

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

NUMBER: 481

AUTHORIZING BODY: PRESIDENT'S CABINET/BOARD OF TRUSTEES/DIVISION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: DEPARTMENT/UNIT

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LAST UPDATE: NEW POLICY

RATIONALE: To provide guidance to the University community for effective Records retention and disposal that will preserve the University's history, meet regulatory and legal requirements, minimize risk, optimize the use of space, and minimize cost.

POLICY: Because there are costs and risks associated with retaining all forms of Records beyond their useful or mandated lives, the University encourages secure, responsible destruction of Records at various times as prescribed in the Procedures section of this policy. This function and responsibility has been decentralized to the Responsible Operating Departments with the understanding that Records retention and disposal will be implemented according to this policy. Any Records that may have significant historical value should be referred to Kresge Library - Archives for evaluation.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to all University Records regardless of their origin, use or form (electronic, physical).

DEFINITIONS:

Basic Business Record: Any Record, physical or electronic that contains evidence or information of business transacted on behalf of the University may be Basic Business Record. This might include contracts or other agreements, invoices, applications for admissions, financial aid documents, journal vouchers, requests for proposal and related notes and findings and other items as noted in Appendix A (as amended from time to time).



Duration: The period of time a Record is to be kept and maintained until disposal.

Official Repository: A place where Records of a certain type are kept.

Permanent Record: A Record which must be kept indefinitely.

Record: A product of University work that is kept for any period of time whether it be physical, like paper, or electronic, like a stored computer file or an imaged file.

Record Type: The primary use of a Record, not its form or format.

Responsible Operating Department (ROD): The OU department responsible for a particular Record Type.

PROCEDURES:

Retention

Records should be retained and properly safeguarded according to their intended use as described in Appendix A. The Responsible Operating Department will determine the appropriate Official Repository for each Record Type. Once a Record has exceeded its Duration, the Record should be examined by the Responsible Operating Department for either destruction or possible historical archival.

Destruction

Once a Record has reached the end of its useful life as defined in Appendix A, it should be determined if the Record may have some significant historical value to the University or if it should be destroyed. If it is determined that the Record may have some significant historical value to the University, it should be sent to the Kresge Library for evaluation. Should the Library determine that the Record does not have significant historical value, the Record should be sent back to the ROD for appropriate destruction and disposal.

Generally, destruction and disposal of a Record implies that it is made unrecognizable and disposed of in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, particularly environmental health and safety rules. Costs of Record destruction and disposal are to be paid by the ROD.

No Record shall be destroyed if it is part of, or may be part of, ongoing litigation. If there is any question about the existence of relevant litigation, contact the Office of Legal Affairs at extension 3110.

Guidelines for Disposal/Destruction of Records

- All paper Records should be shredded before disposal. This may be accomplished by shredding them in the office or through a reputable Records destruction service.

- Recycling services should be used where possible but they must be certified and bonded to handle sensitive business Records or the Records must be destroyed before they are turned over to the recycling service.
- Records contained within electronic devices should be destroyed according to [OU AP&P #360 Property Management](#) and [OU AP&P #860 Information Security](#).

Guidelines for Permanent Records

- Permanent Records must be kept in safe storage which is fire resistant, water resistant and not exposed to electronic or magnetic damage (in the case of electronic Records).
- Permanent Records must be kept in secure storage which will protect the Record from theft or malicious destruction.
- Permanent Records must be maintained by the ROD using an inventory system that documents the handling and check out status of the Record such as date and time a Record was checked out and back into its Official Repository.
- Permanent Records should be labeled as “Permanent Record”.

RELATED POLICIES AND FORMS:

[OU AP&P #360 Property Management](#)

[OU AP&P #860 Information Security](#)

APPENDIX:

[Appendix A](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

