



Records Management Guide

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Introduction and Acknowledgment

This guide is provided to help University records managers comply with State law and Oregon University System administrative rules pertaining to records management. Special thanks to Larry Landis, University Archivist at Oregon State University, for permitting me to reproduce and adapt information from his site.

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Office of Administrative Services
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Records Managers

The records management program for the Oregon University System is created and maintained through the OUS General Records Retention Schedule. Each SOU unit is required to designate a records manager (RM). It is recommended that the RM's responsibilities be incorporated into the employee's position description.

Responsibilities of the Unit Records Manager

- Organize and maintain department records.
- Provide department with current information on retention and disposition of records.
- Organize and supervise the destruction of records.
- Maintain control over confidential records, including access, storage, and destruction.
- Serve as the liaison with Administrative Services for transactions related to the department's records.
- Provide reasonable access to non-confidential records.
- Identify and supervise transfer of permanent records to the University Archives.
- Work with department faculty/staff to ensure management of electronic records, particularly e-mail.
- Notify the Director of Administrative Services when records manager responsibilities have been transferred to another person.
- Work with Administrative Services and University Archives for proper disposition of records when programs/departments are created, eliminated, transferred, or combined.

Records Management Policies

Records management policies are authorized by the State Archivist and implemented by the SOU Records Officer. These policies include:

Designation of the Agency Records Officer. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 166-030-0016 mandates that each state agency designate a Records Officer. The SOU Director of Administrative Services fulfills this function. In turn, each University department and office must designate a records management officer to be responsible for the oversight of records and provide for the retention and disposition of public records within the office.

Disposal of records. State agencies are legally obligated to dispose of state records without continuing value (OAR 166-005-0000). Disposition authorization is obtained through the OUS Records Retention and Disposition Schedule <http://www.ous.edu/archives/schdmain.html>. Because of legal and fiscal liabilities, retaining records longer than the retention schedule authorizes is forbidden.

Unauthorized destruction and tampering. Unauthorized destruction of public records is considered tampering, a Class A misdemeanor. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 162.305.

Destruction of confidential records. Records that are confidential by law or contain information exempt from public disclosure by law are to be destroyed by pulping, shredding, or incineration (OAR 166-030-0060[2]).

Access to public records. Contact the director of administrative services for proper procedures for responding to public records requests. Public Records Policy, ORS 192.420, gives every Oregonian the right to inspect any public record of a public body in the state; exceptions are noted in ORS 192.496 and 192.501 to 192.505. ORS 192.430 requires custodians of public records to furnish reasonable access to the records in their offices during regular business hours and to furnish facilities for reviewing the records.

Charges for reproduction of public records. SOU's administrative rule 573-001-0075 contains approved charges for reproducing records upon request from a member of the public.

Principles of Records Management

Public record includes, but is not limited to, a document, book, paper, photograph, file, sound recording or machine readable electronic record, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, received, filed or recorded in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business, whether or not confidential or restricted in use (ORS 192.005). A record series is a body of records or documents that are filed together as a unit because they have a relationship such as serving the same function, having a similar form, or containing similar or related contents.



Records management is based on the principles of “records life cycle” and “records appraisal.”

Records Life Cycle: The useful life of a record. Generally, the need to refer to records declines as their age increases. As records reach the end of their active use, they are destroyed or transferred to storage or to the University Archives.

Records Appraisal: Appraisal is the method for determining the primary value (administrative, legal, and fiscal) and the secondary value (historical and long-term research) of records.

Appraisal Considerations

Some considerations during an appraisal include:

- legal and fiscal regulations governing retention;
- administrative and operational need served by the record;
- historical significance;
- whether it is the record copy or a duplicate;
- physical volume (expressed in terms of cubic or linear feet);

- economic advantage of moving the records from high cost office storage to low cost records storage space or direct disposal.

The OUS Records Retention Schedule

The OUS Records Retention Schedule specifies how long records must be retained. The schedule was developed as a joint project between the archivists of the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and the Chancellor’s Office.

Understanding and Using the Schedule

The schedule is an Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR 166-475) and subject to all applicable laws and regulations. It is a “minimum/maximum” schedule, which means that records are to be kept by University offices for as long as the retention period and no longer. To meet legal and fiscal obligations, it is mandatory to destroy records in a timely and appropriate manner.

Retention Periods

Retention period is mandated by law and refers to the maximum and minimum lengths of time that a record must be kept. An exception to the mandatory destruction of a record at the end of its retention period occurs when the record series is required for litigation, criminal or civil investigation, audit, or is needed for ongoing administrative purposes. There is no exception to the requirements for the minimum retention of a record series.

Retention periods that are a specific length of time are based upon usage factors and legal requirements such as audits. Several other retention period designations are also used:

Permanent indicates that the record is kept indefinitely or at least 100 years. This designation is given to all records determined to have historical value. Most records with a permanent retention period are transferred to the University Archives when they become inactive.

