



Records Retention

Responsible Executive: Vice
Provost for Faculty Affairs

Responsible Office: Special
Collections and Archives Research
Center

Effective: January 2, 2019

Last Revised: August 1, 2023

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Oregon State University (“university”) subject records must be retained for no less than the minimum retention period set forth in any applicable federal or state law, in the General Schedule, or in any applicable Unit Schedule.
- 1.2. When authorized by this University Standard, a university employee, volunteer, agent, or unit may destroy or otherwise dispose of a university public record or other university-held Information.
- 1.3. Except as authorized by this University Standard, no person may destroy a university public record or other university-held Information.
- 1.4. This University Standard supersedes all previous university records retention and destruction policies.
- 1.5. By authority of ORS 352.087(1)(m), this University Standard is declared to have the force of law.

2. Reason for Policy

- 2.1. The Oregon legislature declares in ORS 192.001 that Oregon public bodies “have a responsibility to ensure orderly retention and destruction of all public records, whether current or noncurrent, and to ensure the preservation of public records of value for administrative, legal and research purposes.” This University Standard establishes the university’s framework for the retention and destruction of university public records and other university-held information. It also creates a uniform practice for the retention of records created or maintained in the course of university business that document the university and its functions, policies and procedures, decisions, and other activities.

3. Scope & Audience

- 3.1. This University Standard applies to all university public records and other university-held Information and governs all university employees, volunteers, agents, and units.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **General Schedule:** The university's *General Records Retention Schedule*.
- 4.2. **Non-subject records:** Other university-held information, as well as university public records, that are not subject records. Non-subject records include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.2.1. Messages on voice mail or on other telephone message storage and retrieval systems.
 - 4.2.2. University Public Records that are duplicates by reason of being photocopies or electronic copies.
 - 4.2.3. Transmittal and acknowledgment letters or emails.
 - 4.2.4. Spam, advertising, and announcements.
 - 4.2.5. Correspondence or notes pertaining to reservations of accommodations or scheduling of personal visits or appearances.
 - 4.2.6. Private emails or other messages or records that do not relate to University business or activities.
 - 4.2.7. Electronic text messages sent from one cellphone to another.
 - 4.2.8. Superseded drafts of letters or emails, minutes, notes, memoranda, reports, or articles.
 - 4.2.9. Desk, telephone, or meeting notes intended for temporary or personal use.
 - 4.2.10. Daily calendar or scheduling information.
 - 4.2.11. A stock of publications.
 - 4.2.12. Library and museum materials made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes.
 - 4.2.13. Any metadata associated with a non-subject record.

- 4.3. **Other university-held information:** Records or other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristic, made, received, filed or recorded at the university that are not university public records.
- 4.4. **The Special Collections and Archives Research Center:** A unit of the OSU Libraries and Press that is the repository for university public records with long-term historical value and is responsible for the preservation of and access to those materials.
- 4.5. **Subject records:** University public records identified in the General Schedule, in a unit schedule, or in a federal or state law prescribing a retention period for such records, provided that subject records do not include any university public records defined as non-subject records.
- 4.6. **Unit schedule:** A university unit-specific records retention schedule.
- 4.7. **University public record:** For purposes of this University Standard, university public records include any book, document, paper, file, photograph, sound recording, computerized recording in machine or electronic storage, records or other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristic, made, received, filed or recorded at the university pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of any university business or activity, whether or not confidential or restricted in use. University public records could be considered subject or non-subject records, depending on factors outlined in those definitions above.

5. Responsibilities & Procedures

5.1. General

- 5.1.1. Subject records or non-subject records may be material to a pending or threatened tort claim notice, litigation, or administrative proceeding or may become subject to an active public records request, subpoena, litigation discovery request, audit, internal or external investigation, or litigation hold. In any of these triggering circumstances, and regardless of the terms of the General Schedule or any unit schedule, neither subject records nor non-subject records may be destroyed unless and until the triggering circumstance is concluded, and the university Office of the General Counsel approves their destruction. Units must inform the Office of the General Counsel of any situation that might give rise to legal action as soon as the situation becomes apparent.
- 5.1.2. Some federal and state laws prescribe retention periods for certain types of records. To the extent that such laws prescribe retention periods for records not listed in the General Schedule or in a unit schedule or longer retention periods for records listed in those schedules, then those laws are to be followed. While units are responsible for maintaining a general understanding over the laws and record

retention requirements that apply to its area, university units are encouraged to consult with the Office of the General Counsel regarding questions about those applicable legal requirements.

