

The University of Memphis BF4005 - University Records Management Program

POLICIES

Issued: October 26, 2017
Responsible Official: Executive Vice President and Chief Operating and Financial Officer
Responsible Office: Vice President for Business & Finance

Policy Statement

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The University Records Management Program is established to facilitate the efficient maintenance and destruction of the University of Memphis' records and to ensure availability and protection of vital information. Prompt access to accurate information is necessary to accomplish the work of University offices.

No records are to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by University employees on their own initiative until the minimum retention period has elapsed.

Individual department or activity managers are primarily responsible for the creation, maintenance, and transfer to storage of University records under their control. The University Standing Committee on Public Records shall monitor and provide guidance to the University Administration for the management of records.

Purpose

The Records Management Program guides the creation, maintenance, retrieval, and final disposition or preservation of records to:

- Assure compliance with Executive Order #45, Tennessee Code Annotated Section 10-7-301 et. seq. and federal and local statutory requirements
- Protect vital records
- Retain and preserve historical documents
- Ensure that records are disposed of only in accordance with established procedures.

Definitions

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| Records | Records shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, sound recordings, or other material regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency. For the purpose of this guideline, records are only those items defined as such by the Commission rules. |
| Permanent Records | Those records which have permanent administrative, fiscal, historical or legal value. |
| Temporary Records | Those records or materials which can be disposed of in a short period of time as being without value in documenting the functions of an agency. |
| Inactive Records | Records which are no longer accessed as part of the day-to-day operations of the office but which have not reached age of disposition, |
| Confidential Public Record | Any public record which has been designated confidential by statute and includes information or matters or records considered to be privileged and any aspect of which access by the general public has been generally denied. |
| Vital/Essential Records | Any records containing information needed to establish or maintain continuity of operation in an office, department, or division of the University, to recreate the University's legal and fiscal records, or to preserve the rights of the University, its Board, faculty, staff, and/or students in the event of a disaster. |
| Agency | Agency shall mean any department, division, board, bureau, commission or other separate legislative branch and the judicial branch to the extent that it is constitutionally permissible. |
| Litigation Files | Those records pertaining to any pending legal case, claim or action, or to any federal or state audit. |
| Records Management | Records management shall mean the application of management techniques to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records in order to reduce costs and improve efficiency of record keeping. It shall include records retention schedule development, essential records protection, files management and information retrieval systems, microfilm information systems, correspondence and word processing management, records center, forms management, analysis and design, and reports and publications management. |
| University Records Officer | The Vice President for Business & Finance is the official designated to administer the Records Management program at the University of Memphis |
| Records Coordinator | An individual designated by a department activity/head to coordinate record disposition in the department or division. |

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| Office of Record | The primary custodian of the record and the office responsible for maintaining the official copy of the record. See Retention & Disposition Schedule . |
| Disposition | The preservation of the original records in whole or in part, preservation by photographic or other reproduction processes, or outright destruction of the records. |
| Records Disposition Authorization | Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) shall mean the official document utilized by an agency head to request authority for the disposition of records. |
| Working Papers | Those records created to serve as input for final reporting documents, including electronic data processed records, and/or computer output microfilm, and those records which become obsolete immediately after agency use or publication. |
| Records Creation | The recording of information on paper, printed forms, punched cards, tape, disk, or any information transmitting media. It shall include preparation of forms, reports, state publications, and correspondence. |
| Non-records | Those records that do not document the activities of an agency. They are excluded from the record retention and disposal requirements and include: extra copies of documents kept for convenience or reference; stock supplies of publications; extra copies of circulated materials where follow-up copies are kept for the record reading files; follow-up correspondence copies; identical or carbon copies kept in the same file; draft copies of documents when the final version is complete; letters of transmittal which add nothing to the transmitted information; inter-office memoranda; short-hand notes; steno type tapes or sound recordings after they have been transcribed; internal housekeeping materials such as intra-office memos, routing slips, telephone call slips, and computer edit error listings after the corrections are made; library or museum material which is for reference or exhibit; and private materials neither made nor received by an institution or school staff member in connection with the transaction of official business. |
| Records Series | Documents, files, folders, reports or other data sets arranged together as a unit because they relate to a particular subject or result from the same activity, and which are appraised as a unit for retention scheduling. |

Procedures

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| University Records Officer | The University Records Officer or Designee has the authority and responsibility to retain and dispose of records in accordance with approved records disposition authorizations. |
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Prior to the destruction of any records, the Records Officer must determine if the action should be delayed due to audit or litigation requirements. Specific records pertaining to current or pending litigation or investigations must be retained until all questions are resolved. These specific records can be retained in a suspense file, while all other records not under pending investigation shall be disposed of in accordance with established Statewide Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs).

