

University Records Disposition Guidelines

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NOTICE

Please do not download or save this document. Find the most recent version of this information on the IPRMO website, under Records Management.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/information-privacy-records-management>

This approach prevents copies being saved and printed, which creates transitory documents and promotes outdated reference copies.

Introduction

To meet legal and operational requirements, University **Units** are responsible for retaining records for the minimum timeframe specified in an approved Records Retention Schedule. Effective and timely records disposition promotes reliable access to information and reduces storage and protection costs.

Records disposition is to be treated as an ongoing business activity, with regular and systematic disposal activities for eligible records.

Overview

Once the minimum records retention timeframe has elapsed for a grouping of records, the records become eligible for **disposition** (destruction OR transfer to archives) according to an approved, authorized and documented procedure.

This standard provides direction and guidance to University Units for authorizing and performing disposition of **Official University Records** (physical and electronic) under their care and control that:

- Have met their minimum retention timeframe, and
- Are not subject to archival, legal, audit or investigative purposes.

This standard does not apply to **transitory records**, which are of short-term, limited value and do not have retention requirements applied to them. For more information, see the Identification and Destruction of Transitory Records Guideline on the Information, Privacy and Records Management Office website.

Identifying University Records Eligible for Disposition

Disposition of University Records is the responsibility of a unit, under the authorization of the Administrative Head within respective organizational entities including faculties, centres, institutes, departments, nondepartmental units and administrative units.¹

¹ Records Management Policy

Retention Scheduling

It is the responsibility of the Unit to apply retention requirements to records to enable Records Disposition. When records eligible for disposition are identified, the records must be isolated, described, and categorized according to an approved records retention rule.

Legal Hold Considerations

Disposition of **responsive** records must be ceased when required for formal requests under the *Access to Information Act (ATIA)*, internal or external audits, or legal discovery. The Information, Privacy and Records Management Office will notify all relevant units if there is an active hold on their records for any reason.

Selecting Disposition Activity

Records Disposition results in one of two sub-processes: transfer to archives or records destruction.

A listing of records to be dispositioned must be created for University records being destroyed or archived.

The disposition form must include, at minimum:

- Description of records being dispositioned;
- Quantity of records being dispositioned (for both physical and digital records);
- Date range of records;
- Eligible records retention criteria being applied, including all legal authority that is cited in the retention rules.

Disposition authority templates can be found on the Information, Privacy and Records Management Office website.

Transfer to Archives

If a Records Retention Schedule designates a records series to be of potential archival value, University Archives should be contacted to appraise the records to confirm if they are appropriate for accession to the archival collection.

Contact the University Archives at archives@ualberta.ca or 780.248.1300 to begin this process.

If an archivist has determined that the records are not suitable for accession, even if the listed disposition is archives, the records can proceed to the destruction activity. A record of appraisal stating that Archives has elected to not accession the records must be included in the disposition authority.

Records Destruction

Records eligible for destruction are those that:

1. Have met their minimum records retention requirements (minimum retention timeframe) to meet identified legal and administrative obligations; AND
2. Have a final disposition of Destroy on the relevant Records Retention Schedule OR have a final disposition of Archive and have been appraised and denied accession by the University Archives; AND
3. Are not subject to Legal Hold, Investigations (including Audit, Reviews and Information Requests), and/or Litigation.

Capturing Evidence of the Disposition Process

For both Records Destruction and Transfer to Archives, evidence of the disposition process must be created and retained for records that are destroyed or transferred to University Archives.

When the actual records disposition process has been authorized and is ready to be performed, the following evidence must be retained by the authorizing Unit:

1. What records were destroyed or transferred?
2. Who authorized destruction or transfer of the records?
3. Why were they destroyed or transferred (e.g. the retention schedule item)?
4. When were the records destroyed or transferred?
5. Who destroyed or transferred the records, and how?

If a commercial vendor conducts the records destruction, a certificate of destruction must be obtained from the vendor and this certificate must be retained with the List of Records and Authorization for Disposition Form. See Appendix 1 for an example of a vendor-provided certificate of destruction.

Information about the preferred supplier for confidential shredding can be found at [Preferred Suppliers - Shredding - Confidential](#).

Managing Transitory Records

Transitory records are records of a routine nature having short-term or limited value with no records retention requirement. They are often individual documents or data sets required for a limited time to complete a routine action; are used in the preparation or creation of other University records; or are documents and data sets retained as convenience copies by offices or individuals. For more information on how to identify transitory records, see [Records Management Fundamentals: Official or Transitory](#).

No legal or regulatory requirements exist to maintain transitory records. However, if Transitory Records are being kept, they may be subject to collection for legal hold, grievances, or other information requests.

No documentation is required to dispose of Transitory Records, rather Transitory Records should be destroyed as soon as they no longer serve an immediate business or operational purpose.

Definitions

For a comprehensive glossary of Information, Privacy, and Records Management terms, see ualberta.ca/information-privacy-records-management/glossary	
Disposition	Action to be taken on the record type at the end of its lifecycle. This will be Destroy, Archive, or Transfer.
Transitory records	Records of a routine nature having short-term or limited value with no records retention requirement.
Units	Administrative and/or organizational entities including faculties, departments, centres, institutes,

	administrative units and non-departmental units.
Official University Records	A University record means recorded information in any format within the custody or under the control of the University relating to the operation and administration of the University.
Responsive	Information that is reasonably related to pending litigation, audit or access to information request.

Related Links

[Records Disposition Authority Template - Google Sheet](#)

[Records Disposition Authority Template - PDF](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

[Institutional Data Management and Governance Procedure](#)

[Records Management Fundamentals: Official or Transitory.](#)

[Shredding - Confidential](#)



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Appendix 1: Example Vendor-Provided Destruction Certificate

MERLIN SHREDDING		CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION	
<i>(plus 6 boxes)</i> This document certifies that <u>105</u> lbs. of client records, received on this date of <u>MAY 13</u> , 20 <u>16</u> , were reduced to an indecipherable form through shredding at the University of Alberta.			
<u>Valberta</u> [REDACTED] DEPARTMENT		[REDACTED] ORDERED BY	
[REDACTED] SPEED CODE	[REDACTED] ACCOUNT #	<u>Kalina</u> DRIVER	
Subtotal	\$ <u>39.75</u>	Merlin Shredding Inc. Box 20008 Red Deer, AB T4N 6X5 (403) 340-2401 1-877-340-2401 www.merlinshredding.com	
Tax	\$ <u>1.99</u>		
	\$ <u>41.74</u>		
		[REDACTED]	

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