

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Record Retention Guide

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Guide to Retention of Business Records

A well-defined record retention program is an important part of Western Michigan University's record keeping system. The following list details some factors the University considers when retaining records.

Federal and state tax laws • It is not uncommon for retention of the same information and/or documents to be required by more than one governmental agency for different periods of time. Those records that have more than one retention period should be kept for the longest period to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

Other government regulations • When there is no legal requirement for the retention of records, the retention policy should be reasonable and developed in good faith. For example, the Federal Paperwork Reduction Act of 1990 adopts a maximum 3-year retention period for any records other than tax, medical, or health.

Statutes of limitation on litigation that may affect your business • Consider statutes of limitation when decisions are made over the length of time particular records are retained. A systematic record retention and destruction program will reduce both litigation costs and exposure to liability. A general guideline would be six years.

The general needs of your business for information retrieval • In a centralized filing system, record maintenance, retention, and destruction are appropriate for documents used by more than one person. Decentralized filing systems are appropriate for documents not needed by more than one person.

E-mail and freedom of information • E-mail messages, both those stored in the computer and those printed out, should not be considered private. E-mail messages may be considered public records pursuant to Michigan and federal law and may be subject to disclosure. If there is no official University business reason to keep, store, or print an e-mail message, it should be disposed of promptly.

Note • Notwithstanding the above, if you encounter a situation that has the potential of resulting claims or litigation against the University, you should retain any and all records that would support the University's position for as long as that potential exists. If you have any questions about how long to retain a record in such an instance, contact the Office of the General Counsel.

Western Michigan University Archives Records Transfer/Disposal Request Form • This Record Retention Program is an ongoing process in which records will periodically be reviewed and updated. Therefore, the form [attached to the end of this document](#) should be submitted to Business Services for any of the following reasons:

1. if any department needs to include records in this document
2. if any department needs to have their record retention periods reviewed
3. if any department needs to eliminate records not addressed in this document

Accounting

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Accounting & Operating Reports	P
Bank Statements and Reconciliation	3
Chart of Accounts	Act
Description of Accounting System	P
Final Close Entries	P
Financial Statements – End-of-year (Other Months Optional)	P
General Ledgers	4
Journal Entries	

*Act = while active, employed, or enrolled; Life= life of affected employee; P= permanent

Accounts Payable

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Accounts Payable Ledgers	4
Expense Reports	Act + 3
Check Registers	4
Correspondence (routine) with Customers and Vendors	1
Insurance Payments	4
Invoices	Act + 3
Payment Disbursement Records	4
Petty Cash Vouchers	Act + 3
Royalty Payments	Act + 3
Independent Contractor Contracts	4
1099's	4
Procurement Card Logs	3

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Accounts Receivable and Cashiering

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Accounts Receivable	4
Accounts Receivable Ledgers	4
Collection Records	Act
Correspondence (routine) with Customers and Vendors	1
Duplicate Deposit Slips, Cashiering Receipts	3
Invoices	3
Trial Balances	7
Uncollected Accounts	4

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Admissions

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Acceptance Letters (students who do not enter)	2 years after application term
Applications(students who do not enter)	2 years after application term
Applicant Statistics(students who do not enter)	P
Correspondence(students who do not enter)	2 years after application term
Transcripts(students who do not enter)	2 years after application term
Exams (ACT, SAT(students who do not enter)	2

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Affirmative Action

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Applicant Flow Report	1 year (plus current year)
EEO-6 Reports	3
Probationary Status Minority C/Ts Report	2

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Associate Vice President for Business and Finance

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Contracts & Leases (Current – Other Than Research)	P
Contracts & Leases (Expired – Other Than Research)	4
Form 990	3
Form 990-T	3
Tax Returns & Property Worksheets, Revenue Agents' Reports, and Documents Relating to Determination of Tax Liability	P
Residency Applications	4

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Audio Production Services

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Videotapes	3

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Board of Trustees

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Articles of Incorporation	P
By-laws	P
Policy Statements	Act

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Budget Office

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Budget Adjustments - Permanent	P
Budget Adjustments - One-time	2
Position Authorizations - UCCS	P
Position Authorizations - Faculty	P
Booking Budgets/Personnel Listings (All Funds)	P
Payroll Reimbursements – Grants and Contracts	4
Budget Request	4
Cost-Study Analysis	4

