

**University of Pittsburgh  
Archives Service Center**

**GENERAL RECORD RETENTION SCHEDULE**

**Introduction**

The **general schedule** for records retention and disposal presented here provide guidance for the management of certain groups and types of records that are **common** to most offices at the University of Pittsburgh. For example, most offices receive the same University-related publications.

A general schedule, sometimes called a functional record schedule, differs from a **department or office specific schedule**. A departmental schedule identifies and provides retention/disposal periods for records that relate either to a specific office or function. A specific office retention schedule should be developed in cooperation with the Records Management staff and should be utilized in conjunction with this general schedule to identify records that are unique to an office.

When the expiration of a stated period of time is reached for records listed on a general schedule, the referenced records should either be discarded or reviewed by the University Archives.

Retention periods beyond what is recommended require justification and warrant review by the Records Manager and/or the University Archivist.

- ◆ The retention periods presented here conform to existing University practices and to established legal requirements. Retention requirements are derived from various federal and state laws, internal practices, and other sources and are subject to change.
- ◆ To insure proper compliance, in the event of conflicting requirements between retention times published by the University and those published by governmental and other sources, the longest retention period will prevail. In such cases, notification by the authorized office official of the difference should be made immediately to the Records Manager.
- ◆ Retention periods for documents not specifically listed in these guidelines may be determined by contacting the Records Manager. In many cases, retention periods may be generally determined by comparing the type of document (i.e., student records, correspondence, etc.) to similar documents with known retention periods.
- ◆ The University Archivist should be contacted before discarding any document that may be of permanent or historical value to the University. All records older than 30 years from date of creation **MUST** be reviewed by the University Archives prior to disposition/destruction.

## **Interpreting Retention Periods**

### **For records with a retention period of less than one (1) year:**

Disposition occurs at an interval equal to the retention period, i.e., if a record has a one month retention period, terminate the file at the end of each month and then apply the retention period.

### **For records with a retention period of one (1) year or more:**

Disposition occurs at the end of each fiscal, academic, or calendar year as appropriate for the records, i.e., if the retention for a correspondence file is 3 years, then discard 3 years after the determined cutoff.

### **For records with a retention period based on an event or action:**

Disposition occurs by applying the retention period after the event or the action has occurred.

### **For records with a retention period based on a specific period after an event or action:**

Place the records in an inactive file on the date the event occurs or the action is completed, then label the file with the retention period and appropriate disposition date. Disposition will occur when that date has been reached, i.e., retention reads "Retain for 6 years – dispose of 6-30-2006." Disposition will occur as stated.

## **Understanding the Retention Period and Action To Be Taken**

In reading these schedules, remember that the referenced records should be either be discarded/destroyed as specified at the end of the retention period or transferred/reviewed by the University Archivist.

**For information and assistance contact: Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh, 7500 Thomas Blvd Pittsburgh, PA 15260**

**Alex Toner, University Records Manager**  
412-648-3164  
[alexjtoner@pitt.edu](mailto:alexjtoner@pitt.edu)

**Zach Brodt, University Archivist**  
412-648-3148  
[zlb2@pitt.edu](mailto:zlb2@pitt.edu)

**Edward Galloway, Interim Assistant University Librarian**  
412-648-5901  
[edwardg@pitt.edu](mailto:edwardg@pitt.edu)

## DEFINITIONS

**University Records** – any documents including both written and printed matter, books, drawings, maps, plans, photographs, microforms, motion picture films, sound and video recordings, computerized data on disk or tape, or copies thereof made or received, by any academic or administrative office of the University of Pittsburgh in connection with the transaction of University business, and retained by such office as evidence of the activities and functions of the University or because of the information contained therein.

University records are categorized as follows:

**University Confidential Records** – records which have the highest level of confidentiality attached to them and which may only be accessed by a limited number of people in the originating office.

**University Restricted Records** – records having a high level of confidentiality attached to them and where access is limited to the staffs of a small number of offices. Examples include individual salary and wage data, individual personnel files, development gift records, non-directory student information, and fiscal records at the budget and fund level.

**University Official Records** – records that are available to University faculty and/or staff members (usually within a department or unit), but are not made available to the public. Generally speaking, the bulk of University records fall into this category.

**University Vital Records** – records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of the University during and after an emergency, and also those records essential to protecting the rights and interests of the University and the individuals directly affected by its activities.

Excluded from the definition of University records are two categories of materials found in University offices:

**University library and museum** material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, stocks of publications and of processed documents, and extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and

**Personal papers** not related to the official function of an office or created in pursuance of non-University activities, including the papers of faculty members related to their teaching and research, except as covered by other University policies (i.e., Research Administration, Technology Management, Patent Rights and Technology Transfer, University of Pittsburgh Policy Manual, Section 11-02-01.)

## UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH - UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT

**Archival Records** – records which are non-current and are not required to be retained in the office in which they originated or are received may have permanent or enduring legal, fiscal, research, or historical value and, as a result thereof, should be retained and preserved in the University Archives.

**Disposable Records** – records which have temporary value, and, as a result thereof, may be destroyed after the lapse of a specified period of time, or after the occurrence of a specific act.

**Public Records** – publicly distributed information that is available to anyone. Examples include directory data, news releases, course and major descriptions, and public databases.

**Records Center** – A facility in which non-current University records are stored for a specified period of time before disposition. At this time, the University of Pittsburgh's records center is a private records management company, Access Information. The company has developed standard procedures regarding the preparation of records for shipment, placement, and retrieval of the University of Pittsburgh's records at their facility.

**Records Series** – any groups of related records which are normally used and filed as a unit and which will be evaluated as a unit for either disposition or preservation.

**Retention Period** – the period of time that must elapse before records are disposed of or reviewed by/placed in the University Archives.

**Schedule of Records Retention and Disposal** - a list indicating the retention period for records before disposition, as well as the appropriate means of disposing of the records (i.e., destruction of disposable records, transfer of archival records to the University Archives.)

**Transfer to University Archives** – Please visit the [University records management website](#) and review the section titled “Transfer Records to University Archives”.

There are basically two types of records schedule:

**General or functional schedule** – a listing of records and record types, with retention periods, that are most common to offices at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Department or office specific schedule** – a listing of records and record types, with retention periods, that relate to a specific office or department at the University of Pittsburgh.

## GENERAL SCHEDULE

### □ **CORRESPONDENCE**

Note: Correspondence by administrators, deans, unit/department heads may have potential for placement in the University Archives. These offices should refer to a record schedule developed for individual offices or contact the Records Manager or University Archivist.

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Chronological (Day Files)	3 years
External (Non-University agencies)	3 years
Interdepartmental	
Originating Office	3 years; review by Archives
Receiving Office	3 years
Internal (within Unit/Department)	3 years; review by Archives

### □ **CURRICULUM RECORDS**

Note: Offices should refer to a record schedule developed for a specific office for records not listed below.

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Class Lists	3 years
Course history files	3 years after course ceases to be offered; review by Archives
Curriculum - Current (Comprehensively lists all approved courses by department and course number)	3 years; review by Archives
Curriculum Proposals - Approved (Documentation of planning and development of approved academic course or program)	3 years after course ceases to be offered; review by Archives
Curriculum Proposals – Denied (Documentation of planning and development of academic course or program that was rejected)	3 years after denial registered
Evaluations of Internal Operations, Self-Studies, Accreditation	10 years in office; transfer final report to Archives for permanent file.

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Schedule of Classes – Timetables	3 years
Student Rated Teaching Evaluations ---- -Summaries	10 years; Faculty should maintain individual class summaries
-Worksheets	3 years
-Individual Evaluation Forms	3 years
Textbook Orders	3 years

□ **DEVELOPMENT/FUND-RAISING RECORDS**

Note: the Office of Institutional Advancement maintains the official development records. All other copies represent transactional documents

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Donors	5 years after funding capability becomes inactive
Friends Groups or Advisory Boards (Minutes, Correspondence, Reports)	5 years; review by Archives
Gift Acknowledgements	5 years after last donation
Prospects background data	3 years after last activity

□ **FINANCIAL RECORDS**

The Financial Records Services Office of the University of Pittsburgh utilizes separate schedules of records retention and disposal for Accounts Payable, General Accounting, Payroll, Research Accounting, Service and Records, and Special Projects and serves as the office of record for all financial records.

□ **GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS**

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Acknowledgements	1 year
Audio-Visual Materials	3 years; transfer 1 copy to Archives
Committees Agendas, Minutes, Reports	3 years; review by Archives
Continuous Quality / Process Improvement (Including Flowcharts, Reports, Surveys, Meeting Minutes, Diagrams)	3 years; review by Archives
Faculty Senate: Agendas and Minutes	3 years; transfer to Archives
Directives	
Internal	0 after superseded
External	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
“History” Files Note: All Records Created Prior To 1970 Must Be Transferred To The Archives	5 years; review by Archives
Invitations/Announcements	1 year, 1 copy to Archives
Legal Opinions, Interpretations, Legislative Comments	10 years in office; transfer to Archives.
Mailing Lists	0 after superseded
Memoranda Of Transmittal	6 months
News Releases, Office Of News And Information	3 years; transfer to Archives
Organizational Charts And Function Records	3 years after superseded; review by Archives
Policies And Procedures- Internal	1 year after superseded; review by Archives
Records Retention Schedules	0 after superseded (retained permanently in Archives)
Strategic Plans And Supporting Documentation	5 years in office; review by Archives.
Travel	

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Itineraries	Current year plus 1 year
Expense Forms	Current year plus 1 year
Reservations/Confirmations	Current year plus 1 year

□ **GRANTS AND CONTRACT RECORDS**

Note: Offices should refer to a record schedule developed for a specific office for record series not listed.