The Records Officer should establish and apply retention schedules for records in their custody that may not be specifically addressed in this policy.

Records Coordinator

The Records Coordinator will manage records retention, off-site transmittal and destruction of records for the department or division, in accordance with legal requirements and as set forth herein.

The Records Coordinator should consult the University's Records Officer for guidance and training.

Records Retention Schedule

Retention of University Records - The [Retention & Disposition Schedule](#) provides information regarding the length of time various types of records should be kept and the office of record. Always consult the [Retention & Disposition Schedule](#) before destroying any University records. Where a Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) Number is given, the record series has been scheduled by the State of Tennessee. Otherwise, retention periods have been set by the University.

Records Maintenance

Electronic Creation/Reproduction of Records. Unless specified otherwise or required by law, records may be electronically created or reproduced and the paper copy destroyed upon verification of an archival quality reproduction. The electronic record will then be retained for the balance of the indicated retention period. Paper records that reflect 'permanent' retention may be destroyed after verification of an archival quality reproduction.

Departments may wish to scan active records to facilitate automated retrieval. Participants will be responsible for acquiring imaging equipment, training users, organizing material to be imaged and reviewing scanned documents for accuracy prior to disposing of hard copy.

Information Systems will assist participants in the design of a database and index to retrieve scanned material. Contact the University Records Officer (email vpbusfin@memphis.edu) for further information.

Protection of Vital / Essential Records. Vital / Essential records may be found on paper, magnetic tape, microfilm, electronic image or any other format used to store information. It is the responsibility of the office of record to ensure that all vital/essential records are protected. This is usually achieved by storing a duplicate of the record in another

location. Retention periods for protection copies of vital/essential records are the same as for the original record. That is, if the vital / essential record retention period of three years, then the protection copy should also be retained for three years.

Use of University Records Center. Subject to space availability, University departments may place inactive records in the University Records Center. Disposal dates should be clearly indicated on records transferred to the storage center – conditions at the University Records Center are conducive to long-term retention of records.

All records received by the University Records Center remain under the control of the department sending the records. No other university department, personnel, or non-University person will be allowed to have access to a department's records without that department's express permission. University, state and federal auditors will be allowed access to a department's fiscal records if needed.

Departments will be responsible for transporting their records to the University Records Center. A Transmittal of Records to University Records Center form must be completed prior to transferring any records. Follow instructions provided with the form, and then contact the University Records Officer for access to the storage center.

Disposal of Records

Physical Destruction or Other Disposition of University Records. The [Records Disposal Request and Authorization](#) form should be submitted and approved through the appropriate Vice President/Provost prior to submitting to the University Records Officer and disposing of any University records. Subject to statutory provisions and in compliance with the University [Retention & Disposition Schedule](#), the University Records Officer may authorize the disposal of records. Each department head or activity manager will determine records that are available for disposal at least annually.

- Duplicate copies of records retained for convenience only may be destroyed without regard to the [Retention and Disposition Schedule](#) when the need for the duplicate ceases to exist.
- Records under subpoena or other pending court or administrative action may not be destroyed until the subject matter relative to the records is fully closed, including appeals and time frames for appeals or completion of audit. When a litigation hold has been issued by the Office of University Counsel; or if any pending or actual federal, state or other audit is being conducted; consult the Office of Legal Counsel before destroying such records.
- No records, paper, electronic, or other media may be destroyed unless and until meeting the criteria of this

guideline. Records kept by employees of the University, unless clearly personal and outside the scope of employment, belong to the University and their destruction should take place only in compliance with established procedures. Unless specified otherwise, or otherwise required by law, records may be imaged, microfilmed, or electronically reproduced and the paper copy destroyed upon verification of an archival quality reproduction. The microfilm, image, or electronic record will then be retained for the balance of the indicated retention period. State records have been approved for disposal by shredding, recycling, and purging (paper and electronic). Several commercial shredding companies are willing to shred records on site and provide a certificate of destruction. Details are available through Procurement and Contract Services.