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Business Services

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Insurance Policies and Records	P
Insurance Claims	7

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Campus Planning

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Project Planning Records	10

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Collective Bargaining and Contract Administration

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Faculty & Staff - Grievance Records	P
Faculty & Staff - Arbitration Records	P
Faculty & Staff - Past Negotiation Records	P

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Development Office/WMU Foundation

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Files on Contributors to the University	Lifetime Cumulative + 10 years detail

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Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Committee to Review the President's Statement On Racial and Ethnic Harmony	2-3
Search Committee Files	2-3

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EduCABLE

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
TV Networks	1
Bulletin Board Announcement Forms	1
Monthly Reports	P
Public File on "Must Carry Retransmission Consent Forms" with Broadcast Stations	P

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Employee Assistance Program

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Files on Anyone Who Uses This Service_	1

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Financial Aid

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Applications	5
Financial Aid Awards	5
Lender's Name and Address	5
Job Placement	5
Repayment History	5

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General Counsel

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Attorney Opinion Letters (Property)	Act + 4
Charter	P
Claims	Act
Court Documents and Records	Act
Deposition Transcripts	Act
Discovery Materials	Act
FOI Requests	P
Litigation Files	Act + 2

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Graduate College

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Information on Master's Theses, Specialist Projects, and Doctoral Dissertations Completed	P
Cumulative List of Doctorates Awarded by WMU (Divided by Program)	P
Approved Graduate Faculty Forms for All Faculty	5
Signed Request Forms, Accompanying Curricular Proposals for All Graduate Courses, Graduate Course Changes, Graduate Programs, Graduate Program Changes	P
Appointment Forms For All Graduate Students With Assistantship or Fellowship Appointments	2 + current
General, But Inclusive, Database On Graduate Students on Appointment	2 + current

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Grants and Contracts

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Grants and Contracts	Act + 3
If the University's period for retaining records is less than the required period of a grant or contract, it is the responsibility of the department to retain pertinent documentation on individual projects. Specific contract or grant regulations should be followed if the requirement is more than 3 years.	
The Grants & Contracts Office is responsible for retaining (1) the official contract files, including the original award and any amendments, required sponsor approvals, and subcontracts; and (2) the official accounting records, including financial transactions, reports, and invoices.	
In the event that any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the end of the specified retention period, the documentation must be retained until all issues have been resolved.	

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Human Resources

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Advertisements	2

AFSCME Monthly Activity Report	2
AFSCME Seasonal Layoff Data	1 year (plus current year)
AFSCME Seniority Reports	1 year (plus current year)
Annual Report	2
Applicant Flow Log	1
Apprenticeship Documents (duration of apprenticeship)	4
Bid Sheets	
Position Activity Record	
Requisition	
Testing Results	
Bid Sheets	2 years (plus current year)
CCH Information	2 years (plus current month)
Background Investigations	Act + 1
Employment Applications/Employment Listings	
Job Announcements and Advertisements	1
Individual Applicants Who are not Hired	
Background Investigation Results	2
Employment Applications/Resumés	2
Employee File After Termination	P
Exit Interview Report	2
Employee Files	
Appointment & Transaction Forms	P
Beneficiary Designation	P
Benefit & Retirement Plan Elective Forms	P
Benefit Documents	P
Court Ordered Service Documents	P
Disciplinary Warnings & Actions/AFSCME Reprimands	P
Emergency Contacts	P
Employee Accident & Injury Report	P
Employment Applications/Resumés	P
Employee Evaluations/Performance Appraisals	P
Employee Personal Information Forms	P
Exit Interview Checklist	P
Garnishment, Wages, Assignments, & Tax Levies	P
I-9 Forms	3 yrs after date of hire OR 1 yr after the date of employment ends, whichever is later
Layoff or Termination Notice	P
Letters of Appointment	P
Letters of Promotion, Faculty	P
Letters of Recommendation	P
Letters of Tenure, Faculty	P
LOA Documents	P
Orientation Checklist	P
Pay Notices	P
Personnel Actions	P

P006s	P
Receipt for Employee Handbook	P
Tuition Remission Documents	P
Written Verification of Employment	P
General Files	
Superseded Employee Manuals	10
Superseded Job Descriptions	10
Position Activity Records	2 years (plus current year)
Requisitions for Employment	2 years (plus current year)
Requisition Log (formerly "Western News Log")	2 years (plus current year)
Temporary, Transfer, and Unfilled Requisitions	2 years (plus current year)
Western News Memos	1

