

RECORDS RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

PURPOSE

To ensure that the University's records are retained and destroyed in accordance with the Massachusetts Statewide Agency Records Retention Schedule, the Massachusetts State Colleges Records Retention Schedule, and other federal and state laws.

DEFINITIONS

Records – All books, papers, maps, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations, or other documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an employee. This includes both paper and electronic records (e.g. Word/PDF documents, spreadsheets, databases, and email).

Records Custodian – An employee who in the normal course of his/her duties has access to, or control of, records.

Records Liaison Officer – Records liaison officers are the only employees authorized to submit the Record Conservation Board's (RCB) Universal Application for Destruction Permission. The president shall designate a records liaison officer for each division. A list of the current records liaison officers is available on myWestfield > Documents > Administration and Finance > Records Retention.

Retention Period – The minimum time period a record must be retained in accordance with the retention schedules. Records falling under several retention schedules shall be retained for the longest applicable retention period.

POLICY

A. Employee Responsibilities:

Employees have an obligation to preserve all records they create, maintain, and receive in a safe, secure, and searchable manner, including electronic records. Employees must familiarize themselves with their records retention obligations, and know both how long records must be retained for and the proper process for their destruction.

B. Retention:

1. All records must be preserved for the retention period stated in the Massachusetts Statewide Agency Records Retention Schedule and the Massachusetts State Colleges Records Retention Schedule. The most recent

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versions are available at myWestfield > Documents > Administration and Finance > Records Retention.

2. Records may not be destroyed while they are subject to litigation, audit, investigation, or when investigation is probable.
3. Approval by the Records Conservation Board (RCB) is required before any records may be destroyed, except for records whose designation is “after administrative use ceases,” or “after verification.” Duplicate copies of records need only be retained until the administrative use ceases unless otherwise required by statute or regulation.
4. Once a record has reached its retention period, a record custodian shall work in conjunction with a records liaison officer to complete the destruction application.
5. It is the responsibility of the records liaison officers to ensure that the listing of records to be destroyed is in compliance with retention periods outlined in the schedules, to submit the destruction application to the RCB, and notify those requesting destruction when permission has been obtained from the RCB.

C. Destruction:

1. Upon receiving destruction approval from the RCB, records with confidential or sensitive data (as defined by Policy 630: Data Classification) must be disposed of in the following manner:
 - a. Paper documents must be shredded so that confidential and sensitive data cannot practicably be read or reconstructed;
 - b. Electronic media and other non-paper media must be destroyed or erased so that confidential and sensitive information cannot practicably be read or reconstructed.
2. The destruction of electronic records must be coordinated through the Information Security Officer.
3. Paper records containing only public data may be recycled after receiving destruction approval from the RCB.
4. It is the records custodian’s responsibility to coordinate and obtain funding for the proper destruction of records.

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D. Departure of University Employees:

Records created or maintained by an employee are University records, which must be preserved after an employee leaves the University. Every manager must take steps to preserve the records kept by a records custodian, including email and other electronic records. For assistance, managers should contact the Information Technology Services and Human Resources departments.

E. Related Policies:

For more information related to the retention and/or destruction of emails and student records, please refer to Policy 550: Electronic Mail (Email) and Policy 4050: Student Records and Privacy Regulations (FERPA), respectively.

FORMS

Available online at the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Records Management website:

- Records Liaison Officer Designation Form
- Universal Application for Destruction Permission (Paper and Electronic)

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed, at a minimum, every three years by the Vice President for Administration and Finance.