Study guide for Exam MS-203: Microsoft 365 Messaging

Purpose of this document

This study guide should help you understand what to expect on the exam and includes a summary of the topics the exam might cover and links to additional resources. The information and materials in this document should help you focus your studies as you prepare for the exam.

Useful links	Description
Review the skills measured as of May 2, 2023	This list represents the skills measured AFTER the date provided. Study this list if you plan to take the exam AFTER that date.
Review the skills measured prior to May 2, 2023	Study this list of skills if you take your exam PRIOR to the date provided.
Change log	You can go directly to the change log if you want to see the changes that will be made on the date provided.
How to earn the certification	Some certifications only require passing one exam, while others require passing multiple exams.
Certification renewal	Microsoft associate, expert, and specialty certifications expire annually. You can renew by passing a **free** online assessment on Microsoft Learn.
Your Microsoft Learn profile	Connecting your certification profile to Microsoft Learn allows you to schedule and renew exams and share and print certificates.
Exam scoring and score reports	A score of 700 or greater is required to pass.
Exam sandbox	You can explore the exam environment by visiting our exam sandbox.
Request accommodations	If you use assistive devices, require extra time, or need modification to any part of the exam experience, you can request an accommodation.

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Useful links	Description
Take a practice test	Are you ready to take the exam or do you need to study a bit more?

Updates to the exam

Our exams are updated periodically to reflect skills that are required to perform a role. We have included two versions of the Skills Measured objectives depending on when you are taking the exam.

We always update the English language version of the exam first. Some exams are localized into other languages, and those are updated approximately eight weeks after the English version is updated. While Microsoft makes every effort to update localized versions as noted, there may be times when the localized versions of an exam are not updated on this schedule. Other available languages are listed in the **Schedule Exam** section of the **Exam Details** webpage. If the exam isn't available in your preferred language, you can request an additional 30 minutes to complete the exam.

Note

The bullets that follow each of the skills measured are intended to illustrate how we are assessing that skill. Related topics may be covered in the exam.

Note

Most questions cover features that are general availability (GA). The exam may contain questions on Preview features if those features are commonly used.

Skills measured as of May 2, 2023

Audience profile

Candidates for this exam are Microsoft 365 messaging administrators who manage a secure, efficient, and effective email collaboration platform using Microsoft Exchange Online and Microsoft 365.

Messaging administrators plan, configure, and manage recipients, mail flow, threat protection, compliance, and client connectivity.

Messaging administrators collaborate with administrators of other workloads, including security, compliance, identity, and networking, to implement a secure cloud messaging topology that meets the business needs of an enterprise.

Candidates for this exam should have a working knowledge of authentication types, licensing, integration with Microsoft 365 applications, Exchange Management Shell, Microsoft Purview, and Microsoft Azure Active Directory (Azure AD), part of Microsoft Entra.

- Manage Microsoft Exchange Online settings and resources (40–45%)
- Plan and manage the mail transport architecture (25–30%)
- Secure the messaging environment (25–30%)

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Manage Microsoft Exchange Online settings and resources (40–45%)

Manage organizational and client access settings in Exchange Online

- Manage a global address list (GAL)
- Add or remove an offline address book (OAB)
- Manage address book policies
- Plan and configure organization relationships and individual sharing
- Configure Outlook on the web policies

Manage recipients and resources

- Manage user mailboxes
- Manage resource mailboxes
- Manage shared mailboxes
- Create and manage mail contacts and mail users
- Manage groups, including distribution lists, dynamic distribution lists, mail-enabled security groups, and Microsoft 365 groups
- Manage mailbox permissions, including delegation
- Manage mailbox mail flow settings
- Create and manage public folders

Manage Exchange hybrid settings and migration

- Configure virtual directories and URLs in a hybrid environment
- Maintain and expand the configuration by using the Hybrid Configuration wizard
- Configure migration endpoints
- Create and manage a cross-tenant migration batch

