



# RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

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### 1. Records Management at UBC

#### a) Purpose of the Records Management Manual

The purpose of the Records Management Manual is to help UBC staff and faculty members understand the records management principles applicable to the information they create and receive, and to help employees manage their information in a secure and efficient manner.

The Records Management Manual will serve as a starting point for records management at UBC, and employees are encouraged to use the tools being developed by the University Archives, including the Records Management Manual and the Records Retention Schedules. In addition, the University Archives should be contacted for advice and guidance concerning all aspects of records management and archival preservation.

#### b) The Benefits of Records Management

Records management will result in a number of positive benefits for units, most notably:

- reduced costs
- increased useable space
- legal and regulatory compliance
- increased efficiency

The cost of filing cabinets, file folders, and other tools associated with paper records storage is considerable at UBC. Many units have run out of in-office storage space, and have turned to spare closets and rooms for records storage. These costs (and inefficient use of expensive office space) can be reduced or eliminated with the application of records management principles. In addition, costs associated with employee time spent searching for records, and being forced to recreate the record if it cannot be found are significant, as is the cost of commercial records storage. The use of commercial records storage has been growing at a rapid pace at UBC over the last 5 years, and has become a permanent expense for many units. Many of the same issues which units face in their attempts to manage hardcopy information are increasingly being faced in the digital world as well. Electronic storage is perceived as being inexpensive; however the reality is that the management of electronic information; its classification, management, and preservation can be much more costly than initially supposed. Records management, by

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allowing for the controlled destruction of insignificant information, reduces storage needs in both the hardcopy and digital world. Records management is about managing records – no matter what format.

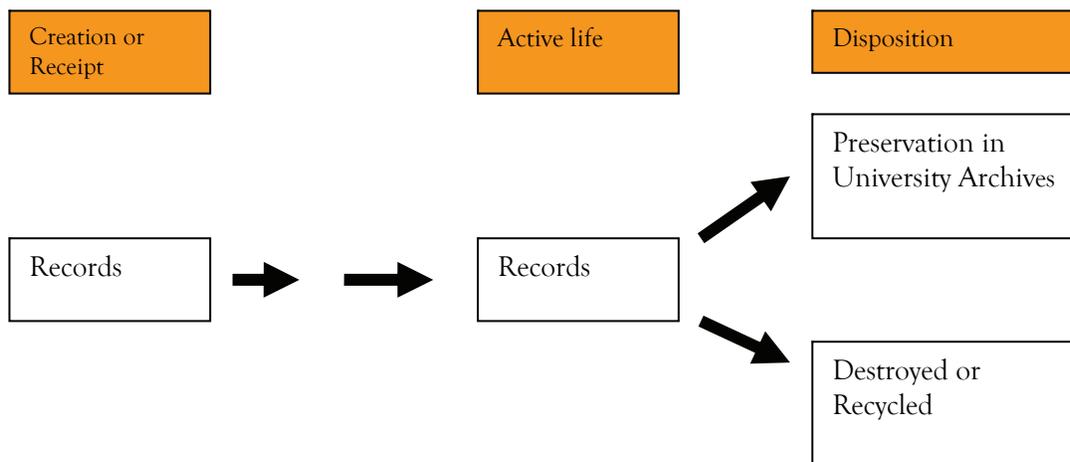
Records management helps in the administration of University records by allowing employees to locate information reliably and efficiently and in complying with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) requests and other legal requests for records. The ability to find the entirety of the records related to a particular subject, and to provide them in a reasonable time period is both good management and good policy.

Records Management allows money to be saved on filing cabinets, file folders, and the cost of employee time spent filing and retrieving records. In addition, space may be reclaimed – in closets, basements, and hallways that is currently taken up by records. Expensive commercial records storage may be reduced or eliminated, while space currently used for records retention on campus may be purposed for more productive purposes.

### c) Some Records and Recordkeeping Concepts

#### **Life Cycle**

The “Life Cycle” of records creation (birth), maintenance and use (life), and disposition (death) is a way to imagine how records are commonly used. Upon creation records will be used as evidence or as reference to an event. Over time, the record will be referred to less and less



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frequently, until it is no longer required. At that point a decision is made to either destroy or archive the record depending on whether it has archival value.

### d) Records are not all the same

It is important for anyone connected with record keeping at UBC to understand that not all information is created equal. Although some records are vital and need to be protected, most people intuitively understand that not all information needs to be retained long term. In fact, a great deal of the information retained at UBC is retained unnecessarily, and is of no value.

### Ephemera

- Some information at UBC can be considered to have little or no value to the unit. Such information might include spam, letters of transmittal (fax cover page, cover letters) routine correspondence and telephone messages (“while you were away” slips and other non-policy informational messages. This material is also referred to as ephemera and employees should recognize that such material holds no evidential value and can be destroyed, without referencing a records schedule, once the information has been read, and as the employee sees fit.