Sample Record

A Class Scheduling Records

B OAR 166-475-0025(4)

C This series documents the formulation of class schedules by academic departments for inclusion in the published schedule of classes. This series may include but is not limited to: the final edition of the schedule of classes booklet; requests from departments for class offerings; deviation from schedule forms; copies of course schedule maintenance forms; requests for class changes; working papers; and related documentation and correspondence.

D Retention:

E Record Copy:

(a) Permanent for 1 copy of the schedule of classes booklets;

(b) 1 year for all other records

F Other copies: 1 year

Key

A Title of the record series.

B The OAR chapter, division, section, and subsection numbers that are assigned by the Oregon Secretary of State. This number also provides unique identification for each record series. Chapter and division numbers remain constant throughout the retention schedule. Section numbers identify functional sections the series belongs to, for example: 0010 - Administrative; 0015 - Budget; 0020 - Contracts, etc. Numbers in parentheses identify individual record series.

C The series description generally consists of two components: a use or purpose statement and a content statement.

D Begins retention period field. Where multiple copies of records in a series may exist, retention is noted for:

E Record copy. The official copy of a record when multiple copies exist. Also referred to as primary copy.

F Other copies. Often, other copies of public records do not need to be kept as long as the record copy.

Until Superseded is the retention period assigned to records that are routinely updated or revised and where the previous version has no continuing value.

Until Obsolete is assigned to records that become valueless on a non-routine basis.

Calculating Retention Periods

Retention periods usually begin at a chronological file break, such as the fiscal, calendar,

or academic year. The retention period applies to all records created during the time period. For example, the record copy of many accounting records has a four-year retention period, by fiscal year. The retention period for journal vouchers created during the 1998-99 fiscal year (July 1, 1998 -June 30, 1999) began on July 1, 1999. They were eligible for destruction four years later on July 1, 2003.

Confidentiality and Access

State records law guarantees citizens' rights to access public records with the following exceptions:

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 192.501 and 192.502 generally exempt from disclosure several categories of records such as tests and examination materials, archeological site and object information, personnel discipline actions, threatened or endangered species information, faculty research, personal privacy information, employee or volunteer addresses and telephone numbers contained in personnel records, workers compensation claim records, and library circulation records.

Oregon Higher Education Law, ORS 351.065 generally restricts access to personnel records maintained for twenty-five years by OUS institutions.



It also guarantees employees' rights to their personnel records. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 580-022-0090 describes information that may be disclosed without the consent of faculty. This information includes "(a) Directory information, that is, information generally needed in identifying or locating a named faculty member including such information as is readily found in published documents such as institutional catalogs; (b) Objective evidence of a faculty member's academic achievement, limited to information as to the number of credits earned toward a degree or in postdoctoral work, and certificate(s), diploma(s), license(s) and degree(s) received; (c) Salary information and the record of terms or conditions of employment...."

The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and its Oregon equivalent, ORS 351.070(4)(e) restrict public access to most student records and information without consent of the student. However, University officials who have a demonstrated need to know as part of their official duties may have access to relevant student records.

The following directory information may be released without a student's consent:

- Student name
- Current mailing address and telephone number
- Month and day of birth
- Major field of study
- Full-time or part-time enrollment status
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Most recent previous educational institution attended

Students may request in writing to the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs that all directory information be kept confidential. The restriction remains in effect until revoked by the student even if the student leaves the University or graduates.

Records access and information disclosure are very complex issues. Consequently, this section should not be considered legal advice. When questions arise, contact the following for guidance:

- Office of Human Resource Services for questions related to disclosure of and access to faculty and staff personnel records;
- Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or the Office of the Registrar for questions related to access to student records;
- OUS Office of General Counsel for any questions that cannot be addressed by on-campus resources.

Subpoenas and Other Court Orders

Access to University records may be required for litigation. Subpoenas and other court orders are legal documents issued by courts that require the University to produce records. If a court order or subpoena is issued to produce student records, the University is usually obligated to notify the student. Please contact the OUS General Counsel if you receive a subpoena or other court order for University records.

Records Destruction

Confidential Records

University records containing confidential information such as social security numbers, home addresses, and personal health information require special care in their removal and destruction. Records containing confidential information should be securely stored with access limited to those whose job responsibilities require access.

Oregon Administrative Rule OAR 166-030-0060(2) stipulates that "Records which are confidential by law . . . must be destroyed by shredding, pulping, or incineration."

Confidential Electronic Records

Electronic records containing confidential or personal privacy information must be destroyed with the same care as confidential paper records. When records on removable electronic media, such as diskettes and CD-ROM, contain protected information and the data is obsolete, the actual storage medium should be destroyed.

The same cautions must be exercised when surplus computer equipment containing hard disk drives. Hard disk drives must at least be reformatted before they leave the office for use by another department or before being sent to surplus property. If the hard drive contains confidential information it is advisable to delete the contents of the drive.

Non-Confidential Records

Records that do not contain confidential information may be recycled.