Plan and manage the mail transport architecture (25–30%)

Manage and secure mail flow

- Plan and configure connectors
- Plan and implement mail flow rules (transport rules)
- Manage accepted and remote domains
- Configure namespaces, accepted domains, and DNS records, including Exchange Online Protection (EOP)
- Implement email authentication, including Sender Policy Framework (SPF), DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM), and Domain-based Message Authentication, and Reporting and Conformance (DMARC)

Troubleshoot mail flow

- Configure and manage alert policies
- Trace a message

Microsoft

- Analyze a message trace
- Analyze message headers
- Analyze non-delivery reports (NDRs)
- Troubleshoot by using the Microsoft Remote Connectivity Analyzer

Secure the messaging environment (25–30%)

Manage role-based permissions in Exchange Online

- Plan and manage RBAC roles
- Manage default and custom admin role groups
- Manage user roles

Secure messages by using Microsoft 365 Defender

- Configure and manage anti-phishing policies
- Configure and manage anti-spam policies
- Configure and manage anti-malware policies
- Configure and manage Safe Attachments
- Configure and manage Safe Links
- Configure and manage quarantine policies

Manage compliance

- Configure Messaging Records Management (MRM) and retention policies for a specific mailbox folder
- Enable and configure archive mailboxes
- Manage inactive mailboxes
- Analyze audit logs
- Manage journal rules
- Manage content search
- Manage standard eDiscovery cases (not including Premium eDiscovery)

Microsoft

Study resources

We recommend that you train and get hands-on experience before you take the exam. We offer self-study options and classroom training as well as links to documentation, community sites, and videos.

Study resources	Links to learning and documentation
Get trained	Choose from self-paced learning paths and modules or take an instructor-led course
Find documentation	Microsoft 365 documentation Exchange documentation
Ask a question	Microsoft Q&A | Microsoft Docs
Get community support	Microsoft 365 - Microsoft Tech Community
Follow Microsoft Learn	Microsoft Learn - Microsoft Tech Community
Find a video	Exam Readiness Zone Browse other Microsoft Learn shows

Change log

Key to understanding the table: The topic groups (also known as functional groups) are in bold typeface followed by the objectives within each group. The table is a comparison between the two versions of the exam skills measured and the third column describes the extent of the changes.

Skill area prior to May 2, 2023	Skill area as of May 2, 2023	Changes
Audience profile		Major
Manage organizational settings and resources	**Manage Microsoft Exchange Online settings and resources**	% of exam increased
Plan and manage organizational settings and client connectivity	Manage organizational and client access settings in Exchange Online	Major
Manage recipient resources	Manage recipients and resources	Major
	Manage Exchange hybrid settings and migration	Added

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Skill area prior to May 2, 2023	Skill area as of May 2, 2023	Changes
Plan and manage the mail transport architecture	**Plan and manage the mail transport architecture**	No change
Plan and configure connectors		Removed
Manage and secure flow of internal and internet mail	Manage and secure mail flow	Major
Troubleshoot mail flow	Troubleshoot mail flow	Minor
Plan and implement a hybrid configuration and migration		Deleted
Plan and implement a hybrid environment		Removed
Plan and implement migration		Removed
Secure the messaging environment	**Secure the messaging environment**	No change
Manage role-based permissions in Exchange	Manage role-based permissions in Exchange Online	Minor
Secure messages by using Microsoft 365 Defender	Secure messages by using Microsoft 365 Defender	Major
Manage compliance	Manage compliance	Minor

Skills measured prior to May 2, 2023

Audience profile

Candidates for this exam are messaging administrators who plan, deploy, configure, troubleshoot, and secure the messaging infrastructure in hybrid and cloud enterprise environments.

Messaging administrators are responsible for managing recipients, mailboxes, transport, mail flow, administrative roles, threat protection, compliance, migrations, and client connectivity.