### General Records

- The vast majority of records at UBC are important in the short term but become less so over time, eventually resulting in them either being destroyed or preserved in the Archives. These records should not be destroyed without consulting a records schedule. Email, correspondence, employee and student records are a few examples of such records. Records may vary from relatively unimportant to very important, and must be destroyed according to records schedules.

### Archival and Vital Records

- Certain types of records need to be retained differently than either ephemera or general records. Vital records need to have a great deal of consideration given to their care, with security a priority. Further, such records need to be carefully reviewed before disposition. Many of these records are essential in the event of a disaster, and would be instrumental in the resumption of the activities of the University. Such records include pension and payroll records, as well as student transcripts, and other records which detail essential information. Archival records are never destroyed and are sent to the University Archives for permanent preservation.

### 2. UBC Policy, Legislative Framework, and Standards

#### a) Policy

Policy #117 – Records Management

<http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/>

#### b) Legislative Framework

UBC's Records Management Policy, Records Retention Schedules, and the Records Management Manual and any procedures contained within will conform to relevant Provincial and Federal legislation.

#### c) Standards

Records Management related standards will help to inform and supplement legislation as a source of information for UBC records management programs. Two such standards are the ISO Records Management Standard 15489-1 (2001) and "Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence" Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) (2005). It is likely that such standards will adapt and change as record keeping needs change and new technology is implemented. UBC will implement these and future standards as appropriate, and as required to meet University Records Management Policy requirements.

### 3. The University Archives and Records Management

#### a) The role of the Archives

The Archives provides

- a) tools to determine retention periods, such as the Records Management Manual and the Records Retention Schedule
- b) permanent preservation of archival records
- c) advice and guidance concerning records
- d) in office records management services (fee for service)

#### b) Records Retention Schedule

Records Retention Schedules define the length of time that specified types of records are to be retained as Active Records and as Semi-active Records, as well as their final Disposition once they become Inactive Records. Records Retention Schedules are determined based on the following considerations:

- federal and provincial legislative requirements;
- administrative and operational requirements of the unit and the University
- the historical value of University records as determined by the University Archives

After University Records have been retained by the creating units for the requisite time in accordance with the Records Retention Schedules, they must either be destroyed or sent to the University Archives for permanent retention. Units wishing to transfer Permanently Valuable Records should contact the University Archives to arrange for transfer.

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### c) Archival Records

Records selected for archival retention by the University will detail the origins, the structure, the curriculum, and the decision making at UBC. In some cases the record may be a single document; such as an organizational chart for a particular unit in a certain year. In other cases, the record may be a collection of records relating to a subject such as a search or a project. Finally, an archival record may be a summary of a series of records, such as a yearly Financial Statement or a final report from a hiring committee.

Records which detail the origins and growth of the University, a Faculty, a Department, or a Unit are essential historic records and must be preserved.

Examples of such records are formal documents such as letters patent, contracts, and agreements. In many cases there is a formal ceremony or public announcements related to the origin of the unit and the resultant invitations, correspondence, and photographs may hold archival value as well.

- Incorporation Papers
- Deeds, Leases
- Contracts/Legal Agreements
- Planning and development records (campus maps, drawings, plans, etc)

Records which detail how the university or its units are organized or managed as well as any administrative or organizational changes over time are essential historic records as well.

Policies and Planning, including records of Board of Governors and Senate decisions, are essential records of decision making and need to be retained. Record types can include organization charts, executive committee minutes and related policy and planning records, annual reports, and special projects.

- organization charts
- reviews and audits
- materials for special events such as conferences your department organized or lecture series, fund raisers, anniversary celebrations
- Minutes of major decision making committees
- Policy and procedure manuals
- Correspondence by directors, chairs and other principle staff members on important

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decisions or events.

- Reports such as Annual reports, project reports and studies

Financial records may be archival in nature, provided they are records of *summary* such as Yearly Financial Statements, General Ledger, or other summary reports.

- Annual financial statements
- Annual/General Ledger
- Audit material

Records which detail curriculum, course development, and course delivery include the UBC Calendar, course descriptions, course syllabi, reading lists, as well as curriculum committee minutes and reports.

- Course materials (if your department organizes any courses), and course development records
- course handbooks and audio visual materials
- course syllabi

Unique Operational records are often archival as they reflect functions which are unique and are not captured elsewhere. (for example, units within Medicine may retain resident records, LBS may retain records of electrical wiring, and Campus Security may keep records of security incidents on campus. All of these are just examples, but do indicate that individual units create and retain records which are unique to their particular unit.) Units which perform a unique function on campus need to consider which records best reflect their activity. If there is any question concerning such records the Unit should consult the Archives for retention advice.