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Intercollegiate Athletics

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Expired Licenses	6
Financial Aid	6
Institutional Recruiting Documentation	6
Licenses & Permits	P
Playing/Practice Season Documentation	6
Student Athlete Registration Forms	6
Student Athlete Training Files	7
Summer Camps/Clinics Documentation	6
Trademark Registrations	P
Other NCAA Documents	6

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Internal Audit

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Audit Reports of Public Accountants	P
Internal Audit Reports	P
Internal Audit Working Papers	7

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Lawson Ice Arena Office

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Rental Records	4
Schedules	4

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Lee Honors College

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Files of Students Who Are Denied	2
Files of Students Who Graduate From the Honors College	P
Advising Forms -Lee Honors College	5 years after the student graduates
Advising Forms - General College	5 years after the student graduates
Awards for Travel and Research	5

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Miller Auditorium

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Box Office Reports/Performance Files	7

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Office of Endowment/Investment Management

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Capital Stock & Bond Records (Ledgers, Transfer Registers)	3
Donor Declaration of Intention	P
Life Income and Annuity Agreement	Act

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Office of Planning and Institutional Research

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Analytical Studies Committee (notes, reports)	5
College Data Exchange (data sharing agreement among Michigan colleges and universities)	5
Cost Study Database (electronic)	5
Data Sharing – Michigan Enrollments By County	5
Faculty Database (electronic files)	5
Grade Statistics	P
High School Reporting (as required by the state of Michigan)	5
IPEDS (WMU reports to IPEDS)	5
Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan Reports (tuition and fees, enrollment)	5
Responses to Guide Book Surveys	5
University Fact Book	25

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Ombudsperson

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Case Sheets	2

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Payroll

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Employee Time Sheets/Time Cards	3
Employment Tax Returns	7
Garnishments	Act
Payroll Deductions	Act or 3
Payroll Journals Summary for Calendar Year	7
W-4 Form	Act or 3
W-2 Form	Act or 3
I-9 Form	3 yrs after date of hire OR 1 yr after the date of employment ends, whichever is later

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Physical Plant/Campus Facility Development

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Automobile Logs	4
Blueprints & Plans	P
Building Permits	Act + 1
Building Plans & Specifications	P
Laboratory Practices	Act
Maintenance Records	Act
Motor Vehicle Records	Act + 1
Office Layouts	Act
Zoning Permits	Act
Work Orders	4
Project Related Files	4 years after the completion date

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Plant Accounting

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Depreciation Schedules	4
Equipment Inventory	Act
Mortgage Records	4
Physical Inventory Tags	3
Property Improvement Records	4
Property Records/Inventory	4
Sales	4

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Provost's Office/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Faculty Correspondence	P
Faculty Course Evaluation Forms	P
Faculty Committee Evaluation Reports	P
Faculty Peer Review Documents	P
Faculty Scholastic Achievement	P
Faculty Tenure Records	P

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Public Safety/Environmental Safety and Emergency Management

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Accident Reports	7
Air or Water Waste Emissions	3
Annual PCB Log	3 years past disposal
Asbestos Training Records	1 past last day of employment
Audiometric Exams	Duration of employment
Bloodborne Pathogen Training Records	3 years past training
Campus Crime Reports (Annual)	P
Campus Crime Reports (Interim)	2
Clean-up Records for PCB Spills	5
Confined Space Entry Permits	1
Crane Inspection Reports	2
Employee Exposure Records	Act + 30
Employee Medical Complaints	Act + 30
Hazardous Chemical Waste Records	3
Inorganic/Arsenic/Lead/Acrylonitrile Medical and Exposure Records of employment	40 years or 20+ years
Laboratory Practices	Act
Manlift Inspection Logs	Act
Mechanical Power Press Inspection Records	Last 2 inspections
PCB Transfer Maintenance Records	3 years after ceasing use
Personal Protective Equipment Hazard Assessment and Training Logs	Act
Radiation Disposal Records, Monitoring Records, Radiation Survey Records	P
Sling Testing Reports	Act
Traffic Accident Reports	P

