

# **SLCC Records Retention Guidance Document**

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## The Laws

There are two Utah laws that primarily govern how government records are handled and how the public can access them. The [Division of Archives and Records Service and Management of Government Records \(MGR\)](#) addresses how records are to be kept and responsibilities of governmental entities. The [Government Records Access Management Act \(GRAMA\)](#) dictates how the public can access a governmental entity's records and which records they can have access to.

## Roles & Responsibilities

MGR establishes defined roles for records management. The size of the records management team can vary depending on the needs of the governmental entity but must have a Chief Administrator Officer and Appointed Records Officer leading the team.

### Chief Administrator Officer (CAO)

The SLCC Chief Administrator Officer is responsible for the following:

- Appointing one or more records officers.
- Making determinations and responding to appeals of denials to records requests (may be handled by an appointed delegate of the CAO).
- SLCC's designated Chief Administrative Officer is the Vice President of Government & Community Relations.

### Appointed Records Officer (ARO)

The SLCC Records Officer is responsible for the following:

- Responding to GRAMA requests.
- Working with the State Archives to establish and update College records classifications and retention schedules.
- Providing records management training to department records custodians.
- Coordinating the review and transfer of records to the College's archives.
- Coordinating the review and transfer of College records to the State Records Center or State Archives.

### Records Custodians

SLCC appoints Records Custodians to assist with the records management procedure. Records Custodians are the individuals in the department who coordinate the records process. They are responsible for the following:

- Understanding and inventorying the types of records within their department.
- Implementing the department's records management practices.
- Ensuring identified records are transferred to the appropriate records repository.
- Training departmental staff on records retention and practices.
- Consulting with the College's Records Officer on matters related to the retention and disposition of records.
- Disposing of the records and maintaining a departmental destruction/disposition log.

## Department Responsibilities

SLCC departments are responsible for maintaining their records in an accurate and efficient manner.

Each department is responsible for:

- Maintaining a Records Custodian.
- Creating records that accurately document their core activities and functions.
- Maintaining all records in a safe, stable, and secure manner.
- Ensuring that records are accurate and retrievable in a timely manner.
  - Developing a filing and classification system for the records.
  - Keeping the records in an accessible format for the length of their retention period.
- Protecting records from unintended access.
  - Ensuring records are properly classified as private, controlled, or protected (as applicable).
  - Maintaining the confidentiality of records that are private, controlled, or protected.
- If identified as the repository of the official copy of a record:
  - Providing records to the College's Records Officer for GRAMA requests.
  - Coordinating with the College's Records Officer on storage options for records and transferring records to the State Archives or State Retention Center.

### What is the Official Copy?

The official copy of a record is either the original record or a copy of the record maintained by the government entity according to the approved retention schedule. Under PRMA, the government entity must maintain, at a minimum, an official copy of the records it creates.

### Determining which department holds the official copies.

Every department creates documents and records in the course of their work. Some departments create the same records for certain functions. While the departments are the creators of these records, they may not be the repository of the official copy of the record. The department that oversees the underlying operation or function is the repository for the record. For example, many departments use p-cards for expenses. P-card packets are created to report the transactions to the Purchasing Office. While the departments may create the packets, the Purchasing Office is ultimately the repository of those records because they oversee purchasing for the College and maintaining the records related to that function. Contact the College's Records Officer if you need help determining which department is the repository of the official copy of a record.

### Does that mean my department doesn't need to create or track certain records if we're not the repository of the official records?

Not necessarily. Good records management is a balancing act. The governmental entity must create and maintain records that document the functions and activities of the entity. This is weighed against creating unnecessary and/or duplicate records. You still need to create records that document the operations and functions of your department, but you may not need to retain a copy of the records once they have been transferred to the department maintaining the official copy. However, it is important to keep a log of what records you create and how those records are handled.

A [sample records log](#) can be found on the Utah Division of Archives and Records Service website.

Can the College Archives serve as the official repository for my records?

No, the College Archives cannot serve as the official repository for your department's records. The College Archives retains records with historical value to the College. The Archives is not intended to serve as the storage facility for College records in general. Records maintenance and storage are the responsibility of the departments and the identified records repositories.