In general, personal records related to staff, faculty, and students are not considered archival because

- a) they are personal information and require permission from the subject to be accessed by researchers
- b) most of the related records are scheduled for destruction according to University records schedules
- c) primary responsibility lies with HR, (staff) Faculty Relations, (faculty) and the Registrar's Office and the Faculty of Graduate Studies (students) so most UBC units will be in custody of secondary, supporting, or duplicate records.

Records of distinction – awards, service recognition, etc – are usually kept in summarized form. (a list of award winners, for example) Units may keep records of such employees; however, FIPPA requirements to respect privacy must be of paramount consideration. If you are unsure of how to maintain such records in compliance with FIPPA please contact the Archives.

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### d) Some Archival Records Guidelines

- The Archives is interested in the primary or original copy of records. In a limited number of cases this is not possible due to loss; however it is important to remember that duplicate material and material created by other units are not generally considered archival. Circulation copies and supporting papers are most often not required.
- Records of minor committees whose main minutes/findings/reports are summarized at a higher level in the administrative hierarchy are not required to be retained permanently. (An example might be the department safety committee which is formed every year - these records should be retained in compliance with records schedules and then destroyed)
- In most cases archival retention decisions should be made at the series level, for example, a series of departmental minutes, and not individual minutes of particular meetings.
- Try to apply retention decisions as soon as possible after records are created or received, particularly for electronic recording media which require special measures to be taken for long term preservation.
- Records generated by teaching units – curriculum/course materials – are of interest to the Archives but require some discussion of which records best reflect the teaching efforts of the department. Please consult with the Archives concerning retention.
- Retention decisions for the majority of records will be governed by the University's retention schedules, however, records created pre-1970 may be of interest to the Archives – please consult with Archives before destroying

### 4. Issues

#### a) Electronic records

Increasingly, electronic records are becoming the primary record of transactions at the University, and further, many hard copy records are being digitized so that they may be managed in digital form. There are some clear advantages to digital records; they are easier to duplicate, to share, and do not require the expensive “real estate” which hard copy records do. Further, the ease with which such records may be searched, accessed, and edited allows large entities to manage information in a much more efficient way than in the past. However, the ability to preserve electronic records has not matched the ability to create such records. They can be fragile, easily lost, destroyed, or altered, and run the risk of obsolescence as software and hardware age and are replaced. Almost all employees create records, in multiple formats, every day. Some keep these records on hard drives, some on departmental servers, and still others print to paper. In most cases this is not standardized, and electronic records are often not managed in a systematic way. Unlike hardcopy records which have file folders and cabinets to help in their organization and management, the tools for electronic records are either not widely followed or are poorly developed.

The relatively low cost of digital records storage has led to units retaining almost all digital material created, whether it is valuable or not. This results in massive amounts of records being retained unnecessarily and is particularly noteworthy when retention decisions are made. This excessive amount of records becomes problematic for a number of reasons, most notably because there is often a difficulty ensuring that the correct version of a record can be located or identified, and also because drafts, in addition to the primary record, may be retained, and must be included in any FOI/POP request. In short, the low cost of storage, and the perception that digital records are “different” than paper records has led to excessive retention which has, in turn, made retrieval difficult, which can create an onerous burden in the event of a FOI/POP request.

Electronic records need to be retained reliably and according to a records schedule in the same way as paper records. Consideration must be given to the long term preservation of digital information due to obsolescence concerns.

The importance of records; for business, evidential, or historic reasons will dictate how records should be maintained. If records are to be retained in electronic form the unit must consider how the records may be retained reliably, securely, and with a minimal chance of corruption. All security and privacy issues must be thoroughly considered.

Particular care must be taken when disposing of electronic storage media, such as hard drives,

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tapes, CDs, DVDs, and other magnetic or optical storage media, since they may contain confidential University Records. All information on electronic storage media must be rendered unreadable before disposal.

Electronic records are slowly replacing paper records as the primary record, whether they were created electronically (born digital) or were digitized from hard copy sources. In order for the record to meet evidential requirements, the records keeper must be able to prove:

- a) authenticity of the record;
- b) integrity of the Records Management System (RMS) that a record was recorded or stored in; and
- c) that it is "a record made in the usual and ordinary course of business" or that it is otherwise exempt from the legal rule barring hearsay evidence.

Please consult with Archives if you are concerned about record keeping requirements related to electronic records.

### b) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

For a complete explanation of rights and responsibilities relating to FIPPA, please see:

<http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/foi/>

### c) Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

In the event of a disaster, there are records which can be considered as vital to business continuity, and which are essential to resume business operations. Such records will detail the rights and obligations of the University, its personnel, and students.

Records which are considered vital need to be protected from destruction by the unit responsible. This may involve off site storage as well as using physical, technical, and procedural safeguards to prevent unwanted damage or destruction.