Messaging administrators collaborate with other workload administrators and the Microsoft 365 enterprise administrator to implement a secure hybrid or cloud-only messaging topology that meets the business needs of an enterprise.

The messaging administrator should have a working knowledge of authentication types, licensing, integration with Microsoft 365 applications, and Microsoft Azure Active Directory (Azure AD), part of Microsoft Entra.

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- Manage organizational settings and resources (15–20%)
- Plan and manage the mail transport architecture (30–35%)
- Plan and implement a hybrid configuration and migration (15–20%)
- Secure the messaging environment (25–30%)

Manage organizational settings and resources (15–20%)

Plan and manage organizational settings and client connectivity

- Manage a Global Address List (GAL)
- Manage an Offline Address Book (OAB)
- Manage address book policies
- Manage email address policies
- Plan and configure organization relationships and individual sharing
- Configure virtual directories and URLs in a hybrid environment
- Configure global Outlook on the Web policies
- Troubleshoot by using the Microsoft Support and Recovery Assistant (SaRA)

Manage recipient resources

- Manage resource mailboxes
- Manage groups including distribution lists, dynamic distribution lists, mail-enabled security groups, and Microsoft 365 groups
- Create and manage group naming policies
- Manage user mailboxes
- Manage mailbox permissions, including delegation
- Manage mailbox Mailflow settings
- Manage shared mailboxes, including converting to a shared mailbox
- Create and manage contacts, including mail contacts and mail users
- Create and manage public folders

Plan and manage the mail transport architecture (30–35%)

Plan and configure connectors

- Plan connectors for mail flow
- Create and configure connectors to route mail
- Create and configure connectors to secure mail flow between organizations
- Configure enhanced filtering for connectors in Microsoft 365 Defender

Manage and secure flow of internal and internet mail

- Manage mail flow rules
- Manage accepted and remote domains
- Manage hybrid mail flow

Microsoft

- Identify the appropriate DNS MX record for a specific scenario
- Plan and implement Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC)
- Plan and implement Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM)

Troubleshoot mail flow

- Configure and manage alert policies
- Trace a message
- Analyze a message trace
- Analyze message headers
- Analyze Non-Deliverable Reports (NDRs)
- Troubleshoot by using the Microsoft Remote Connectivity Analyzer
- Troubleshoot by using transport logs and queues in a hybrid environment

Plan and implement a hybrid configuration and migration (15–20%)

Plan and implement a hybrid environment

- Plan a hybrid deployment by using the Hybrid Configuration Wizard (HCW)
- Manage the Edge server role in a hybrid environment
- Configure the environment by using the Hybrid Configuration Wizard
- Deploy the Exchange Hybrid Agent
- Manage the Exchange certificates lifecycle in a hybrid environment

Plan and implement migration

- Evaluate migration methods, including minimal hybrid (express migration), remote move, cutover, cross tenant, staged, PST Imports, IMAP, and Google Workspace
- Configure migration endpoints
- Create and manage a migration batch
- Specify cross-tenant migration requirements
- Troubleshoot mailbox migration

Secure the messaging environment (25–30%)

Manage role-based permissions in Exchange

- Note: Exchange-related roles only
- Plan RBAC roles
- Manage default and custom admin role groups
- Manage user roles

Secure messages by using Microsoft 365 Defender

- Configure and manage Anti-phishing policies
- Configure and manage Anti-spam policies

Microsoft

- Configure and manage Anti-malware policies
- Configure and manage Safe Attachments
- Configure and manage Safe Links
- Configure Tenant Allow/Block lists
- Configure and manage quarantine policies
- Investigate messaging threats by using Microsoft 365 Defender Explorer and Advanced hunting
- Manage user-reported message settings
- Validate settings by using Configuration analyzer

Manage compliance

- Configure retention tags and retention policies for a specific mailbox folder
- Enable and configure archive mailboxes
- Analyze audit logs
- Manage journal rules
- Manage content search
- Manage standard eDiscovery cases (not including Premium eDiscovery)

Microsoft