- 5.1.3. The General Schedule preliminarily identifies subject records that, based on their on-going usefulness or significance in documenting the primary functions of the university, may have long-term administrative or historical value. At the request of a unit head, the University Records Manager will assist units holding these records in identifying the specific records with long-term value and developing a plan for preservation and access.
- 5.1.4. Subject records must be retained for no less than the minimum retention period set forth in any applicable federal or state law, in the General Schedule, or in any applicable unit schedule. Except as provided in Sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, after this minimum retention period is met, each university unit, employee, volunteer or agent may destroy subject records, or use their discretion and decide to retain a subject record or a category of subject records for a longer period.
- 5.1.5. Except as provided in Sections 5.1.1, non-subject records may be destroyed at any time. Some non-subject records may have long-term administrative or historical value. Units are encouraged to consult with the University Records Manager before destroying Non-Subject Records.
- 5.1.6. Subject records containing confidential, sensitive, or otherwise protected information should be destroyed in a secure manner such as shredding.
- 5.1.7. Except as authorized by this University Standard, no person may destroy or otherwise dispose of a university public record.

5.2. **Administrative Roles and Responsibilities**

5.2.1. University Archivist

- a. The University Archivist helps units identify specific subject records with long-term value and develop plans for preservation and access of those records. This may include transferring the records to the Special Collections and Archives Research Center.

5.2.2. University Records Manager

- a. The University Records Manager is responsible for the development of the General Schedule and educating university personnel in records management policy and procedures. The University Records Manager must consult with the Office of General Counsel before approving changes to the General Schedule.

- b. The University Records Manager is responsible for assisting university units develop unit-specific retention schedules where appropriate. The University Records Manager may inform the Office of General Counsel of new unit schedules and changes to existing unit schedules and consult with the Office of General Counsel.

5.2.3. University units

- a. Unit heads are responsible for ensuring that their units familiarize themselves with the General Schedule and understand what subject records—paper-based and electronic—they create or receive and are required to retain.
- b. Units are responsible for the retention, storage, and access of subject records in compliance with the General Schedule and, if appropriate, with any unit schedule or any applicable federal or state law setting a minimum retention period.
- c. Each unit head will periodically review currently used subject records to determine whether these records and forms are adequate and appropriate for each unit's requirements.
- d. Some units may choose or be required to maintain a unit schedule, in addition to the General Schedule, based on that unit's internal and external requirements. In such instances, the unit head must consult with the University Records Manager in developing a unit schedule. The unit head must ensure that all employees within the unit are familiar with this unit schedule. In addition, each unit head must maintain copies of any unit schedule, and ensure that all employees within the department adhere to the unit schedule.
- e. Each unit head must periodically review any unit schedule developed for the unit to determine if changes need to be made to the retention periods. If a change to the unit schedule is necessary, the unit must seek approval from the University Records Manager before making the change.
- f. Requests for changes in retention periods within the General Schedule should be made to the University Records Manager and may be implemented only after approval by the University Records Manager in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel.

5.3. Enforcement

- 5.3.1. This University Standard may be enforced through appropriate employee and volunteer personnel procedures, contract administration procedures, code of student conduct proceedings, or exclusion notices. In the event that the procedure used in a particular case does not include an opportunity for an appeal of any initial decision to a higher level within the university or externally, then the person

aggrieved by such a decision may, within ten days of the decision, appeal the decision in writing to the University Provost, who will make the final university decision.

6. Forms & Tools

- 6.1. General Records Retention Schedule: <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/general-schedule.pdf>
- 6.2. Unit-specific Retention Schedules: <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/records-management.html>

7. Frequently Asked Questions

- 7.1. None.

8. Related Information

- 8.1. ORS 192.001: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors192.html
- 8.2. ORS 352: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors352.html

9. History

- 9.1. Adopted: January 2, 2019.
- 9.2. Reviewed: *Records Retention* received its periodic review in 2023; housekeeping amendments were made August 1, 2023 to update position titles.
- 9.3. Next scheduled review date: August 2028.

10. Website

- 10.1 http://policy.oregonstate.edu/UPSM/04-010_records_retention

11. Contacts

Department	Phone Number	Website
Special Collections & Archives Research Center	541-737-2075	http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu