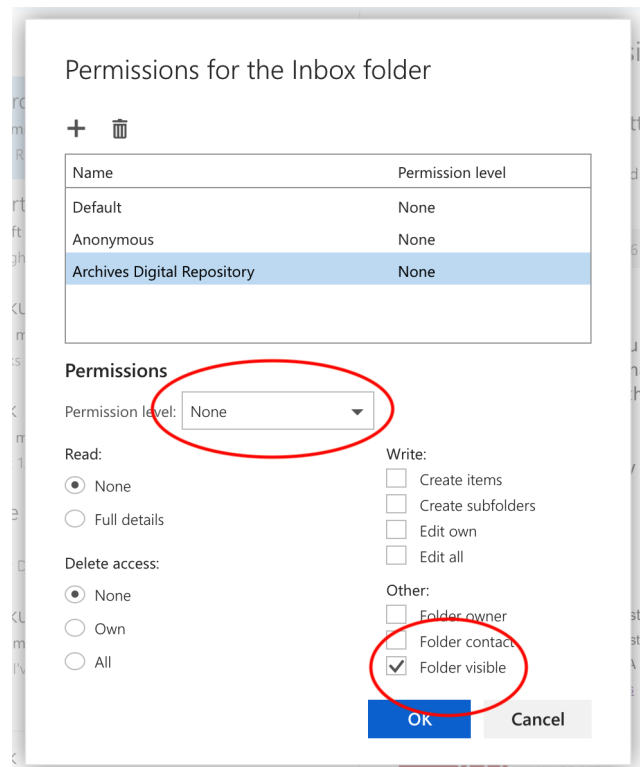
These settings mean that your `Inbox` will be visible in the `archem1` account (`Folder visible` = "Yes"") but its contents cannot be viewed or accessed (`Permission level` = "None"); only the folders that you explicitly designate in step 2.3 will be accessible to the Archives.

## 2.3 Add permissions to the transfer folder(s)

Permissions in Outlook are not inherited by sub-folders from a top-level parent folder: **you need to explicitly add permissions to the transfer folder and each sub-folder inside it.**

- Even though a folder is placed within the `Transfer folder`, the Archives will not be able to access its contents unless you explicitly share it with the `archem1` account.

**Steps**

2.3.1 For the `Transfer folder` and every sub-folder contained within it repeat the same steps you applied to the `Inbox` in section 2.2 above.

2.3.2 The only difference is in the last step (2.2.5), where you specify the actual permissions on the folder.

- Select `Archives Digital Repository` so that it is highlighted.
- In the drop-down box labelled `Permission level` select "Reviewer".
- The `Folder visible` box will default to checked; make sure to leave it checked.

**Reviewer** permission means that an archivist will have **read-only** access to the transfer folders (cannot create, edit, delete or send email from the shared folder).

