Policy

Definition: Records management is the process by which recorded information, regardless of format, is ushered through a multi-phased life-cycle, including initial creation; active office use; inactive storage; and eventual destruction or transfer to the University Archives for preservation and permanent retention.

Purpose: Ensure reasonable compliance with external laws and regulations regarding records disposition. Make handling of records a routine process which effectively documents the spectrum of University operations and preserves documents relevant to the history of the University. Provide professional assistance and records system control to University offices and departments so that these units may contribute to the University’s mission.

Authority

The UW-River Falls Chancellor issues this policy in accordance with the Administrative Policy process.

The Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance is responsible for the administration of this policy. To request an exception to this policy, Mailto: administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

Sanctions and Appeals Process

Failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action as provided under existing procedures applicable to students, faculty, and staff, or civil or criminal prosecution.

Procedure

Inventory: A department/unit conducts an inventory to determine what records are created and used, and what records are active or inactive. It is a complete and accurate listing of information about records including but not limited to: series title; dates; types of storage equipment; departmental function documented by the records; and physical information such as location, format, volume, etc. The inventory also allows the department/unit to evaluate records and to make recommendations for disposition.

General Schedules: UW System-wide and Wisconsin statewide records retention schedules are called general schedules. These schedules codify retention policies for record types common to all offices across campus. Rather than making each office secure its own specific retention schedule, a general records retention schedule can be used by all offices to determine retention and disposition of similar records. Departments/units should determine if records fall under pre-existing general campus- or System-wide general records schedules. If they do, skip to 5.4; if not, proceed to Step 5.3.
Records Disposition Authorization (RDA): While many of the more common administrative records will be covered by campus-wide or System schedules, departments will have records that are unique and should therefore be covered by a specific records retention authorization called a Records Disposition Authorization (RDA). RDAs are written based in large part on the information gathered in the records inventory. Wisconsin Statutes prohibit the destruction of any public records, regardless of format, without the approval of the State Public Records and Forms Board (PRB). To obtain this approval, an RDA is written by the RO using the inventory worksheets completed by the department/unit and submitted for review. When the final draft is completed, the department/unit representative signs the RDA and it is submitted to the PRB, which meets quarterly. Upon approval, the PRB signs off on the RDA and returns it to the RO, who sends a final copy with all signatures to the originating office.

Disposition: Records are either destroyed or legal custody is transferred to another agency, such as the University Archives. In effect, the RDA is a legal agreement between the University and the PRB that a given records series will be retained for at least a certain number of years and then disposition will be handled in a certain manner. RDAs are subject to amendment and change by the same process used for initial creation.

University Responsibilities
The Chancellor shall designate a public records and forms officer. The Records Officer (RO) shall develop and maintain a records management program in compliance with Wisconsin statutes and UW System policies governing public records, regardless of format; provide records management training and assistance to University employees; provide special assistance to UW System legal counsel upon request; and collaborate with information technology professionals at the university and System levels in developing and maintaining systems that manage electronic public records in compliance with state and federal requirements.

The records management program shall facilitate the disposal of records determined not to be of permanent value. It shall also provide for the preservation of those records deemed to have permanent legal, fiscal, administrative, research, or historical value. In making these designations, the RO may consult University employees from other professional fields, including but not limited to: business officers, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Department/Unit Responsibilities
The University Archives shall be responsible for the administration of inventorying, scheduling, and disposition of records, regardless of format. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Advising and assisting departments and units in conducting records inventories and establishing records retention schedules.
2. Developing priorities for records management program expansion to all University departments and units.
3. Working with University administrative offices, UW System Administration and other offices and departments as appropriate to establish disposition schedules for University records.
4. Serving as University liaison with the State Public Records and Forms Board.

Links in PDFs don’t always function. Please copy and paste URL in a new browser tab to visit the web page Records Management Program Policy, Page 2
5. Administering the University Archives of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

**Background**

   - [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/16/III/61](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/16/III/61)
   - [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1997/statutes/statutes/16/III/62](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1997/statutes/statutes/16/III/62)
2. System Policies ([https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/))
4. Past Practice

**Contact**

To direct questions about this policy, Mailto: [administrative-policy@uwrf.edu](mailto:administrative-policy@uwrf.edu).