

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: RECORD RETENTION PRACTICES

BACKGROUND:

Records retention and disposition practices at the University are vital for the following reasons:

- In the absence of practices for record retention, maintenance and destruction, a university may find itself storing records that are duplicates, obsolete or simply unnecessary. Indiscriminate records retention can result in significant unnecessary storage costs, misfiled records, inefficiency in wading through obsolete or irrelevant information, or increased exposure to litigation costs, lawsuits or damages;
- Internal and external auditors require adequate records to fulfill audit requirements;
- The universities require different types of information in order to develop institutional policies, to formulate strategic plans, and to manage day-to-day operations;
- Various federal and state laws require that certain records be generated and kept for specific periods of time.

Attachment I presents the recommended minimum retention periods by major document category. Documents can be retained for longer periods, in accordance with operational or management needs. Note that it is likely that the universities will have record types that are not specifically stated in the list. Likewise, not all of the document types listed herein will be generated by each university. The category that most closely matches the record in question should be selected in the event that a specific category has not been defined.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all public and confidential records generated in the course of the universities' operations, including both original documents and reproductions. It also applies to records stored on computer and microfiche as well as paper records.

Included is any written, printed, graphic, mechanical, or electronic data that has been received or prepared for use in connection with the transaction of university business.

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LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

For some record categories, the minimum length of time information is to be retained is defined by federal and state law. For example, federal student aid regulations dictate the type of information that must be obtained for each student and the length of time these records must be stored. Records of wages and salaries are required by the Internal Revenue Service, Department of Labor, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and by state revenue departments and employment commissions. Frequently, the same data is required by more than one governmental agency, each with different retention periods. In these cases, the records should be retained for the longest period to ensure that all laws have been complied with.

A systematic record retention and destruction program will reduce litigation costs and reduce exposure to liability. Since all records kept by an institution can be scrutinized when a lawsuit is threatened or has begun, a university that has not routinely destroyed obsolete records may be required to produce these as well, which may significantly increase legal costs. If old documents contain damaging information or are taken out of context, a university may be needlessly exposed to liability. When documents are destroyed according to an established policy, the courts will not assume that the records contained incriminating information as long as there is no anticipated or pending lawsuit.

EMPLOYMENT RECORDS

Employment records, including official personnel files, must be maintained and retained in accordance with collective bargaining contracts, University policies, and legal requirements. Supervisors should be cautious in creating unofficial records, such as notes in a supervisor's file, because such records may be used to the detriment of the University. Supervisors should consult with the Human Resources office for guidance about employee performance and discipline issues.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), known as the Buckley Amendment, governs the access to, disclosure and retention of some student records for institutions that receive Federal funding. The Act guarantees student access by requiring that current and formerly enrolled students be given the right to inspect and challenge certain records kept by an education institution. The Act also places restrictions on the disclosure of student records to third parties. The Act specifies the retention periods for recommendation letters, pass/fail requests, and student waivers of the right to see recommendation letters, and other documents.

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E-MAIL

The candidness of e-mail messages has hurt more than one institution faced with a lawsuit, because the conduct of public business thru e-mail is a public record. To minimize the potential risk and cost associated with e-mail, e-mail should be used in a professional manner. Users should not use derogatory comments or obscenity and should keep in mind that the personal privacy of e-mail is not guaranteed.

If the content of an e-mail file falls within a document retention category, then the email record should be retained in either paper or electronic form for the period defined for that category.

ADMINISTRATION

The Office of Finance & Treasurer will periodically revisit the record retention practices and solicit input from the universities regarding the modification of this APL.

APPROVED

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES

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RETENTION PERIOD KEY

PERIOD

Applicable
Employment
Enrollment
Permanent

DEFINITION

While active or in effect; during term of contract
During period of employment
During period of enrollment
Permanent record; maintain indefinitely

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM
RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES**

CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
HUMAN RESOURCES	Job Announcements & Ads	Job Announcements & Ads	3
	Applicants not Hired	Employment Applications	3
		Background Investigation	3
		Resumes	3
		Recommendation Letters	3
		Applicants Hired	Employment Applications
	Background Investigation		Employment + 6
	Resumes		Employment + 6
	Medical Examinations		Employment + 6
	Recommendation Letters		Employment + 6
	Immigration Records (I-9 Forms)		Longer of : (Hire Date + 3) or (Termination Date + 1)
	Faculty Files		Correspondence
		Student Course Evaluation Forms	Employment + 6
		Peer Review Documents (Evaluations)	Employment + 6
		Reviews of Publications	Employment + 6
		Tenure Records	Employment + 6
		Faculty Committee Evaluation Reports	Employment + 6
	HRS Master Tapes		10
	Official Personnel Files	Employment History	Employment + 6
		Educational Background	Employment + 6
		Emergency Contacts	Employment + 6
		Promotions	Employment + 6
		Attendance Records	Employment + 6

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)	
HUMAN RESOURCES	Official Personnel Files	Employee Evaluations	Employment + 6	
		Transfers	Employment + 6	
		Personnel Actions	Employment + 6	
		Grievance Records	6 years from date of settlement/decision	
		Equal Opportunity (including Discrimination, Sexual Harassment) Complaints	6 years from date of settlement/decision or Accused's separation + 6, whichever is longer.	
		Disciplinary Warnings and Actions	Employment + 6 (unless otherwise specified in bargaining agreements or employee handbooks)	
		Layoff or Termination	Employment + 6	
		Training Records	Employment + 6	
		General Files	Superseded Employee Manuals	Permanent
			Superseded Job Descriptions	10
	Expired Collective Bargaining Agreements		Permanent	
	Pension & Benefit Records	Individual employee files	Life of Employee + 4	
		Education Assistance	Life of Employee	
		Vesting	Life of Employee + 4	
		Defined Benefits Retirement Benefits	Life of Employee + 4	
		Defined Contributions Retirement Benefits	Life of Employee + 4	
		Disability Records	Life of Employee + 4	
		Actuarial Records	6	
		Health, Life and Disability Insurance Plan Designs & Provisions	Permanent	
		Retirement Plan Designs & Provisions & Summary Descriptions	Permanent	
		Beneficiary Designation	Employment + 6	

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
EMPLOYEE MEDICAL RECORDS	Health & Environmental Safety	Medical Records	Employment + 6
		Hazardous Material Biological Monitoring (lead, arsenic, etc).	Employment + 30
		Accident Reports	Permanent
		Blood-borne Pathogens Vaccination/Declination Form	Employment + 30
		Medical records for Exposed Employees	Employment + 30
		Employee Exposure Records	30 years from date of exposure
		Records of Employees Exposed to Blood Borne Pathogens	Employment + 30
		Analyses using Medical or Exposure records	Employment + 30
		Employee Safety Training Records	The longer of 30 years or employment
		Respirator Fit Testing Records	3
		Blood Borne Pathogen Training Records	3
		Noise Exposure Records	2
		Occupational injury or illness records	6
		Employee Medical Complaints	6
		Employee Assistance Program Records	7
STUDENT RECORDS	Attending Applicants	Applications	5 years after last attendance
		Transcripts (high school or previous institution)	5 years after last attendance
		Entrance Exams and Placement Scores	5 years after last attendance
		Recommendation Letters	Until Admitted
		Acceptance letters	5 years after last attendance
	Correspondence	5 years after last attendance	
	Non-Attending Applicants	Applications	1 year after application term
		Transcripts (high school or previous institution)	1 year after application term
		Acceptance letters	1 year after application term
		Correspondence	1 year after application term

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
STUDENT RECORDS	Individual Student Records	Course Add/Drop Slips	1
		Audit Authorizations	1 Year After Date Submitted
		Pass/Fail Requests	1
		Registration Forms	1
		Transcript Requests	1
		Withdrawal Records	2 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		VA Certifications	3 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Academic Action Letters	5 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Relevant Correspondence	5 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Curriculum Change Authorizations (waivers, substitutions, etc.)	5 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Graduation Authorizations	5 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Disciplinary Files	Separation + 3
		Student Dismissal Files	Permanent
		Class Schedules	Enrollment + 1
		FERPA Requests	Life of Requested record (no records are required if records requested by the student)
		Personal Data Forms	Enrollment + 1
		Application for Graduation	Enrollment + 1
		Advanced Placement (Credit by Exam)	5 Years after Graduation or Date last Attended.
		Degree Audit Records (VA students)	Enrollment + 5
		Transfer Credit Evaluations	Enrollment + 5