## Records & Retention

### Determining the Retention Schedule & Records Classification

The Utah State Archives determines how long each type of record must be retained by governmental entities. These retention schedules provide a description of the records they apply to, the retention period, how to dispose of the records, and their value to the state or entity. General Retention Schedules (GRS) are available from the State Archives for commonly encountered records like emails, certain reports, meeting minutes, etc. If a governmental entity has unique records that are not covered by an existing GRS, the Records Officer for that entity can work with the State Archives to establish a retention schedule for that specific series of records. Contact the College's Records Officer if you determine that your series of records may need a specialized schedule.

Information in government records is considered public information unless it is restricted under the law. GRAMA provides explicit definitions for what information qualifies as private, controlled, or protected. Records can likewise be classified as private, controlled, or protected depending on the information they contain. Contact the College's Records Officer if you need assistance determining the classification status of your records.

### Records Format

The term record applies to information retained in various formats. The physical characteristics do not matter so long as all the information in the original is reproducible by photocopying or other means. The record must also be prepared, owned, received, or retained by a government entity. Lastly, the information must pertain to the entity's business or functions to be considered a record.

### Changing Formats: Hard Copy to Electronic

Records can be converted to other formats for multiple reasons including, but not limited to, ensuring continued access to the information, making additional copies of the record, adopting a more efficient storage system, etc. The converted copy of the record must retain all the same information and be of similar (or better) quality than the original copy. Not every record will be a good candidate for changing formats. It's important to conduct an evaluation of your records prior to converting them.

Once you have assessed your records and determined if the records are going to be converted to a new format, you will need to determine where the records are going to be stored. The College offers several options depending on your situation and needs. For more information on what options the College offers for electronic records, contact OIT.

See the templates sections for a [records conversion evaluation](#).

### What is metadata?

Metadata simply means the information that describes the record and its contents. It's not the data contained in the record, but the data about the data. When converting records, you will need to

maintain the metadata of the original record. This includes things like who created the record, the original format of the record, the original date the record was created, etc. For electronic records, most of this information is contained in the “properties” of the file.

Like electronic records, physical records also have metadata. For example, the metadata for a photograph may include things like the size and dimensions of the photo, the type of film and/or camera used, if the photo is a color photo or black and white, the date the photo was taken, who took the photo, a description of the contents of the photo, etc.

### Electronic Records

Electronic records can be records converted from a hard copy of a record or a record that exists only in a digital format (called “born digital”). Several records that the College used to maintain physical copies of have switched to digital-only format. This includes HR forms, contract request forms, p-card packets, etc. Once the record format changes to the digital format, only the electronic version of the record needs to be maintained for records created after the transition.

If the electronic records are stored in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party database or system, then the department using that product will need to ensure that the data and records can be extracted from that system (called an exit strategy).

### Records Storage and Disposition

Records can be stored in physical or electronic format. The department that is maintaining those records will decide which format works best for them. Some records are retained permanently and may be transferred to the State Archives according to the disposition plan in the retention schedule. Once records are transferred to the State Archives, they become the property of the state.

Another option is utilizing the State Retention Center (SRC) at their Clearfield facility. It is a useful option for records with long retention schedules. For example, personnel files are retained for 65 years after the date of employment or 3 years after the retirement or death of the employee. The retention schedule says that the College must retain the records for at least 1 year on site but may transfer the records to the SRC for the remaining years of the retention period. The SRC will also manage the final disposition for the records in their possession. They will contact the Records Officer when the records reach the end of their retention period. Contact the College’s Records Officer if you are interested in utilizing the SRC.

Disposition refers to how the records are disposed of once they reach the end of their retention period. Records can be disposed of by destroying them, transferring them to the State Archives or SRC, or donating the records to the College Archives. The State Archives will specify which records they will take ownership of from the government entity. Contact the College’s Archivist if your department would like to consider donating records to the College’s archives.

See the templates section for a [disposition log sample](#).

### Requesting Records from the State Archives or Records Center

Records sent to the SRC can be requested or recalled by the government entity and are usually delivered within 1-2 business days. The College’s Records Officer maintains information on the records housed at the SRC. If you need records from the SRC, contact the College’s Records Officer.