The screenshots below show the settings for Reviewer permissions (on the left); and an example of how a shared folder appears in the `archeml` account (on the right).
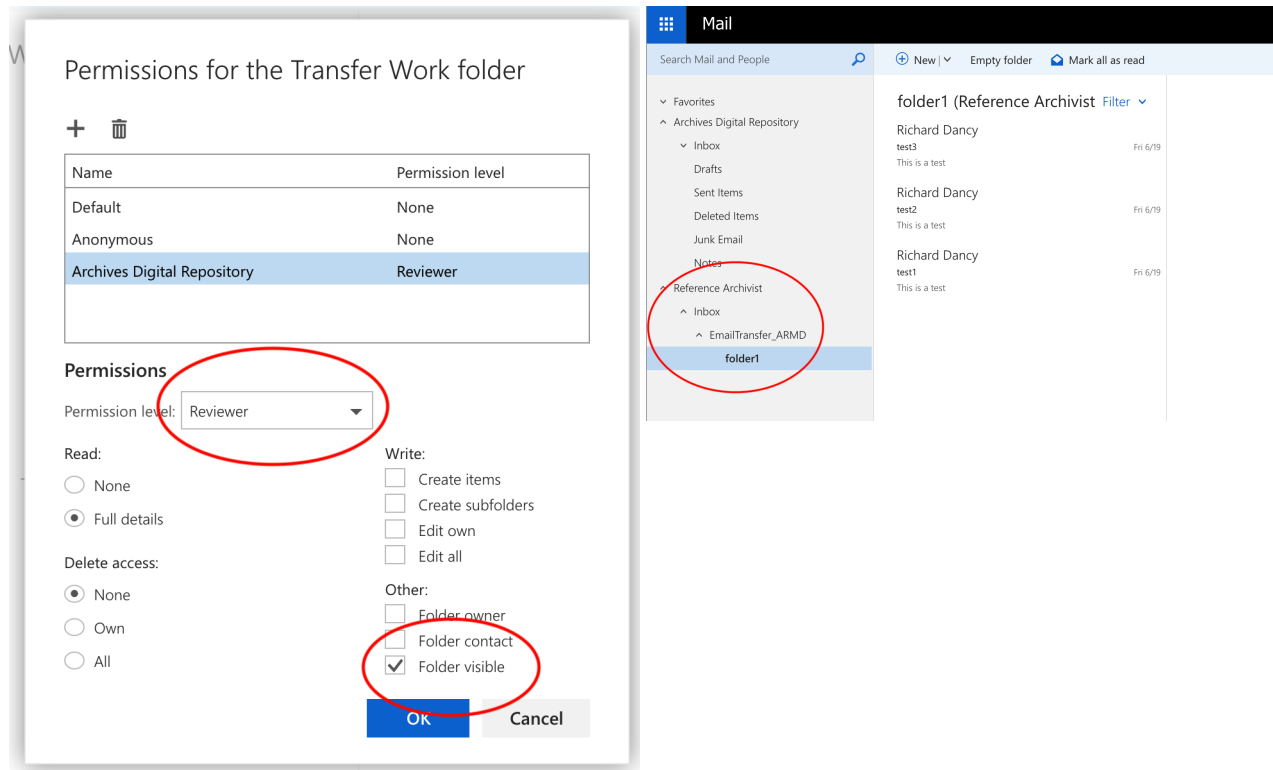


## 2.4 Validate transfer

Your email is now ready for transfer, validation, and accessioning.

- **Transfer** copies the email over to the Archives' account ( `archeml` ), then exports it from the SFU Mail system.
- **Validation** verifies that all the folders that you intended to transfer were in fact successfully transferred.
- **Accessioning** processes the transferred email into the Archives' digital preservation system.

All of these steps are done by an archivist, but they require communication between the account owner and the Archives.

**Steps**

2.4.1 Advise the Archives when you have finished setting up the transfer folder(s) and added permissions.

- If in doubt about who to contact, send an email to `moveit@sfu.ca` (the Archives' generic account for digital transfers) or `archives@sfu.ca` (the Archives' reference desk).

2.4.2 Receive notification from the Archives that it has transferred the email.

- Transfer occurs behind the scenes. You will not notice any change in your own account and the transfer folder and any sub-folders remain in place.

- An archivist has accessed the transfer folder via the permissions you created in steps 2.2 and 2.3, copied its contents to the Archives' `archem1` account, and ran a utility ( `OfflineImap` ) to download the messages and attachments from the SFU mail server to an Archives' computer.

2.4.3 The notification message you receive will include a list of all folder names included in the transfer. Review this list to ensure that the transfer is complete.

- It is possible, for example, that you inadvertently missed some folders when adding permissions in step 2.3.
- If folders are missing from the transfer list, review the permissions on these folders and make sure they have been shared with the Archives.

2.4.4 Reply to the Archives: confirm that the transfer list is complete; or (if not) indicate that folders were missed and that permissions on these folders have been reviewed / added.

- If folders were missed, the Archives will re-run the entire transfer.

2.4.5 Receive an `Transfer Accessioned Notice` from Archives.

- On receipt of your final confirmation, an archivist will accession the transfer (assign it a unique `Accession number` ) and upload it to the Archives' digital preservation system ( `Archivematica` ) to await further processing at a later date.

**Note that there may be a considerable time lag between completion of transfer (accessioning) and completion of processing (archival description).**

- For more on this, see in this guide Section 4, What happens to email after transfer?

## 2.5 Remove permissions

Your transfer is now complete. The Archives will delete its share to your `Inbox` in the `archem1` account. But on your side you should also now remove the Archives' permissions.

**Steps**

2.5.1 Delete the Archives' permission on your `Inbox` .

2.5.2 If you no longer need to access the email messages transferred, you can now delete them from your account.

- But see the caution in Section 1: **once deleted, you will not be able to view transferred email from your SFU account.**
- The Archives' access protocols are set up for third parties to access historical email collections in an offline environment.
- If you need continuing access to particular messages, do not delete them from your account.