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
STUDENT RECORDS	Individual Student Records	Name Change Authorizations	Enrollment + 5
		Tuition and Fee Charges	Enrollment + 5
		Foreign Student (I-20) forms	Enrollment + 5
		Continuing Ed. Attendance Records	Enrollment + 7
		Medical Records	10 years from date of last campus health center visit
		Date of Graduation and Degree	Permanent
		Academic Records (Including transcripts & Continuing Ed Award Certificates)	Permanent
	General Student Records	Applicant/Admission Statistics	Permanent
		Admission Tapes	5
		Enrollment Tapes	10 years
		Enrollment Statistics	Permanent
		Racial/Ethnic Statistics	10
		Degree Statistics	Permanent
		Financial Aid Records	Campus-based and Pell Grant records
	FISAP Reports		3 years from end of the award year in which report submitted.
	Perkins and Nursing Loan repayment records		3 years from date loan assigned to the Department, cancelled or repaid.
	Perkins and Nursing promissory notes		Until loan is satisfied or as needed to enforce the obligation.
	FFEL and Direct Loans eligibility and participation records		3 years from end of award year in which student last attended.
	FFEL and Direct Loans - all other records		3 years from end of award year in which report is submitted.

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
FINANCE	Accounting Records	Description of application systems (FAST, A/P, A/R, etc.)	Life of system
		Fiscal Year-End FAST Master File Tape	Current Year + 10
		Journal Voucher source documents and backup	5
		Journal Voucher Reports (JVREPT)	5
		Journal Entry Register	5
		Transaction Detail (Both on magnetic tape and on fiche)	Current Year + 10
		Grants & Contracts (contract copies, budget backup, misc. correspondence)	3 years after completion of project, unless grant or contract specifies otherwise
		Workpapers	10
		Auditor's Reports	10
		A133 Financial Aid Audit Reports	3 years after resolution of open items.
		Year-End AD043 - G/L Summary	10
		Year-End AM052 - Revenue/Expense Statement	10
		Chart of Accounts	Until superseded + 2.
		Daily Updates to Accounting System (retained by SWS)	1 year.
		Accounts Payable/Purchasing	Purchase Requisitions
		Purchase Orders	4 + current
		Interdepartmental Orders (IDTs/IDOs)	4 + current
		Receiving Records (packing slips, bills of lading, etc.)	4 + current
		Invoices	4 + current
		Payment Records (Check Registers, etc.)	4 + current
		Expense Reports	4 + current
		Petty Cash Records	4 + current
		Cash Advance Records	4 + current