Non-Record Materials

Certain Oregon statutes and administrative rules identify materials that may be purged from files without further authorization or reference to the OUS General Records Retention Schedule. Non-record materials may be removed from departmental files when no longer needed for reference. Either recycle or dispose of them as trash.

Examples of Non-Record Materials

- **Library Materials:** Includes books, pamphlets, circulars, newsletters, brochures, catalogs, advertisements and similar published material, bibliographies, directories, and tabulations or compilations of information made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes.
- **Extra Copies:** Copies created and preserved only for reference convenience.
- **Excess Stock:** Includes both excess stock of publications and forms.
- **Duplication Masters:** Dictation recordings if fully transcribed and magnetic recording media created and used solely for transfer of data from one medium to another, such as CD-ROMs, disks and floppy disks.
- **Individual Employees' Memberships:** Files accumulated as a result of an individual employee's membership in professional, occupational, service, or community organizations, associations or clubs, if they are paid for by the individual. If the institution pays, they are university records and subject to the retention schedule guidelines.
- **Duplicated Records:** Records that have been duplicated in another format, such as paper records that have been microfilmed, if the duplicate is retained as record copy and its accuracy has been verified. Duplicates include photographs, micrographs, and other reproduction forms on paper, film, or computer-readable format.



Resources for Document Destruction

Living Opportunities, 488-2798

Docu-Shred: 503-570-8778,

<http://www.docu-shred.com/>

Electronic Records

Electronic records are created and stored through the use of computers and applications

software. Computer programs, unless customized and developed as part of a research project, are not considered electronic records.

Legal Nature of Electronic Records

Electronic documents are records in the legal and practical sense, but their form and dependence on machines for creation and reference does change the way they must be stored and managed.

Oregon law includes all electronic information and record formats as public records. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 192.005 defines a public record as “. . . a document, book, paper, photograph, file, sound recording, machine readable electronic record or other material . . . regardless of physical form or characteristic, made, received, filed, or recorded in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business . . .” The rules that cover hard-copy paper public records also apply to electronic records.

Formats

Text. Text has traditionally been used to prepare hard copy records through the use of word processing and desktop publishing software. Examples include drafts and copies of correspondence, memoranda, reports, and publications. In addition to word processing and desktop publishing software, other types of software, including spreadsheet and database management programs, can be used to create text documents.

Database. Databases contain elements that can be manipulated or extracted to serve diverse needs. However, the database as a whole is managed electronically and rarely printed out in their entirety.

Electronic Mail (E-Mail). E-Mail consists of memos, letters, notes, reports, or communications stored or transmitted in an electronic form. Important messages that perform a directive (policy or procedural) function should be printed on paper and filed in office files.

Voice Mail. Voice mail consists of messages recorded on the University’s telephone message system.

Electronic Records Retention Guidelines

Text and Data Files

When electronic documents are printed out and retained in hard copy form, the electronic copy may be deleted immediately. Records that are retained only in electronic form should be kept for the period of time specified in the OUS Records Retention Schedule.

Electronic Mail

The person who transmits an e-mail message is responsible for retention of that message in accordance with OUS records retention guidelines. Messages received by an individual or office on the e-mail system may be deleted when the messages no longer have administrative value. If an item of correspondence falls into a category that requires it be retained for more than a few years (such as administrative correspondence, which has a five year retention period), it should be printed out and filed as part of the regular office files.

Voice Mail

Our voice mail system retains messages for 10 days and then automatically deletes them. Messages with administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value that exceed the ten-day default retention period should be transcribed and filed with the appropriate administrative records in the office files. Messages lacking substantive content may be deleted immediately after you have listened to them.



Public Information Server

The files located on public information servers are considered publications. Electronic publications should be printed out and retained in hard copy exactly as printed publications are retained.

Fiscal Records

The State Audit Division of the Secretary of State's Office requires that the electronic form be available for audits. Financial transactions created or maintained in electronic form, e.g. ledgers, journals, balance sheets, and spreadsheets, should be retained in electronic form until they are released from audit.

Electronic Records Management Recommendations

An e-records management plan should contain a schedule for data back-ups and recopying as well as require backwards compatibility of a new electronic records system. Backwards compatibility means that new systems must be able to access and read previously created electronic records and data.

Backup Recommendations

Backup procedures should be implemented to protect valuable data from accidental erasure, disaster, or system malfunctions. The frequency

of data backups should be determined by office personnel based on the frequency of data changes and the volume of records affected.

Standard procedure is to keep the three most recent backup tapes or disks. It is also recommended that backups be stored off-site. At a minimum, backups should be stored in a separate campus building than the facility housing the electronic records system.

Electronic Records of Long-term Value

Due to the instability of magnetic media and to some accessibility considerations unique to electronic records, measures must be taken to keep information accessible in inactive record systems that must be retained for a period exceeding one year.



For every action, there is an equal and opposite malfunction.