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Assistantship/Fellowship Stipend (Procedural Documentation)	3 years after termination or expiration
Student Records	3 years after last activity then destroy by shredding
Conferences, Seminars, Workshops – Grant Funded	3 years after termination or renewal; review by Archives
Dean’s Office and Department/Unit Copies - Expired Awards. (Applications, Interim Publications, Products and Final Reports)	5 years after termination or renewal; transfer to Archives
Federal Grants (Construction)	20 years after project completion; review by Archives
Federal Grants (Non-construction) (Application, Interim Publications, Products and Final Reports)	20 years after project completion, renewal or audit; review by Archives
Financial Documentation	Governed by Financial Records Services schedules
Grant Administration Records (Application, Interim Publications, Products and Final Report)	3 years after termination or renewal; transfer to Archives
Grant and Contract Applications – Rejected	3 years
Grant-Related Human Resources Records. Dean’s Office and Department/Unit. Copies	3 years after termination, resignation, or retirement; transfer original documents to the permanent personnel file



**Types of Records****Retention Period**

Non-Federal Grants  
(Application, Interim  
Publications, Products and  
Reports

3 years after termination or renewal; transfer to  
Archives

(following periods are per Chancellor's guidelines  
issued November 25, 2009)

-Reports of Project Status:

7 years in office after termination or renewal; transfer  
to Archives

-Final Report

-Research Data Forms -Human  
Subjects

7 years in office after termination or renewal; destroy  
by shredding

-Research Data Forms

7 years in office after termination or renewal; destroy  
by shredding

-Scientific and Technical Data

7 years in office; transfer to Archives

□ **GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Note: Retention periods in this schedule refer primarily to correspondence, reports, and meeting minutes. Organizational agreements or records created detailing the University's commitment to the organization should be reviewed by the Archives.

**Types of Records****Retention Period**

Affiliated Institutions

3 years

Atlantic Coast Conference

3 years; review by Archives

Big East Conference

3 years; review by Archives

Civic Groups

3 years

Cultural Groups

3 years

Educational Groups

3 years

Honor Societies

3 years

Business/Industrial Groups

3 years

Political Groups

3 years

Professional Organizations

3 years

Scientific Organizations

3 years

Service Groups

3 years

Social Groups

3 years

Student Groups

3 years. Note: Information on  
individual students should be  
destroyed by shredding

□ **HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Types of Records**

**Retention Period**

Affirmative Action Forms/Reports

3 years

Applications - Hired

3 years after termination, resignation or retirement

Applications – Not Hired

1 year

Claims for Dependent Child Tuition Scholarship Benefit

6 years after last activity

Employment Record –Staff

6 years after termination, resignation, or retirement then destroy by shredding. Retain Final ER in the Office of Human Resources

**Faculty Records in the Office of Faculty Records, Office of the Provost**

6 years in office after termination, resignation, or retirement then destroy by shredding, except as noted below.

-Note: The following documentation should not be retained in a faculty member's academic department or unit after termination, resignation, or retirement.

-Award of Tenure Documentation

-Appointment/Re-appointment Documentation

-Claims for Dependent Child and Spousal Tuition Scholarship Benefits

Administrative need may dictate retention of this documentation beyond 6 years.

-Committee Reports

-Curriculum Vitae (most recent)

-Employee Record-Final

-Leave of Absence Documentation

Retain permanently in the Office of Faculty Records, Office of the Provost

-Letters of Recommendation including recommendations from Department, Dean, and, as appropriate, Senior Vice Chancellor, Provost and/or Chancellor

-Salary Documentation

## **Types of Records**

### **Faculty Records in Academic Departments/Units**

- Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity Documentation
- Annual Faculty Evaluations
- Grievance Proceeding Documentation
- Physician Certification in Support of Medical Leave Documentation
- Promotion and Tenure Appeals Documentation
- Sexual Harassment Documentation

I – 9's –Regular Full Time Employees and Students

Job Description

Letters of Recommendation – Hired

Letters of Recommendation – Not Hired

Personnel Action Forms

Search Committee Reports

Staff Performance Appraisal

Time Cards (to support PRISM)

Training and Development Attendance

## **Retention Period**

6 years after termination, resignation, or retirement then destroy by shredding

3 years after date of hire, or one (1) year after the date employment ends, whichever is later (See Immigration and Naturalization Form I-9 instructions). Note: Official records are kept with local human resources representatives.