Records sent to the State Archives are handled differently. These records cannot be returned to the College and are only available through the State Archives. It's recommended that the person who needs a record from the State Archives contact them directly. When contacting the State Archives, email them at: [archivesreference@utah.gov](mailto:archivesreference@utah.gov). You'll need to provide the following information:

- Your name
- The records you want to view/get a copy of
- Whether you are the subject of the record
- Series number
- Date range for the records you are looking for

#### Why aren't records at the State Archives College records anymore?

The records sent by a governmental entity to the State Archives are typically permanent records of the State that have reached the end of the retention period that the governmental entity must retain them. Since they are State records, the State Archives takes ownership of the records to retain them permanently. The College may have created the records, but the State Archives becomes the final custodian/repository of the records.

#### What is a Series and how do I find the number?

A series is a group of records that relate to each other in terms of what they are documenting. A series can include various records that comprise things like employee personnel files, student academic records, etc. Each series gets assigned a series number that is used when requesting records included in the particular series. For assistance identifying the records series and number, contact the College's Records Officer.

#### Should an additional copy of this record be made?

The MGR does not prohibit a government entity from making additional copies of their records. In general, departments are discouraged from creating duplicate records because of personal preference or because the department has traditionally retained a copy of the record. The department wanting the additional copy should carefully consider whether an extra copy is needed for their business purposes or not.

See the templates section for an [additional copy evaluation](#).

#### Email Retention

Emails can be somewhat complicated to handle as multiple retention schedules apply to emails depending on their content, who authored them, and their attachments. Retention periods can vary from until the issue is resolved to permanently.

#### Executive Correspondence

This refers to incoming and outgoing business-related emails that provide unique information relating to the College's function, policies, procedures, or programs. These emails document decisions that executives make regarding the College's interests. Executives includes the College President and other internal administrators identified by the executive office.

These emails are permanent records. They are retained by the College for 5 years then transferred to the State Archives for permanent storage.



### Program and Policy Development Records

This refers to program and policy emails sent and received by executive decisions-makers to document and disseminate the College's programs, policies, and procedures.

These emails are permanent records. They are retained by the College for 3 years then transferred to the State Archives for permanent storage.

### State Government Routine Administrative Correspondence

This refers to emails sent or received in administering the College's functions and programs. These emails document the work accomplished, transactions made, and actions taken. They do not include the creation of functions, programs, or policies.

These emails are retained for 7 years then destroyed.