- Any record designated "confidential" shall be so treated by agencies in the maintenance, storage and disposition of such confidential records. These records shall be destroyed in such a manner that they cannot be read, interpreted or reconstructed
 - Unless specifically approved by the University Records Officer, any records which reflect "Permanent" retention should be maintained by means other than paper after verification of an archival quality electronic reproduction. After verification, the paper copies will be destroyed.
 - Actions by the State Commission shall be communicated to all campus Records Officers.

Certificate of Destruction - State of Tennessee Records Management Division has authorized the implementation and utilization of the Certificate of Destruction form (see Exhibit 1) in order to better track the volume of records destroyed and to insure that records have met the criteria necessary for destruction.

Certificate of Destruction forms must be used when destroying public or confidential records that are not destroyed during the annual Operation Roundfile campaign – an initiative through Executive Order 38 (Exhibit 3) to purge out-of-date documents and/or records on an annual basis. Certificates shall be held at the institution. The University Records Officer is responsible for submitting the form to the Records Management Division.

Related Forms

Records Disposal Request and Authorization <http://bf.memphis.edu/forms/vp.php>

Transmittal of Records to University Records Center <http://bf.memphis.edu/forms/vp.php>

FAQs

My file cabinets are overflowing and I'm ready to clean them out; what do I need to do?

First, check the Records Retention & Disposition Schedule to determine how long records need to be kept; if ready for disposal, complete the [Records Disposal Request](#) form and send to the University Records Officer for approval. Once approval has been given, dispose of records appropriately. Sensitive records should be shredded. If records have not reached disposal age but are no longer needed for day-to-day reference, inquire about use of the Records Storage Center on South Campus.

Why do I need permission to destroy my own records?

Our office records belong to the State of Tennessee. Annually we must report the volume of our record holdings, what has been destroyed, and what has been transferred to the Records Storage Center.

How long should I keep e-mail messages?

E-mail messages, like paper records, must be retained or deleted according to established records management procedures. Retention depends on content; for example, an e-mail which substitutes for a work order request should be retained for one year after work is completed since the [Retention and Disposition Schedule](#) for University Records specifies that Work Orders have a retention period of one year after work is completed. E-mail messages that meet the definition of a **non-record** (see definitions section) do not need to be retained for a specified time. It is the sender's responsibility to determine if the e-mail is a record and, if so, to retain that record.

How do I transfer inactive records to the University Records Center?

Contact the University Records Officer by email at vpbusfin@memphis.edu determine space availability. Check the Records Retention & Disposition Schedule for disposal date; box up records according to instructions, taking care to label with destruction date. Complete a [Transmittal of Records to University Records Center](#) form in duplicate and bring a copy to the University Records Officer when checking out the building key.

What is the University Records Center?

This facility is intended for **temporary storage of inactive records** that are no longer needed for reference in the office but have not reached the age of disposition. Since there are no environmental controls in the facility, and its location makes retrieval of a file more time-consuming, active records and records of permanent value should not be stored there.

I'd like to start scanning my records - what's the first step?

Contact the [University Records Officer](#) for a referral to the Imaging Specialist in Information Systems.

Whom do I contact with further questions?

Contact the Office of the Vice President for Business & Finance at vpbusfin@memphis.edu or consult the [University Records Management web page](#).

Links

**Retention & Disposition
Schedule**

<http://bf.memphis.edu/vp/recordretention.php>

Revision Dates

BF4005 – March 28, 2018
UM1365 -- Revised October 26, 2017
UM1365 -- Revised June 7, 2016
UM1365 -- June 7, 2016
UM1365 Rev.2 -- updated August 26, 2008
UM1365 Rev.1 -- updated May-22-2006
UM1365 - Issued: September 7, 2002 - supersedes policy number
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Subject Areas:

| Academic | Finance | General | Human Resources | Information Technology | Research | Student Affairs |
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