2.5.3 If you do retain some or all of the transferred messages, move them to a folder in your account clearly separated from your other email and marked as already transferred (e.g. a folder named `Transferred to Archives` , with sub-folders for each Accession Number).

- This ensures that you do not inadvertently re-transfer the same email later on.

2.5.4 If you plan to regularly transfer email to the Archives in the future, you may wish to retain the same set of transfer folders with their permissions so that you do not have to repeat the process of setting up permissions on every folder and sub-folder.

- The easiest way to do this is to move the set out of your `Inbox` , leave the permission on the top-level transfer folder, but change the settings to `Permission level` = "None" and `Folder visible` = unchecked.

- Then later, when you want make another transfer, simply add back the permission settings, move the set of transfer folders to your `Inbox` , and notify the Archives that you are ready to make another transfer.

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# 3. Non-SFU email accounts

SFU Archives does not currently hold any email archives from non-SFU accounts. But donations of personal correspondence from non-SFU email systems are possible and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

In general: non-SFU email must be transferred in `mbox` format or in a format that we can convert into `mbox` .

- The Archives has a script for converting email from `maildir` to `mbox` formats.
- Gmail can be exported by users themselves as `mbox` ; the process is documented below.

Note that the Archives will not normally acquire email in the form of Microsoft `pst` files. Our sense is that `pst` files are typically less complete and reliable than `mbox` and that the tools for migrating them are not always robust. Our preference at the present time is to use `OfflineImap` to export email from Microsoft Exchange / Outlook email systems. But our experience to date with this method is restricted to working with SFU email.

## 3.1 Gmail

Individuals wishing to donate private correspondence from their Gmail account may use Google's "takeout service" to export their own email themselves.
Google's takeout service delivers email in `mbox` format. Export and download your email as `mbox` files, then transfer the file(s) to Archives using the Archives' standard digital transfer procedure and the SFU MoveIt packager.

When using Google's takeout service, it is vital that you change the default `All Mail data included` settings.

**Steps**
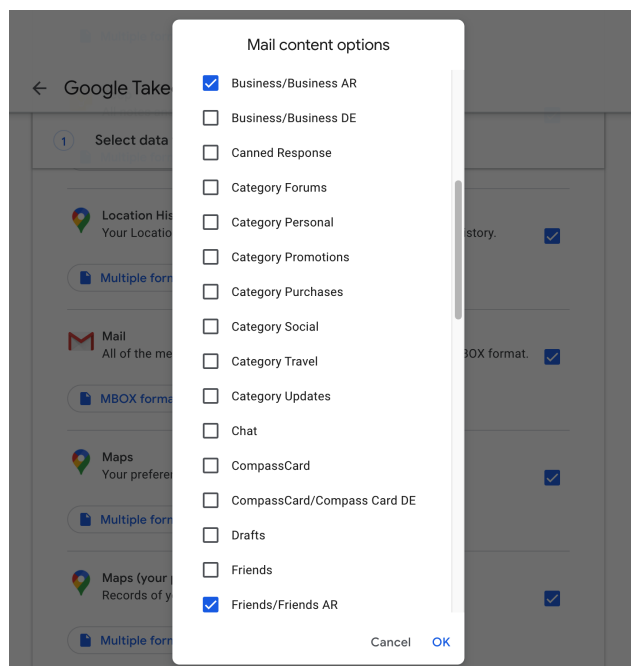
3.1.1 Navigate to your Google account page and log in ([https://myaccount.google.com](https://myaccount.google.com)).

3.1.2 Click the `Data and personalization` link on the sidebar.

3.1.3 Scroll down the page and click the `Download your data` link.

3.1.4 On the `Google Takeout` page, scroll down to the `Mail` section.

3.1.5 Click `All Mail data included` button.

3.1.6 In the `Mail contents options` menu, deselect `All Mail` and select the individual mailbox folders you want to export and transfer (even if you select every folder).

The last step (deselect `All Mail` ) is critical because it ensures that the original folder structure is preserved, i.e. Google will export each folder as its own `mbox` file rather than simpling creating one big `mbox` file for everything.

