umTECH NEWSLETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

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OCTOBER 2026 REVIEW

THE canvas CORNER

There are no updates to Canvas this month.

TAF FUNDING TRANSFORMATION



The Technology Access Fee (TAF) has transitioned to the **TAF Access Fund**, which is now part of a broader university service fee. This change reflects a shift in how technology purchases are funded, with greater emphasis on enterprise-level software and services as the university works within tighter financial constraints.

Funding Structure

TAF remains part of the student fee structure, but students no longer see it listed as a separate charge. Instead, it is included in the broader university service fee.

College Software Funding

During FY25, financial planning provided approximately $333,000 to help cover software expenses. Colleges were informed that this would be their final allocation through this funding arrangement.

Colleges could use available carry-forward funds during FY26, but beginning in FY27, they will no longer receive TAF funding for college-level software purchases. The fund is now being directed toward enterprise-level purchases that support broader university needs.



Protect sensitive information by locking your computer whenever you step away from your desk, even for a few minutes, to help prevent unauthorized access.

Technology Costs

Rising technology costs are making equipment replacement and purchasing decisions more challenging. For example, Dell computer prices have increased by approximately 15–20 percent, and vendor quotes may remain valid for only about two weeks. These pressures are prompting a review of traditional four- and five-year computer replacement cycles. The goal is to balance the cost of replacing equipment with the need to provide users with reliable, functional computers. Replacement decisions will need to account for equipment condition, recurring problems, and available funding.

Asset Management

ITS has added an asset management system to TopDesk and is refining it to provide a clearer picture of university computer equipment. The system is being developed to associate each computer with its assigned user, device name, purchase date, and age. This information will help ITS identify patterns in equipment performance, recurring computer problems, and the reliability of different models. It can also help determine when a device may need replacement or when a conversation with a user could help address ongoing technology issues. Better asset information will support more informed decisions about equipment purchases and support resources.

Mac Support

Mac support and repair options are being reviewed to balance technology costs and available staffing. Extended Apple warranties help reduce the need for in-house repairs, while establishing an internal repair operation would require additional resources. More Macs are now managed through Jamf, and ITS will continue evaluating warranty coverage and support options to provide effective service within available resources.

ITS SECURITY CHANGES AND DEADLINES

Several security changes are coming to University of Memphis technology services. These include changes to automatic email forwarding, Duo authentication, and required security-awareness training. Understanding what is changing and taking a few steps now can help prevent interruptions to your access to university systems.

Email Forwarding

Beginning November 1, automatic forwarding from university email accounts to Gmail or other external email accounts will be disabled. This includes Outlook inbox rules that automatically redirect messages to another account.

You can still manually forward individual messages when permitted by university data protection requirements. Departments with legitimate business needs for automatic forwarding may request a case-by-case exception through UmTech. Remember to protect personally identifiable information and other restricted data when sharing email messages.

Duo Authentication

Text message (SMS) verification codes for Duo will be discontinued after November 30. If you currently use text messages to verify your identity, you will need to switch to another supported authentication method before the deadline.

Options include Duo mobile push notifications, passcodes generated within the Duo app, and passkeys. A passkey uses your device's built-in security features, such as a fingerprint or facial recognition, to verify your identity. Setting up a passkey on a phone with biometric authentication is a recommended option. Instructions are available at memphis.edu/duo.

Third-party USB security keys, such as YubiKey, are also an option, although ITS cannot provide support for these devices. The Service Desk has no remaining Duo hardware tokens or key fobs, so users should plan to use another supported authentication method.

SOFTWARE CONTRACTS/RENEWALS

No Renewals



SECURITY TRAINING

Current employees and student workers must complete their required security-awareness training by October 31. Beginning November 1, accounts belonging to those who have not completed the training will be restricted to the training site until the requirement is met.

The university is transitioning its training to Adaptive. New employees are being enrolled in Adaptive, while some employees who enrolled before September 18 may still be using KnowBe4 until the transition is complete.

If you have trouble accessing or completing your assigned training, contact UmTech for assistance. Completing the training before the deadline will help you avoid an interruption to your university account access.

RESTART AND STAY SECURE

Restarting your computer regularly is an important step in keeping university technology secure and reliable. Security updates often require a restart to finish installing and apply critical protections. Even when updates have downloaded successfully, some changes may not take effect until the computer restarts. Delaying a restart can leave updates incomplete and your device without the full benefit of the latest security protections.

Faculty and staff can help protect university devices and information by saving their work and restarting their computers when prompted. If you receive a restart notification during a busy workday, plan to restart as soon as practical rather than repeatedly postponing it. Regular restarts also help clear temporary resources, resolve minor performance issues, and keep your computer running smoothly. Taking a few minutes to restart helps support a more secure and dependable technology environment across campus.

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ITS Service Desk, 100 Administration Bldg., Memphis, TN 38152 | 901.678.8888
For more information or to inquire about technical reports, contact
umTech@memphis.edu | memphis.edu/umTech