Roger Williams University | Information Technology

2-Factor Authentication FAQ

What is 2-factor and why are we required to set this up?

In response to recent phishing scams and as part of our State of Rhode Island mandated Information Security Plan, Roger Williams University is implementing a high-security email login procedure for faculty and staff known as 2-factor authentication. The purpose of 2-factor authentication is to prevent password compromises and improve account security. By introducing a second authentication factor, such as a physical device (i.e. mobile phone or landline), hackers will not be able to gain access to RWU accounts even if the users' password has been stolen or compromised.

What options are there to set up 2-factor authentication on my account?

The easiest and most flexible option is to use a cell phone, which can provide authentication through a specific Authenticator app, through text message, or through a voice call. Alternately, you can set up a landline phone (office, home or other) as a method of authentication. However, if a landline is used, you will need to be at that location when you are authenticating your account.

I'm concerned about using my personal phone for 2-factor authentication.

RWU doesn't get access to any of your personal data when you're using your personal phone for 2-factor authentication.

Can I set up 2-factor authentication on more than one phone?

Yes! You are encouraged to set 2-factor authentication up on more than one phone in case you forget a phone at home or are not at the landline phone location when you need to authenticate. You can set up your cell phone, your office phone, and an additional cell or landline phone.

What if I get a new phone?

Call the MediaTech helpdesk at 401-254-6363 and we will assist you in setting up your new phone for use at RWU, including connecting to wireless and configuring your 2-factor authentication.

What if I lose my cell phone?

We encourage you to call the MediaTech helpdesk at 401-254-6363 and we will assist you with options to help you to protect your personal and work-related data.

Do I need a smart phone to use 2-factor authentication?

No. Our O365 email offers several options to authenticate your email account. A text message can be sent to a regular cell phone or a voice call can be placed to your office or cell phone.

What if I'm traveling internationally?

The Authenticator smart phone app will generate the required code without the need of a telephone signal and data plan, and it can do this anywhere in the world. If you have a telephone signal and data plan or Wi-Fi connectivity, you can authenticate using one of the other options while abroad.

Do I have to use 2-factor authentication every time I log into my RWU O365 email account?

O365 2-factor authentication will allow you to remember a device for 30 days.

Do I now have to use the Outlook app or can I continue to use the native Mail, Calendar, and Contacts apps on my cell phone?

You can use the native apps on your phone and/or the Outlook app. IT can help you configure this when they set up your 2-factor authentication or you can call or visit the MediaTech helpdesk to get help with this process.

What if I decide that I want to change the method I use for 2-factor authentication?

While the IT department is happy to help you make this change, you can also do it yourself anytime by logging into O365.rwu.edu and visiting the "Security and Privacy" section under the account settings. Click on "Additional security verification" and then "Update your phone numbers used for account security". Call or visit the MediaTech helpdesk if you need any assistance with this process.

What if I receive a notification from the Authenticator app asking me to approve a new sign-in to my account, but I am not currently signing into my account?

Any Authenticator app notification not generated by you trying to log in could mean that your password has been compromised. Do not approve the new sign-in and call the MediaTech helpdesk at 401-254-6363 for further help and instructions.