



DREW UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: RECORDS RETENTION AND
DESTRUCTION POLICY

DATE: September 2008

I. Policy Statement

The university recognizes that the efficient management of its records, regardless of their form or medium, is essential to support its core functions, to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations, and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution. The university further recognizes that proper methods of records disposal are important, as well as determining what type of records should be stored in the University Library Archives. This document provides the policy framework through which these aims can be achieved.

II. Reason for Policy

- (a) To promote efficient administration and management of the records of Drew University.
- (b) To provide guidance on the maintenance, retention, storage and disposition of official records based on their fiscal, legal, administrative, and historical value to the university
- (c) To reduce and/or prevent unnecessary legal and fiscal responsibility caused by retaining university records longer than the retention schedules authorizes or by premature disposal of university records.

III. Who Should Read Policy

All members of the Drew University community

IV. Related Documents

See Records Retention Schedule (Table I)

V. Contact

Vice President of Finance and Business Affairs
973-408-3501

VI. The Policy

A. Policy Statement

Records management is the systematic control of information from creation or receipt, through processing and use, until final disposition, either destruction or placement into the University Library Archives. Proper records management satisfies compliance with laws and regulations, and ensures that historically significant records are preserved to document university history.

This policy provides direction on records management to ensure that the university complies with federal, state, and other regulatory guidelines. Therefore, university faculty and staff shall:

- Retain records according to established records retention schedules
- Maintain active and inactive records in appropriate storage equipment and locations
- Preserve records of historical significance
- Protect sensitive information using secure methods of recordkeeping and disposal
- Identify and protect vital records
- Discard (in an approved manner) records that are no longer required

B. Records

1. Definition of a Record

University records are defined as any and all documents in any format (including written and printed matter, drawings, maps, plans, photographs; microforms; motion picture films, sound and video recordings; and electronic data on disk or tape) or copies thereof made or received by an academic or administrative office of the university in connection with the transaction of university business, and retained by such office as evidence of the activities of the university or because of the information contained therein.

2. Vital Records

Some university records are “essential” meaning that their loss would jeopardize the rights and privileges of the university. Vital records include records whose informational value to the university is so great, and the consequences of loss are so severe, that special protection is justified in order to reduce the risk of loss. The following records are considered to be essential:

- Records containing information required to re-establish or continue the university in the event of a disaster
- Records containing unique and irreplaceable information necessary to recreate the university’s legal and financial position.
- Records that preserve the rights of the organization and its employees, students, and other constituent groups.

3. Electronic Records

Electronic records are defined as records containing machine readable, as opposed to human readable, information consisting of character coded electronic signals that can be processed and read by means of computers.

4. Email is a document created or received on an electronic mail system, including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments that may be transmitted with the message.

Other forms of electronic records include instant messages (IM) and voice mail.

5. Departments and units that maintain university records are called “official repositories.” These administrative units are responsible for establishing appropriate record retention management practices. Each unit’s administrative manager or a designee must:
- Implement the unit’s and/or office’s record management practices
 - Ensure that these management practices are consistent with this policy
 - Educate staff within the administrative unit in understanding sound record management practices
 - Preserve inactive records of historic value, and transfer those records to the University Library Archives
 - Ensure that access to confidential files is restricted and secure. Long-term restrictions on access to selected archival records should be negotiated at the time of their transfer to the University Library Archives
 - Destroy inactive records that have no archival value upon passage of the applicable retention period

When the prescribed retention period for official university records has passed, a determination of whether to preserve or dispose of the documents must be made. To decide if the record is of historic value to the university, consult the University Librarian, who has the authority to designate which records are archival.

Option A – Archival Records


If you have determined that the records are archival, they may be transferred to University Library Archives.

- Review records to be sent to University Library Archives
- Schedule a time for boxes to be picked up

Option B – Non-Archival Records

If you have determined that it is appropriate to dispose of the records, destroy them in one of the following ways:

- Recycle non-confidential paper records
- Shred or otherwise render unreadable confidential records
- Erase or destroy electronically stored data

 **Caution:** Periodically review records generated and maintained in university information systems or equipment (including mainframe, mini, and micro computing/storage systems) to ensure that these requirements are met

C. Records Retention and Disposition

The Records Retention Schedule (see attached) provides a list of official records for each major administrative department in the university and prescribes the periods of authorized retention. The schedule may be revised periodically to include a newly created record series, to change retention periods, or to address records that are no longer useful or obsolete. A university record, regardless of the format in which it is created, must be retained for designated periods of time and may only be disposed of in accordance with approved retention and

disposition schedules. Once a university record has satisfied its retention period, the retention schedule will dictate the document's ultimate disposition (i.e., authorized destruction, retention extension or transfer to the University Library Archives.)

1. Records retention period may be increased by government regulation, judicial or administrative consent order, private or governmental contract, pending litigation or audit requirements. Such modifications supersede the requirements listed in this policy. Suspension of record destruction required for any of these reasons will be accomplished by a notice sent out to affected units by the Office of the Vice President for Finance

◆ **Note:** No document list can be exhaustive. Questions regarding the retention period for any specific document or class of documents not included in these tables should be addressed to the Vice President of Finance and Business Affairs.

👉 **Caution:** Departments and units that are not official repositories and that retain duplicate or multiple copies of these university records should dispose of them when they are no longer useful.

D. Historical Appraisal and Review

The retention and disposition schedule generally identifies those records with historical value. However, questions regarding the historical value of a particular record should be referred to University Library Archives.

E. Records Storage

University records, both paper and electronic, must be properly maintained during their retention period. In-house maintenance of records should ensure proper accessibility, security, and protection.

F. Records Disposal

All university employees must ensure that information in confidential or privacy-protected records is protected from unauthorized disclosure through the ultimate disposition of these records. As a normal matter of conducting business, destruction of confidential or privacy-protected information in computer files or other electronic storage media is not acceptable. Electronic records must be "wiped" clean or the storage media physically destroyed. These methods of destruction are specified in the retention schedules so that records may not be viewed or used by unauthorized persons after they are disposed.

Many records can be legally destroyed at the end of their active lives if there are no audit, legal, fiscal, regulatory or historical reasons for the preservation of the records. Those university records designated for destruction (after fulfilling their retention requirement) must be disposed of in an appropriate method. Records containing confidential information should be destroyed by pulping, shredding, or incineration.

In the case of electronic records, complete and proper deleting and purging should be performed.

Email messages and other electronic business records are considered university records and are subject to the same retention requirements as those which

govern the management of paper records. Individual users need to save email (preferably in topic folders).

F. Records Training

Departmental consultations and campus-wide workshops will be available to better educate the university community in proper records management principals.