

Rice University Policy No. 812

Records Management

I. General Policy

Rice University requires that various types of records be retained for specific periods of time, as may be required by law, operational needs, historical preservation goals or sound practices, and that records be either indefinitely maintained or otherwise destroyed on a specified schedule and in an appropriate manner. This policy is intended to aid the University in meeting academic and business needs, complying with legal and regulatory standards for record retention and protection of privacy, optimizing the use of space and storage, and properly destroying outdated or unnecessary records. This policy applies to all records, regardless of media or format (e.g., paper, electronic, microform, magnetic tapes, CD-ROM). The implementation guidelines below are meant to provide guidance to University offices and departments in formulating record retention and destruction programs that meet the legal requirements and operational needs of the office or department.

Implementation

A "record" is information that has been recorded in some manner and can be retrieved. A record of the University reflects evidence of an educational activity, a University business transaction, or a University administrative or research function or other University action. Administrative and academic offices of the University generate records in the conduct of University business, and these records may be preserved in various media (e.g., paper, electronic, film, video).

The appropriate time periods for record retention are specific to the situation and subject to ongoing statutory and regulatory mandates and changes, as well as departmental needs. Accordingly, each department and office of the University shall develop its own records management plan that meets the relevant regulatory requirements and its operational needs. A record management plan should:

1. Meet legal and regulatory standards for protection, storage and retrieval;
2. Appropriately protect the privacy of faculty, staff and students;
3. Consider the proper use of space and storage;
4. Provide for the destruction of outdated records in an appropriate manner;
5. Preserve in the University Archives records of historical interest.

When it is appropriate to dispose of records after the legal retention period and when the records are no longer needed for business reasons, the office or department should shred or otherwise destroy confidential records in a manner that the confidentiality is not impaired, erase or destroy electronically stored records and data, and recycle non-confidential paper records.

Each department and office shall designate an individual responsible for records management. The Controller's Office, the Woodson Research Center and the Office of the General Counsel are available to work with departments and offices to assist them in creating their records management programs and in complying with this policy.

Records Subject to a Legal or Regulatory Claim, Proceeding or Audit

Even if the records management program of an office or department calls for the destruction of a record at a particular point in time, if a record is relevant to a pending or anticipated claim, investigation, audit, agency charge, enforcement action or litigation, the records must be retained until the final resolution of the matter. If there is any question whether a department or office's normal document destruction schedule should be temporarily suspended because of a pending matter, the department or office shall consult with the Office of the General Counsel before any such destruction.

Confidential Records

Many records subject to record retention requirements contain personal or confidential information (e.g., date of birth, social security number, financial information). The confidentiality of such records may be protected by federal or state law (such as FERPA or the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act) or University policies. Offices and departments must take all reasonable steps to assure that the confidentiality of such records is protected while the records are maintained and when the records are ultimately destroyed.

Records of Significant Importance or Value

Records of significant importance or value should be stored in a manner suited to protecting the records. Should an office or department no longer require such a record or its maintenance on site, it should confer with the Woodson Research Center concerning indefinite preservation or transfer to the University Archives.

II. Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation

Responsible Official: Vice President and General Counsel

Signed David W. Leebron
David W. Leebron, President

Policy History

Clerical Change: February 6, 2018

Issued: June 3, 2009

Appendix 1. Resources

The following are some resources that provide information about and timetables for record retention:

Cornell University

http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol4_7.cfm

University of Minnesota

http://www.policy.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/record_retention.cfm

University of Pennsylvania

<http://www.archives.upenn.edu/urc/recrdret/entry.html>

Yale University

http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ars_schedules.html

Internal Revenue Service

<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p583/ar02.html#d0e1577>

<http://www.sbrg.irs.gov/sections/section2/recordkeeping.htm>

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

<http://www.eeoc.gov/employers/recordsandreports.html>