

Multi-factor authentication FAQs

What is MFA?

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) requires you to provide more than one type of authentication for a login to a device, website or app, or other transaction. It adds an extra layer of protection to your account and is used on a regular basis for many online transactions such as banking, shopping, social media accounts or PayPal.

MFA requires you to authenticate using:

Something you know: your username and password,
and

Something you have: a trusted device, such as your mobile phone, on which to receive and respond to verification requests.

Why do we use MFA?

MFA significantly increases the security of your account and therefore your data. By using MFA, it is much harder for hackers to do damage to our network when somebody gives up their account details by means of a scam email, as they'd also need to be in possession of the authentication device to access the phished account.

The University has been using an MFA system called PingID since 2021. However, as part of our cyber resilience programme, we are enhancing our MFA solution by transitioning to a new partner that will offer GCU MFA. From July 23, 2024, staff will be invited to register for the new GCU MFA platform.

Why are we changing from PingID to GCU MFA?

It has become critical for us as an institution to enhance the security of our systems, data and services to a much-improved platform. The University's new MFA platform offers the ability to control, monitor and govern sensitive account usage for both staff and students. During the transition period, you will be required to continue to use PingID, even when registered with GCU MFA

What systems will I have to use GCU MFA to access?

You will initially use the new GCU MFA platform to log on to your device, while continuing to use PingID to access the VPN and other systems that require VPN access. In due course, GCU MFA will be migrated to all our systems and apps, and PingID will be decommissioned. An email will be sent to all staff before then (likely to be towards the end of 2024).

Is it mandatory for me to set up GCU MFA?

The GCU MFA software will be installed remotely on all GCU devices by our Information Services team on Thursday, August 29. Ahead of this date, you must register on the system and either download the app to your smartphone or set up SMS text authentication.

Registering for GCU MFA is mandatory for all staff with systems access and must be done by Friday, August 23. If you don't, you will not be able to access your device after August 29.

I have received an invitation to set up GCU MFA in my University mailbox, what do I need to do?

Click on the link on the email and follow the instructions to register for GCU MFA. This [simple user guide will guide you through the process](#).

What do I have to do to now?

In preparation for the transition, you should register on the GCU MFA platform immediately upon receipt of the registration invitation email. The registration process is easy to follow and should only take five to 10 minutes.

How do I set up my GCU MFA?

Setting up MFA is a simple process. You can find an [easy-to-follow user guide here](#).

New members of staff will need to register for both PingID and GCU MFA. [Follow the instructions for PingID here](#).

How many authentication methods do I need to set up?

You are required to set up a minimum of one authentication method in addition to your existing password.

The following authentication methods are available:

- SMS/text message
- Third party authenticator app (e.g. Microsoft Authenticator app)
- Mobile device (i.e. CyberArk Identity app)

What is OTP?

A one-time passcode (OTP) is a set of numbers received via SMS or on the authenticator app, which is used to complete your login once you have registered your device. The OTP is only valid for 60 seconds. If the 60 seconds elapses and you haven't used the OTP, you will need to generate another OTP to complete your registration.

How often do I need to use GCU MFA to log in to my device?

You will be prompted for MFA at least once every 24 hours.

Will I need to be on campus to register for GCU MFA?

You can register for GCU MFA on campus or remotely.

Will I need to use MFA when working on campus?

You will be required to use MFA on campus and remotely.

I am a casual worker who only accesses GCU email and GCU Learn, what do I need to do?

All GCU staff, authorised guests, PGR students and students are required to register for GCU MFA.

I use my own personal computer, what do I need to do?

To access any GCU applications you will need to register for GCU MFA. This includes working from your personal computer.

I have Windows Hello installed on my work laptop, do I still need to set up GCU MFA?

Yes, Windows Hello and GCU MFA will work in conjunction with each other.?

What happens if my mobile device is lost or stolen and I'm unable to log in?

Contact the IT Helpdesk for support by emailing ITHelp@gcu.ac.uk or logging the issue on [GCU Service Now](#).

When will students start using MFA?

Student registration will begin ahead of the new academic year and they will start to use the new platform in November 2024.