



Effective: 02/1/2020
Last Revised: 10/1/2019

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Records Retention

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Scope

This policy applies to all offices of the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents of the University are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed by the University or are of no value are discarded at the proper time following the designated procedure. This Policy represents the University's formal policy regarding the retention and disposal of documents and official records related to and generated in the course of University operations. Records retention policies are one of several good governance policies.

Policy Statement

The University of Nebraska Records Retention Schedules account for the management and disposition of University records. Records shall be disposed of and/or preserved as set forth in the University Records Retention Schedules in accordance with applicable law. The retention period for University records shall depend upon their administrative, legal, fiscal, and/or historical value. University Records Retention Schedules set for

minimum standards for retention. When appropriate, particular records may be retained for a period longer than the mandatory period stated in the retention schedule. University records subject to the requirements of a preservation notice must be retained until the notice is terminated.

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska to preserve University records or materials that (a) may be relevant to pending or anticipated litigation involving the University, or (b) may be relevant to an audit or investigation conducted by a state, federal or other regulatory agency, or (c) are subject to a subpoena, warrant, or national security letter served upon the University.

Executive Memorandum No. 29 issued from the Office of the President outlines records management and procedures for issuance of preservation notices.

Reason for Policy

Records management activities shall include compliance with the Nebraska Records Management Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1201 through 84-1226) and other state and federal laws concerning the management of records, regardless of physical form or characteristic.

Procedures

The University generates many records that the University is required, by law, to maintain. Some records are needed to: continue critical University operations; document programs, contracts, expenses, etc.; and provide legal evidence. Although the University is not required to permanently retain all records, the University's retention schedule will dictate when records can be disposed.

The Records Officer for the University of Nebraska at Kearney is Jane Sheldon.

[Retention Schedules](#)

Forms of Records (Physical/Electronic)

- **Electronic Records**

Unlike physical records, management of electronic (i.e., digital) records requires a computer, server, or other digital storage equipment. Particular concerns exist about digital preservation—the ability to retain and be able to access and read electronic records over time as technologies change. With electronic records, technical expertise is needed to assure that the content, context and structure of records is preserved and protected.

The electronic version of physical records need to be accessible for the length of the retention period. There must be a backup of the electronic record that is kept at a

separate location. For example, if the electronic records are saved to shared network drives, this requirement is met because of the backups taken of the shared networks. The sole electronic version should not be kept on the hard drive of an individual's desktop or laptop.

- **Email**

Work related electronic mail created and received by University employees during the course of business are University records. Electronic mail is identical to regular postal mail that must be sorted based on content according to the University Records Retention Schedules.

- **Paper**

Paper records must be stored in such a way that they are both sufficiently accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. Vital records needed for disaster recovery may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, flood, earthquakes, tornado, etc.

Storage of Records

Records are stored because they may need to be retrieved at some point. Therefore, stored records must be protected from physical harm or loss, organized, and indexed so they are available for retrieval. House all records appropriately based on their size, format, and composition. Provide a mechanism for organizing and maintaining records that can be easily and safely handled. Factors that are considered when designing the type of storage used include the optimum method of accessing, storing, and using the records and stability of all component storage materials.

Disaster Record (Continuity of Operation) Plan

As part of a department's disaster recovery plan, a records management policy should provide a series of detailed actions if a disaster should occur at the storage locations of the records. Include the response procedures for multiple types of disasters. The goal of the plan should be to have the access to the records in the least amount of time.

Department Records

Departments can retain file copies of documentation on site for a convenient length of time when deemed appropriate for the department's timely reference. Original documentation that must be maintained in the department is subject to periodic review by the Division of Business and Finance to ensure that the documentation is being preserved in compliance with the University's Records Retention Schedules. The retention of this documentation must follow the Records Retention Schedule.

If records are not scanned and retained in centralized systems or otherwise retained electronically according to the Durable Medium Definition developed by the Nebraska Secretary of State, original copies of the documents must be maintained by the University

department. For additional information regarding the Durable Medium Definition, please see <https://sos.nebraska.gov/records-management/durablemedium.html>

Disposition of Records

The disposition of a retained record refers to what is done with the record at the end of its “life cycle”, in accordance with the Records Retention Schedule, may involve storing the record in its current location, transferring it to another location, or destroying the record. Before records can be disposed, a Disposition Report should be completed with the Nebraska Secretary of State.

Steps to Record Destruction

- ✓ Review the Records Retention Schedule
- ✓ Any records which you are the custodian of should be destroyed following the Records Retention Schedule and completing the Records Disposition Report.
- ✓ If a department chooses to destroy their own records, the University recommends utilizing a cross-cut or micro-cut shredders.
- ✓ Contact UNK Records Officer to obtain current vendors who can assist in destroying records for a one time or routine arrangement.
- ✓ Any documents with personal identifying information should be destroyed using the methods above.
- ✓ Complete the Disposition Report
 - The online form can be found at https://appengine.egov.com/apps/ne/sos_records_disposition_report
 - In the Agency field, type Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, in the Division field, type University of Nebraska at Kearney, (Add UNK department name)

Definitions

Terms, defined Nebraska Revised Statute 84-1202

Electronic Information and Services: Any data, information, or service that is created, generated, collected, maintained, or distributed in electronic form by the University through transactions with individuals, businesses and other entities by means of electronic access.

Public Records: All records and documents regardless of physical form, of or belonging to the University except when any other statute expressly provides that particular information or records shall not be made public. Data which is a public record in its original form shall remain a public record when maintained in computer files.

Record: Any book, document, paper, photograph, microfilm, sound recording, magnetic storage medium, optical storage medium, or other material regardless of physical form or

characteristics created or received pursuant to law, charter, or ordinance or in connection with any other activity relating to or having an effect upon the transaction of public business.

Records Management Act: Nebraska Revised Statute Sections 84-1201 to 84-1227

Retention Schedules: List of records that determines length a record is retained and provides the final disposition requirements.

Additional Contacts

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
Records Retention	Records Officer	308 865 8427	sheldonj@unk.edu

Forms

[Disposition Report \(Online\)](#)

Related Information

[Executive Memorandum No. 16 Policy for Responsible Use of University Computers and Information Systems](#)

[Executive Memorandum No. 29 Records Management and Procedure for Issuance of Preservation Notices](#)

[University of Nebraska Board of Regents Schedule - 170](#)

History

Replaces current policy dated October 1, 2019