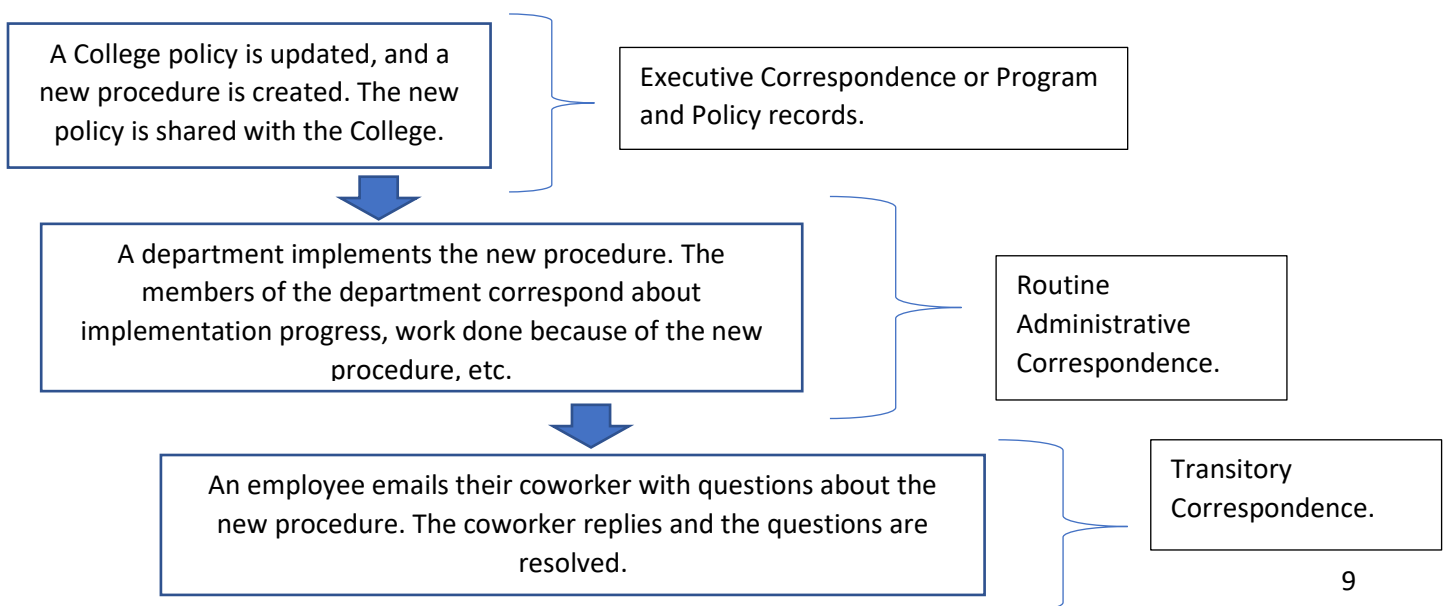
### Transitory Correspondence

This refers to emails sent or received that relate to matters of short-term interest to the College. These emails do not impact the functions of the College. Most emails will fall into this category.

These emails are only retained until the matter in the email is resolved then they are destroyed.

Examples include:

- Routine Administrative Correspondence
  - Correspondence around a hiring committee (excluding the actual offer to a candidate).
  - Emails related to gathering records for a GRAMA request.
  - Emails to specific employees to complete required training. (Note: This could be considered routine administrative correspondence for the sender, but transitory correspondence for the recipient.)
- Transitory Correspondence
  - Emails scheduling a meeting.
  - Emails with questions about a work task.
  - Emails modifying/sharing a schedule.
  - Reminder emails.



### Correspondence that is not a record

Some correspondence received via email is not considered a record and may be deleted at any time. This includes junk mail, commercial publications, and personal correspondence.

### Attachments and other information

Attachments may require longer retention than the email they came with, depending on their contents. Attachments and emails should be considered as separate records when determining how long to retain each of them. If an attachment falls under a different retention schedule to the email, download it, save it, and retain it based on the appropriate retention schedule.

Emails that are part of an investigation or audit, pending GRAMA request, or litigation hold are retained until the issue is resolved.

### Email Management & Suggested Best Practices

Regular email maintenance can make records retention more efficient and manageable. Some suggested best practices include:

- Regularly delete correspondence that is not a record.
- For emails that are considered a record, tag the emails, or move the emails to specific folders based on their retention schedules.
- Set a consistent schedule for reviewing emails and deleting them. This includes the inbox and sent folder.
- Emails not identified in an existing general retention schedule are retained for seven years.
- Avoid using business email accounts for personal correspondence. Likewise, try to avoid using personal email accounts for business purposes. Emails are considered records if they relate to the business of the government entity regardless of which account they are associated with.

See the College's [Acceptable Use of College Computing Resources Policy](#) and [Employee Conduct Policy](#) for more specific guidance on acceptable use of the College's email system.

# Templates

## Records Conversion Evaluation

- Volume
  - How many records will be converted?
  - Is the volume of physical records too large for physical storage to be sustainable?
- Convenience
  - Do the records need to be on hand for an employee/department?
  - Is retrieval time a factor? I.E.: Being able to quickly retrieve the record is important.
  - Is storing the records at the SRC an option? Would it cause delays or undue challenges if the records are stored off site instead of converted?
- Retention
  - Do the records have a long retention period?
  - Will long term storage become an issue?
- Longevity of the Original Record
  - How old is the original record?
  - Has the data in the record already started to degrade?
  - Will the data degrade overtime? (E.G.: regular CDs/DVDs typically only last 5-10 years before the data degrades.)
- Maintenance/Storage
  - Who will manage the records?
  - Who will perform the conversion of the records?
  - Where will the records be stored?
- Condition/Preparation
  - Are the records in good enough condition that they can be converted to a different format?
  - Do you have the technology/equipment to convert the records?
  - How will the metadata of the item be preserved?
  - What standards and workflows will be used to convert the records?

## Extra Copies Evaluation

- Why is the additional copy wanted/What purpose will the additional copy serve?
- How often will the copy of the record need to be accessed?
- If the department is not the repository of the record, how long would the additional copy of the record be retained?
- Who would have access to the copy?
- How/where will the copy be stored?

## Disposition Log

Department	Record Name	Date Created	GRS/Series Number	Dispose Date	Disposition
<i>Risk Management</i>	<i>ABC Contract</i>	<i>1/1/2016</i>	<i>GRS-1731</i>	<i>1/1/2023</i>	<i>Destroyed</i>