RECORDS MANAGEMENT 101

The Basics

What is RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

helps offices assess their records and record types for:
- retention: how long do you need to keep a record; and
- disposition: what you need to do with the records after that time.

provides advice about file management, offsite storage, record destruction, and policy compliance.

identifies records of enduring historical value for transfer to the University Archives.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT TERMS & DEFINITIONS

How we talk about records

RETENTION PERIOD

How long do you need to keep records

Usually given in number of years

Minimum amount of time that records must be kept

Based on:

- Laws, federal and state, statute of limitations
- Rules and regulations
- Best practices, professional standards
- Operational needs

TRIGGER DATE

When the retention period begins, when the clock starts
- End of the fiscal year
- End of the calendar year
- Date of separation/termination
- Date of hire
- Date of last attendance

Example:
- Date of record: December 12, 2019
- Retention period: FY + 8 years
- Trigger date:
  - June 30, 2020 (end of FY, trigger date) + 8 years = July 1, 2028 (disposition date)

DISPOSITION: Two Choices

Destruction:

- Sensitive, confidential or records with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be destroyed or shredded in a manner that leaves data fully unrecoverable
- Public information records can be recycled/discarded

Permanent Retention:

- 3-5% of all records, a very small amount
- Historical value: best evidence for processes, decisions, curriculum, events, etc.
- Transfer to the University Archives

NON-RECORDS

Duplicates of original records: information or reference copies of records

Database printouts, aka convenience copies of reports

Preliminary drafts including: drafts of letters, memoranda, reports

Worksheets, work papers, notes

Books or chapters of books, periodicals, articles, manuals, training binders, conference packets, and other printed material obtained from outside sources

Schedules, directories, travel itineraries, menus

Spam, junk mail, and listserv messages

Blank forms and stationery

You can dispose of non-records as soon as they are no longer useful.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The local rules

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Procurement Document Images as Document of Record Policy

Procurement Records Retention Policy

Retention of Student Education Records

Sponsored Projects Administration Records Retention Policy

Treasury Records Retention Policy

https://policylibrary.columbia.edu/category/records-retention-and-disposal

COMMON RECORD TYPES

Record Type	Description	Retention
P-Card receipts	Original transaction paperwork kept by the holder of the P-Card	FY + 11 years
Budget planning records	Supporting schedules and planning assumptions for the annual budget	FY + 2 years
University publications	Published by students, faculty members, departments, offices, etc.	Permanent. Transfer 2 to 3 copies to the University Archives

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about records management and / or the Columbia University Archives, please contact us.

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