Typically it will take some time for Google to prepare your email for download. When it is ready, Google will email your Gmail account with a link to download the `mbox` files.

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# 4. What happens to email after transfer?

Through the transfer process, SFU Archives acquires or makes a copy of your email and stores it offline in the `mbox` format.

For SFU email, the Archives uses a tool called [OfflineImap](#) to download messages and attachments from the SFU mail server in `maildir` format, then runs a Python script to convert the `maildir` to `mbox`. For email originating in other systems, the donor must be able to provide it already exported to `mbox` or in a format that the Archives can convert to `mbox` (see [section 3, Non-SFU Accounts](#)).

When a transfer is complete, an archivist accessions it (assigns a unique `Accession number` to the transfer), then uploads the records to the Archives' digital repository using [Archivematica software](#). Here the email remains in "backlog." At a later date, an archivist will further process the email using [ePADD software](#). This will typically involve further appraisal, selection, description, and curation; and the archivist will prepare preservation and access packages for long-term storage in the digital preservation system.

When processing is complete, the archivist updates the Archives' online catalog, [SFU AtoM](#), with a series-level description of the email records in the context of the creator's entire holdings ("fonds").

Email archives often contain sensitive personal information of third parties, as well as other confidential information. Requests for access are handled on a case-by-case basis, and access for researchers will typically require a [Research Agreement](#). The Archives delivers access to the records through a dedicated offline terminal in the Archives' reading room using the [ePADD platform](#).

For more information on the Archives' workflows and processes for handling email, see the broader discussion in [Guide for Email Archives](#) (under development).

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# 5. Email transfer checklist: account owners

Use this checklist when transferring email from SFU Mail accounts.

☐ 1. Consult with an archivist to see if your email may be transferred to Archives.

- The archivist will advise on which parts of your email account are suitable for transfer and long-term preservation.

☐ 2. Create a `Transfer folder` inside your `Inbox`.

- You can give the `Transfer folder` any name but it must be placed in the `Inbox`.

☐ 3. Move email folders and / or messages into the `Transfer folder`.

- Wherever possible keep messages in their original folder structures.
- There is no limit to the number of sub-folders or sub-levels you can nest within the `Transfer folder`

☐ 4. Add permissions on your `Inbox` for the Archives' `archeml` account:

- `Permission level` = "None".
- `Folder visible` = "Yes" (check box)
- For screenshots etc. see section 2.2 Add permissions to the Inbox.

☐ 5. Add permissions on your `Transfer folder` and every sub-folder within it for the Archives' `archeml` account.

- `Permission level` = "Reviewer" (= read-only access)
- `Folder visible` = "Yes" (check box)
- **You must add these permissions to every folder you intend to transfer, not just the top-level `Transfer folder`.**
- For screenshots etc. see section 2.3 Add permissions to the transfer folder(s).

☐ 6. Notify the Archives that your email is ready for transfer.

- [ ] 7. Receive notice from the Archives that the transfer has been completed and review the accompanying `Transfer list` of folders that the Archives has copied and exported from SFU Mail.

    - Ensure that everything you intended to transfer was in fact successfully transferred (i.e. appears on the `Transfer list`).

- [ ] 8. If folders are missing from the `Transfer list`, double-check to make sure you added permissions to the missing folders and add them if required.

- [ ] 9. Confirm with the Archives that the `Transfer list` is complete or incomplete.

    - If folders were missed, the Archives will re-run the entire transfer; repeat steps 7-9 as needed.

- [ ] 10. Receive from Archives a **Transfer Accessioned Notice** giving your transfer a unique `Accession number` and listing the folders transferred.

- [ ] 11. Determine whether or not to delete or retain your own copies of the emails transferred.

    - **Once deleted you will not be able to access transferred email via your SFU Mail account**

- [ ] 12. If you are retaining any email that was transferred, separate it from your other email folders and keep it clearly labelled so that you will not inadvertently re-send the same email at a later date.

- [ ] 13. If you are retaining the `Transfer folder` or any of its sub-folders for re-use in future transfers, move them out of your `Inbox` and delete or change the permissions setting granted to Archives on them.

    - Changing `Permission level` to "None" and `Folder visible` to "No" (unchecked) on the top-level folder should make the contents of any sub-folders inaccessible to the Archives.
    - The most secure approach, however, is to simply delete the permissions given to `archeml` and recreate them later when you need to.

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