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Purchasing

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Correspondence (routine) with Customers and Vendors	1
Purchase Orders (Purchasing/Receiving/University Stores)	4
Purchase Requisitions	2
Receiving Documents	4
Vendor Bidding Documents	4
Postal Records	4
Delivery Unit Records	2
University Stores Requisitions (customer supply orders)	4
Procurement Card Logs	3

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Registrar/Records

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Acceptance Letters	7 years after date of last attendance
Academic Records	P
Advanced Placement	7 years after date of last attendance
Applications	7 years after date of last attendance
Application for Graduation	7 years after date of last attendance
Class Schedules	P
Correspondence	7 years after date of last attendance
Course Drop/Add Slips	3
Date of Graduation and Degree Award	P
Degree Audit Records	7 years after date of last attendance
Degree Statistics	P
Disciplinary Files	7
Enrollment Statistics	P
Entrance Exams & Placement Scores	7 years after date of last attendance
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	Life
Graduate Student Records Folders	Act & Inactive for 2 years
Letters of Recommendation	7
Name Change Authorizations	7 years after date of last attendance
Personal Data Forms	1 year after date of last attendance
Racial/Ethnic Statistics	P
Transcript Requests	1
Transfer Credit Evaluations	Permanent if accepted/ Destroy if not accepted

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Residence Hall

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Residence Hall Student Files	3
Contract Cards	3

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Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Minutes of Board of Trustees Meetings	P
Minutes of Board of Trustees Committee Meetings	P

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Sindecuse Health Center

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Medical Records	7 years after last visit
Pre-Employment Physicals of Applicants Not Hired	7 years after last visit
Pre-Employment Testing	30
Workers' Compensation Records	30

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Student Employment Referral Service

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Evaluations	3
Applications for Student Positions, Hired	7 years after termination of employment
Applications for Student Positions, Not Hired	2
Copies of Payroll Card	1
Staff I-9's (kept by hiring department)	3 years after date of hire or 1 year after the date employment ends
Payrolls (for Audits, Employment Verifications)	3
Automatic Interest	3
Resumés for Interns	1
Over-Hours List	3
Non-enrolled List	3
Students Sheets for CWS	3-5
Off-campus Contracts	3

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Student Life

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Keystone Leadership Documents	3
Registered Student Organizations	P
Sponsored Events – Bronco Bash, For Freshmen Only Homecoming	3
WIDR	P

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Telecommunications

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Financial Reports	4
Student Billing Totals	4
Student Transactions	4

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Unified Clinics

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
University Substance Abuse Clinic	7
Speech and Audiology	3
Occupational Therapy Records	7
Vision Testing Records	10

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University Bookstore

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Purchase of Products	7-8
Cash Register Tapes	1-2 months
Student Records	4

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University Counseling and Testing Center

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Clinical Counseling Records	7 years from last date of service
Test Results Data	2 years from date of administration

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University Libraries

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Archives & Regional History Accession Records, Correspondence, Staff Minutes, Sign-In, Phone Logs, Returned Loan Items, Personnel Files	P
Circulation Statistics (# of items checked in/out)	P
Daily Record of Overdue Fines Paid Per Day	P
Entry/Exit Gate Count	P
IPEDS Statistics, Library Associations Statistics	P
Number of Items Shelved, In-House Usage, Periodicals, Books	P

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University Recreation Programs and Facilities

Document Name	Retention Period In years*
Rental Contracts	4
Membership Forms	4

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Vice President for Research

Copyrights	P
Licenses and Permits	P
Patent & Trademark Records	Act + 6
Royalty Records	7
Trademark Registrations	P
Investigator Significant Financial Disclosure	Act + 4
Allegations of Scientific Misconduct	3 years after completion of the case
Human Subjects Institutional Review Board	3 years from expiration of protocol approval
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee	3 years from expiration of protocol approval
Institutional Biosafety Committee	3 years from expiration of protocol approval

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Date: _____

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
RECORDS TRANSFER/DISPOSAL REQUEST

Submit this form to the Archives and retain a copy for your files.

_____ REQUESTS THAT THE FOLLOWING RECORDS BE:
(Department or Office)

- A. Destroyed
- B. Retained at the discretion of the University Archivist
- C. Retained for _____ years within the Departmental File
- D. Retained permanently

(Signature of Department Head/Director)

Please list or describe records and inclusive dates below:

(Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Approved:

(Director, Archives and Regional History Collections) (Date)

(Manager, Business Services) (Date)