

ESS Authentication

The Office of Administration, Office for Information Technology has implemented a new security safeguard for access to [Employee Self Service](#) from external Internet connections.

The new safeguard, ESS Authentication, will apply to users who wish to access ESS from outside the office or from a device not connected to the commonwealth network. In addition to a user name and password, you also will need to enter a six-digit passcode that automatically expires after it is created.

There are two ways to receive a passcode:

- 1. Email** – A passcode is sent to your work email account after you enter your user name and password to log into ESS. You will then enter the passcode to complete the log-in process. This is the default method to receive a passcode; no action is required by you to enable this service. [View instructions here.](#)
- 2. SAP Authenticator App** – A passcode is generated by an app installed on a mobile device. You must download and configure the app before you can receive a passcode to log into ESS. [View instructions here.](#)

Important! You will not need a passcode to access ESS from a commonwealth work site on a computer connected directly to the CWOPA network or when using a virtual private network (VPN) connection for remote access.

For questions or assistance, call the HR Service Center at 866.377.2672 Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is Employee Self Service (ESS) Authentication?

ESS Authentication is a form of multi-factor authentication (MFA). MFA requires a user to provide information in addition to a user name and password in order to access systems or data. For ESS, an automatically generated six-digit passcode will be required when logging in externally.

2. When will I need to use ESS Authentication to log in?

ESS Authentication will be required when users wish to access ESS from outside the office or from a device not connected to the commonwealth network. In addition to a user name and password, you also will need to enter a six-digit passcode that automatically expires shortly after it is created.

3. I've never accessed my work email account from home before. I will need to access my work email in order to receive the ESS Authentication passcode. How do I access my work email from home?

Links and instructions for agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction are available here: <https://itcentral.pa.gov/sites/TechHelp/collaboration/email/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

4. Is the added security in ESS the same as the multi-factor authentication (MFA) used when I access my Office 365 (email, OneDrive, etc) from home?

The concept is the same, as both are an added layer of security; however, ESS Authentication is separate. The MFA for Office 365 uses challenge questions and/or a six-digit passcode created by you for verification. ESS Authentication uses a unique six-digit passcode that is generated at the time of login and emailed to you; it expires shortly after it is generated.

5. Why is ESS Authentication being implemented?

ESS contains personal information about commonwealth employees. ESS Authentication provides an additional layer of protection from unauthorized access by someone using an employee's lost or stolen log in credentials or devices.

6. Does a separate application need to be downloaded for ESS multi-factor authentication to work?

By default, ESS Authentication will send a six-digit PIN code to your work email account. Users who do not wish to receive in PIN code in this manner can download and configure an app that generates the PIN code necessary to log in. Please note that the app is also protected by a PIN code that you must create and cannot be reset if you forget it

The remaining questions are specific to the SAP Authenticator App. If you are using the passcode by email option, these do not apply to you.

7. What happens if I enter the wrong password into the SAP Authenticator App?

This is a password of your choosing. After 20 unsuccessful attempts to enter your app password, the app data will be disabled.

- a. Contact your agency IT Help Desk to request that your ESS authentication registration be reset.
- b. After your registration is reset, your mobile device will need to be re-registered within the SAP Authenticator App.
- When you re-register, you will create a new password. Pick a password that is easy for you to remember. Follow the instructions in Employee Self Service; look for the ESS Authentication tab in the upper left corner of the screen.

8. I forgot my SAP Authenticator app password. What should I do?

Contact your agency's IT Help Desk to have your registration reset.

9. I deleted the SAP Authenticator App after registering my device and ESS Authentication is stating that my device is already registered, how do I re-register my device?

- a. Contact your agency IT Help Desk to request that your ESS authentication registration be reset.
- b. After your registration is reset, you will download, install, and re-register the SAP Authenticator App.
 - When you re-register, you will create a new password. Pick a password that is easy for you to remember. Follow the instructions in Employee Self Service; look for the ESS Authentication tab in the upper left corner of the screen.

10. Am I able to register more than one mobile device with the SAP Authenticator app?

Yes. Once you finish registering your first mobile device, you can log into Employee Self Service from a desktop computer, select the "ESS Authentication" tab from the top menu, and select "Set Up Account on Device" and follow the instructions on the screen for an additional device. Registering a second device requires that the first registered mobile device be available in order to obtain the passcode.

11. I received the message, "Account cannot be added or updated" when attempting to register my device using the Setup URL. Who should I contact for help?

Contact your agency IT Help Desk to have your registration reset.