If your unit maintains records which are unique and vital to the interests of the University, its employees or students, please consult the Archives for Business Continuation and Disaster Recovery advice.

### 5. Managing information at UBC – what you need to know

- The University Archivist, in consultation with the Office of the University Counsel, has the authority to approve the Records Retention Schedules. The Records Retention Schedules are available on the University Archives website <http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/rrsda.html>.
- The Records Retention Schedules define the length of time that specified types of records are to be retained as Active Records and as Semi-active Records, as well as their final Disposition once they become Inactive Records. Records Retention Schedules are determined based on the following considerations: federal and provincial legislative requirements; administrative and operational requirements of the University; and, the historical value of University records as determined by the University Archives.
- After University Records have been retained by the creating units for the requisite time in accordance with the Records Retention Schedules, they must either be destroyed or sent to the University Archives for permanent retention. Units wishing to transfer Permanently Valuable Records should contact the University Archives to arrange for transfer.
- Questions regarding the Disposition of University Records, including University Records not included in the Record Retention Schedules and appropriate methods of Disposition, should be forwarded to the University Archivist who, in consultation with the Office of the University Counsel, makes a final determination.
- Units must store University Records that are under their control in a secure manner. Only authorized personnel should have access to University Records; and, if appropriate, University Records should be stored in a fire and theft proof manner.
- The University is governed by requirements to restrict the storage of and access to certain types of information within Canada, including:
  - Canada Revenue Agency Guidelines require University Records containing accounting and financial information, including supporting source documents, be kept at a location inside Canada; and
  - FIPPA requires University Records containing personally identifiable information be stored and accessed only in Canada in accordance with section

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30.1 of FIPPA.

- o Units must contact the University Archivist and the Office of the University Counsel prior to entering into any arrangements for storage of University Records containing these types of information outside of Canada.
- Particular care must be taken when disposing of electronic storage media, such as hard drives, tapes, CDs, DVDs, and other magnetic or optical storage media, since they may contain confidential University Records. All information on electronic storage media must be rendered unreadable before disposal.

## 6. Glossary

Active records – are Records which are required and referred to constantly for current use, and which need to be readily accessible to users.

Archival records – Records which are considered by the University Archives to have enduring value as a historic record of the university.

Confidential Shredding - Shredding of paper which contains either identifiable personal information such as home address, phone, email, grades, SIN numbers, or other sensitive information, in a way that ensures the information is not in danger of being inappropriately released.

Destruction - means the process of eliminating or deleting Records beyond any possible reconstruction.

Disposition - means a range of processes associated with implementing Records retention, destruction, or transfer decisions which are documented in disposition authorities or other instruments.

Ephemera - Records and information which have little or no value once read, and which may be

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destroyed without consulting the Records Retention Schedules. Ephemera is not needed long term, and is, by definition, transitory or short lived. Examples include spam, non work related email, schedules, calendars, ticket stubs, postcards and other items of a transitory nature.

FIPPA - is the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, as amended from time to time.

Inactive records - are Records for which the active and semi - active retention periods have lapsed and which are no longer required to carry out the functions for which they were created. (Inactive records are often stored out of the office of creation in a records center or on offline media. They may either be destroyed when their frequency of use falls so low that they have lost all value or they may be transferred to an archival repository for permanent retention.)

Permanently Valuable Records - are those Records that because of their administrative, financial, legal, operational, cultural, social, or scientific value warrant permanent retention. Permanently Valuable Records include, but are not limited to: unit minutes and reports, budgets, records of special projects or studies, unit reviews, official correspondence of the unit head, and any surviving documentation of a unit's origins.

Preservation - means the processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic Records through time.

Record - means recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics, which the University creates, receives, or maintains in connection with the conduct of the University's affairs.

Records Management - means the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of Records.

Records Management Manual – is the source of instruction and reference for the personnel responsible for creating, receiving, preparing, processing, storing, and disposing of Records.

Records Retention Schedule - is a control document that describes Records at a series level and indicates the length of time each series should be retained as semi active prior to final Disposition: and the final Disposition of each series. This document serves as the legal authorization for the disposal of public documents. The Records Retention Schedules are available on the University Archives website

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<http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/rrsda.html>

Semi - active records - are Records that are seldom used in day-to-day operations and that are appropriate to be stored out of office. Such records may include financial records which, while not needed for the conduct of current business, may be required as evidence in the future, and are usually required to be retained for a set time period. An example of this would be taxation records.

Vital Records – Vital records are those the University deems essential for business continuity in the event of a disaster. Vital Records may include legal documents and contracts, financial records, personnel, student and other records without which the University cannot continue business. Units managing vital records should institute a vital records program to ensure the safety and security of the records under their control.

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