A records/information retention and disposition program provides economic, operational, and legal/regulatory benefits to an organization. These benefits include:

**Improved operational efficiency** – An information disposition program documents records that the university creates, receives, or uses; how and where the information is maintained; and the relevant recordkeeping requirements. A reduction in the volume of information will improve the speed with which searches for information are completed by reducing the amount of information that has to be searched.

**Compliance with Legal/Regulatory Retention Requirements** – Compliance allows the university to demonstrate that it manages records in the regular course of business and in accordance with a sound business policy and applicable laws and regulations. It is critical for establishing credibility regarding litigation issues and reduces legal exposure.

**Reduce Storage Costs** – Storage space for the necessary accumulation of records can be a significant operational need and costly burden, regardless of the media used. An information disposition program provides for the systematic appraisal and disposition of the official copy and all other copies of records thereby 1) reducing storage space and 2) recouping existing space through reduction of filing and electronic media storage equipment.

**Protection of vital and historic records** – The disposition schedule will allow the university to identify the records/information that are essential to business continuity in the event of a disaster; and to identify and protect historic records that reflect the programs, major achievements, significant events and impact of the university on the local community and the state.

Why did the CSU begin to look at a systemwide standard for records/information retention and disposition?
Universities across the country have long-standing and sophisticated records management programs, including retention/disposition schedules. In fact, several CSU campuses have such programs in place, but this is not universal. Additionally, the system policy statements on records were limited and dated back to the 1980’s. So, the first reason is to get the CSU current with other academic institutions.

The next reason is the world has gotten increasingly more regulatory, litigious and investigative. The CSU’s ability to respond appropriately and successfully to information requests, attorney needs, or mandates was hindered by the lack of a systemwide standard.

Finally, information technology staffs at the campuses and at the chancellor’s office were struggling with how to quantify and then manage electronic storage space.

**General**

**I can't find what I am looking for on the University Records Retention /Disposition Schedule. What do I do?**

Often times if you cannot find a record on the retention schedule it is because the record has not been identified by the department units, and it needs to be added to the retention schedule, or you might be calling the record something different than is listed on the retention schedule. Call us at 916-278-6312 or e-mail at recmgnt@csus.edu and we can assist you.

**If a record is no longer being created, do I have to keep it?**

Yes, we have responsibility for the record for its full retention period regardless of whether we are still creating or using it. You are always welcome to send the record to the State records Center for inactive storage. At the end of the retention period, with your approval we will take responsibility for destroying it.

**According to the retention schedule, any office is required to keep a record of committees, councils, and teams' minutes,**
agendas, etc. If I am not the chair person of the committee, do I need to keep a copy of the meeting minutes?

Yes, if you receive meeting minutes you are responsible for keeping one copy for your office or department.

I want to send boxes to the State Records Center for storage. Is there a special box I should be using?

Yes, because we try to squeeze as many boxes as possible into the State Records Center. Their shelves are configured for only one box size. Commonly known as "banker's boxes", you can order these boxes from Office Max item # P512770. The box size is 10x12x15.

How do I find out about trainings being offered or if the University General Records Retention Schedule has been updated?

Please visit our University Records Management Services website at http://www.csus.edu/aba/recmgmt under Training.

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**Email**

**Do emails have retention periods? And if so, how do I determine the retention period?**

Like any other kind of record, retention periods do have to be applied to emails. The retention is based on the content of each individual email since email itself is not a record; it is a way of transmitting information. Most emails have a very transitory value and therefore can be deleted as soon as they have fulfilled their reference purpose. These emails include preliminary drafts, general announcements, and routine requests for information.

However, all other email must be retained for some period of time. The following are examples of categories of email which have specific retention periods:

- Policy and Procedure Directives
- Agenda and minutes of meetings
- Messages related to legal or audit issues
- Messages that document departmental/office actions, decisions, operations and responsibilities
- Final reports or recommendations

To determine the retention periods of these records, please refer to the [http://www.csus.edu/aba/records-management/Records-Retention-Schedule.html](http://www.csus.edu/aba/records-management/Records-Retention-Schedule.html)

**What is the document retention/disposition policy for electronic mail (email)?**

Email is NOT, in and of itself, a record series for which a schedule is required. Individual emails may contain content which raises them to the level of official record subject to the record/information retention and disposition policy. The CSU Chief Information Technology Officers are currently working on guidelines and best practices for email, email backup tapes, and network logs. These will be presented to the presidents for approval. When final, those guidelines will be posted on
Electronic Records and Scanning

Does the retention schedule apply to electronic records too?

Yes. The retention schedules cover all the records created or received by University employees, whether in hardcopy or electronic format. Both the state and the federal government define a record as information in any format, so by definition, an email or database, or word document is also a record.

In order to reduce the amount of paper my office is keeping, we want to scan and destroy the paper. Is this okay?

The short answer is no. You may scan documents and send hard copies to the State Records Center or to University Archives, but it is not recommended that you destroy hard copies after scanning. Please call Records Management services at 916-278-6312 or e-mail recmgt@csus.edu for questions.

What if we decide to scan the records and then send the hardcopy records to the State Records Center? Is this okay?

Deciding to go this route is perfectly acceptable since the official hardcopy is still being retained. However, be aware that electronic records follow the same retention schedule as hardcopy records, and when the hardcopy is destroyed, the electronic copy should be destroyed as well.

We have switched from creating paper records to electronic records for a certain function/process. Is this okay?
Yes, it's fine to move from paper to electronic records if a record is being created in an electronic format. However, be aware that electronic records are governed by the same accessibility and retention requirements as paper records. When designing a database you need to take into account the retention period of the record and ensure it is accessible and readable for the full retention and can be deleted or wiped at the end of the retention period.

How long do I have to keep my backups?

Backups are considered to be duplicates. Duplicates can be destroyed once they have served their reference purpose. We highly recommend using backups only so that data can be restored in case of a disk failure, accidental deletion, or for disaster recovery purposes. We recommend that full backups should not be kept for more than 6 months and that partial backups not be kept for more than 3 months.

What's New?

I have a grant that started in 1962. Don't I have to keep the financial reports from the beginning of the grant?

State and federal auditors have a 3 year window of opportunity to audit financial records. The University retention requirements are established to ensure the availability of financial records that may be required for audit purposes.