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
FINANCE	Accounts Payable/Purchasing	Travel Advances	4 + current
		Travel Vouchers	4 + current
		Check Requests and Backup	4 + current
		Credit card charge slips, statements, and reports	4 + current
		Royalty Payments	4 + current
		Unemployment Insurance Payments	4 + current
		Workers Comp Insurance Payments	4 + current
		Invoice, Accounts Payable and Purchasing reports	4 + current
		Cancelled Checks	4 + current
		1099-MISC Forms	4 + current
	Accounts Receivable	Invoice Copies	4 years after collection
		Accounts Receivable Ledgers	4 years after collection
		Cash Journals and Receipts	4 years after collection
		Legal Correspondence	4 years after collection
		Collection Notices and Records	4 years after collection
		Records of payments receipts	4 years after collection
		Records of uncollected accounts	4 years after collection
	Cash Management Records	Bank Statements and Reconciliations	3
		Short-term Investments (FNMAs, Freddie Macs, etc).	3
		Analysis of Bank compensating balances	3
		ACH transactions, wires	5
		Transfer Agreements	Life of Agreement
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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
FINANCE	Cash Management Records	Cash Receipts, Cash Books, Deposits	3
		Revenue and State Bonds + Backup	Permanent
		Investment Manager Reports	1
		Non-contributory retirement Investment Manager performance reports	10
		Custodian Reports (Year-End)	10
		Endowment Records	Permanent
		Budgeting Records	Annual Financial Reports
		AMO61 - Year-end (Microfiche, paper, or disk)	10
		AMO90, AMO91 (Microfiche or disk)	5
		BUDSUM (Paper)	5
		Status Reports (Paper)	10
		Budget Change Transactions (Paper)	5
		IPEDS Reports	10
	Payroll Records - General	Wage Rate Tables	3
		Benefits/Deductions Registers	6
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		Time Input Reports	6
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	Payroll - Employee Files	Wage or Salary History	6
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		Disability & Sick Leave Benefits	Life of Employee
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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
FINANCE	Payroll - Employee Files	Time Cards or Sheets	5
		W-2/1042-S Forms	6
		W-4 Forms	6
		Garnishments	Employment
	Buildings	Capital Construction Project Contracts, Final Payment Records, Materials and Equipment information and correspondence	Life of Building + 4 years
		Building, and Site Plan Specifications	Life of building + 4 years
		Acquisition date and cost data; mortgages, improvement and repair records; records of sales; depreciation schedules; grant number, if applicable	Life of building + 4 years
		Building, Zoning Permits	1 year after completion of construction
	Equipment (Capitalizable)	Acquisition Date and Cost; description, location of the equipment; identification and/or serial numbers; grant number, if applicable; depreciation schedules, and records of disposals or sales.	Life of equipment + 4 years
	Other Equipment	Noncapitalizable equipment	The longer of life of equipment or 3 years.
	Health and Safety Environmental Records	Hazardous Material Spill Reports	Permanent
		Accident Reports	Permanent
		Fire Incident Reports	Permanent
		Hazardous Waste Records, including Manifests or Waste shipment records.	Permanent
		Air monitoring (hazardous gases) or area sampling (asbestos, lead, etc.)	30
		Chemical inventories and lists	30
		Process Safety Incident Investigation Reports	5
		OSHA 200 Injury and Illness logs	5
		Inspection Reports (spill prevention, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, etc)	3
		Insurance	Liability and Property Insurance Claims

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
PHYSICAL FACILITIES	Insurance	Liability and Property Insurance incident reports	7 years unless resulting in a claim.
	Other	Operating Permits (eg, elevator)	Current year plus 1
		Maintenance Records	Life of equipment or building
		Motor Vehicle Records	Life of vehicle
INSTITUTIONAL	Alumni Data	Air or Waste Water Emissions	3
		Alumni Publications*	4 years from publication
		Alumni Information** * Alumni publications are one of the document types subject to Internal Revenue Service inspection during an audit. **Information kept on former students typically includes: Name, Class, Year of Graduation and degree, home address and phone number, record of college activities, employment, position, address and phone number, and name of spouse and children.	Until former student's death
	Institutional Publications*	Bulletins and Course Catalogs	15
		Student Newspapers	4
		Student and Employee Directories	5
	Gift Records	*Institutional publications are also subject to Internal Revenue Service inspection during an audit.	
		Cash Gifts	At least 4, no more than 7 years
		Non-Cash Gifts (stock, mutual fund shares, bonds real estate, etc.)	Time gift possessed + 4 years
	Other	Gift fund descriptions	Permanent
Articles of Incorporation		Permanent	
By-Laws		Permanent	
Board of Trustees Minutes		Permanent	
Board of Trustees Committee Meetings Minutes		Permanent	
Licenses		Current + 6	
	Deeds and Titles	Permanent	

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CATEGORY	RECORD GROUP	DOCUMENT TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD (IN YEARS)
INSTITUTIONAL	Litigation Files	Attorney Opinion Letters	Applicable + 6
		Leases	Applicable + 6
		Policy Statements	10
		Campus Crime Reports - Annual (1990 Security Act)	4
		Campus Crime Reports - Interim (when a major crime occurs)	2
		Contracts	Applicable + 6
		Patent Records	Permanent
		Trademark Records	Permanent
		Claims	Until suit fully resolved
		Court Documents and Records (complaints, answers, motions, pleadings, etc.)	Until suit fully resolved
		Correspondence with Counsel	Until suit fully resolved
		Orders issued by the court	Until suit fully resolved
		Depositions, transcripts, interrogatories, answers to the interrogatories, requests for documents, the requested documents, and other discovery materials.	Until suit fully resolved