0 after superseded

3 years after termination, resignation, or retirement

1 year

3 years after termination, resignation, or retirement

3 years after search concluded

3 years after superseded

1 year in office, destroy by shredding (original kept seven years in Payroll)

3 years

## □ OFFICE/WORKSTATION COMPUTERS

<b>Type of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Authority Lists	0 after superseded
Disk Structures	0 after superseded
Equipment	0 after obsolete
Manuals	0 after obsolete
Site Licenses	0 after superseded

Note: Structural information including software name and version should be retained for materials that will be transferred to the Archives.

## □ PUBLICATIONS

Note: Retention period refers to University-specific publications. Non-University publications should be disposed of within one (1) year of receipt and use.

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Annual Reports	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Bibliographies	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Biographies/Vitas	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Calendars	0 after superseded
Catalogues	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Directories	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Handbooks	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Histories	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Journals/Journal Articles	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Literary Publications	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Magazines	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Newsletters	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Newspapers	0 after superseded
Promotional Literature	0 after superseded
Requests for Information/Publication	6 months
Speeches/Presentations/Talks	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Yearbooks	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives

## □ SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Types of Records

Continuing and Distance Learning

Cooperative Programs

Educational Events

Conferences, Institutes, Lectures, Meetings, Seminars and Short Courses (including agendas, correspondence, handouts publications, registration lists, reference materials, and reports

Interdisciplinary Programs

Official Events

Anniversaries, Awards, Convocations, Dedications, Inaugurations, Memorial Services and Mergers/Federations (including agendas, correspondence, handouts, invitations, programs, publications, registration lists, reference materials, and reports

Remedial Programs

Social Events

Concerts, Dances, Festivals, Homecomings, Open Houses, Receptions and Reunions (including agendas, correspondence, handouts, programs, publications, registration lists, reference materials, and reports)

### Retention Period

See Curriculum Record Schedule

3 years; review by Archives

3 years; review by Archives

3 years; review by Archives

3 years; review by Archives

See Curriculum Records Schedule

3 years; review by Archives

## □ STUDENT RECORDS

**Student Records Defined:** Student educational records are defined as those records (in any format) which contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the University or by a person acting for the University pursuant to University, college, campus, or departmental policy.

Student educational records are subject to constraints of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment). They do not include

- ◆ records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and ancillary educational personnel which are in the sole possession of the maker and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a designated substitute.
- ◆ Notes of a professor/staff member concerning a student and intended for the professor's/staff member's own use are not subject to inspection, disclosure, and challenge.
- ◆ Records of the University Safety/Police Services Records Division, except in those instances where they are transmitted within the University for administrative purposes.
- ◆ Records relating to an individual who is employed by an educational agency or institution, not as a result of his/her status as a student, which: (1) Are created and maintained in the normal course of business; (2) Relate exclusively to the individual in that individual's capacity as an employee, and (3) Are not available for use for any other purpose.

Note: Employment records related to University students, who are employed as a result of their status as students, are considered educational records.

- ◆ Records on students which are created or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting or assisting in that capacity are not subject to the provisions of access, disclosure, and challenge. Such records, however, must be created, maintained, or used only in connection with the provision of treatment to the student and are not available to anyone other than the persons providing such treatment or a substitute. Such records may be personally reviewed by a physician or other appropriate professional of the student's choice.
- ◆ Application records of students not admitted to the University; however, once a student has enrolled in an academic offering of the University, application information becomes part of the student's educational record.
- ◆ Alumni records

## **STUDENT RECORDS SHOULD ALWAYS BE DESTROYED BY SHREDDING**

<b>Types of Records</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>
Advisor's Files	3 years after student's last activity
Alumni Lists	
Application for Advanced Credit	3 years after student's last activity
Bulletins/Course Catalogs	5 years; transfer to Archives
Commencement Programs	5 years; transfer to Archives
Examinations and Answer Sheets	1 year after administered
Financial Aid: Scholarships, Grants, Assistantships and Awards	0 after superseded; 1 copy to Archives
Terms/Requirements	3 years after award distributed
Correspondence	3 years after award distributed; review by Archives
Reports	3 years after award distributed
Applications	
Grades	1 year after decision rendered
Appeals	1 year after decision rendered
Books	3 years
Reports	
Graduate Candidacy and Comprehensive Examinations	7 years after last activity
Majors/Minors	5 years after last activity
Recruitment	3 years
Correspondence	3 years
Contact Reports	
Handouts	3 years; review by Archives
Registrar's Statistical Reports	0 after obsolete
Theses and Dissertations	Transfer 1 copy to University Library for permanent retention
Transcripts	Permanently retained in Registrar's Office
Copies	0 after intended use expired (destroy copies by shredding)

