



Records Management at the University of Delaware: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions

UARM = University Archives and Records Management

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Records management

What is a University record?

A university record is defined as recorded information that documents transactions or activities by or with any appointed officer, employee, or unit of the University of Delaware. Regardless of physical form or characteristic, the recorded information is a University record if it is produced, collected, received, or retained in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of University business.

What is records management?

Records management is defined as the program of systematic and administrative control of records throughout their life cycle to ensure efficiency and economy in their creation, use, handling, control, maintenance, and disposition.

What are the University's archives and records management policies?

The University's archives and records management policies may be found online through the website of the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel.

What is a records retention schedule?

A records retention schedule is defined as a document that identifies and describes the University's records at the series level and provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their life cycle. Each University unit generally possesses a single records retention schedule, and all of those schedules taken together are considered the University records retention schedule.

What is a records series? How does it relate to the records retention schedule?

A records series is defined as a group of similar records that are arranged according to the retention schedule and that are related as a result of being created, received, or used in the same activity. Records series often reflect different business functions performed by a University unit. Records retention schedules are comprised of any number of distinct records series.

How do I obtain a copy of my unit's records retention schedule?

You may obtain a copy of your unit's records retention schedule by contacting UARM. Records retention schedules are not available online.

How do I change my records retention schedule?

To make changes to your unit's records retention schedule, the unit director or records management contact should send the request in writing to the UARM director. Changes may or may not be permitted depending on pertinent legislation, regulations, and University policies and the needs of the University itself.

What is a records management contact?

A records management contact is someone in a unit with primary recordkeeping responsibilities and who serves as that unit's liaison with UARM. The records management contact is the person who holds the records retention schedule for that unit, who coordinates the production of container lists, who manages the transportation of boxes and files of records to and from the unit, and who meets with UARM personnel for records management audits. He or she is not the only person in that unit engaged in records management activities, which are the responsibility of all University employees. Alternate contacts may be designated by the unit.

Records management activities

What is a record copy? Why is this important?

Also known as a copy of record, record copy is defined as the single version of a document, often the original, designated as the official copy for reference and preservation. Often, the record copy of a document is that which should be produced for legal needs, such as a subpoena. For example, a record copy might be an original, signed and executed contract; if the original document is not held by the University, then it would be a copy of that agreement. The unit that holds the record copy is the custodial unit. It should be noted that record copies often pass from unit to unit, so that the originating unit is not the custodial unit.

What is a records management audit?

A records management audit is defined as a periodic review and examination of records and recordkeeping activities to determine compliance with established University policies, procedures, and records retention schedules. Audits generally occur on an annual basis and generally consist of an interview between UARM staff and staff of the participating unit. You will receive notification well in advance of the time for when the audit is scheduled.

Should I be concerned about sending confidential records to UARM for storage or destruction?

No, you should not have concerns about sending confidential records to UARM for storage or destruction. Onsite and offsite storage facilities are secure from intrusion and theft, and UARM employees are trained and experienced in handling confidential records and information with discretion. Appropriate chain-of-custody procedures are in place to mitigate inadvertent disclosure of records through loss as they are received and transported by the third-party vendor responsible for offsite storage and destruction.

Records storage

What are the advantages of sending records for offsite storage by UARM?

There are several advantages in sending records for offsite storage by UARM. Doing so greatly reduces the amount of space needed in your own unit to store records. It also eliminates the need for you to obtain secure storage for sensitive records like personnel files. One of the biggest advantages to storing records offsite is that UARM will track retention of those records for you, alleviating your unit of the responsibility of doing so, saving staff time and reducing the University's legal risk.

How do I send new records to UARM for offsite storage?

To send new records to UARM for offsite storage, you must do the following things:

- A series must exist on your records retention schedule for the records that you want to store,
- You must order records storage boxes for your records,

- You must prepare container lists for each box of records,
- You must obtain a box number from UARM for each box of records,
- You must seal the boxes with tape and arrange for their transportation to UARM in Pearson Hall. Please affix green delivery labels to the boxes.

With regard to transportation, Campus Delivery will transport five boxes of records to and from UARM for no fee; orders above five boxes have to be placed with University Movers and you will be charged.

How do I order records storage boxes?

New records storage boxes should be purchased from W. B. Mason through the website. The item number used when ordering is FPC8003637.

Why do I have to use specific records storage boxes instead of bankers' boxes or something similar?

Generally, boxes such as generic bankers' boxes are not strong enough to store records safely in warehouse conditions over the long term. In the warehouses, boxes are stacked to a level of four to six boxes high, meaning great stress is placed on the boxes on the lower levels.

What are box numbers and how do I obtain them?

Box numbers are unique numbers assigned by UARM to track the boxes of records placed into offsite storage. You may obtain them by contacting UARM. Be sure to know which series of records for which the box numbers will be assigned. To determine the correct series, consult your records retention schedule.

What is a container list and how do I make one?

A container list is a document that describes the contents of a box of records. You must use the container list template found on the UARM website. At minimum, the container list contain the following items of information:

- The series number(s) and series title(s) of the records stored in the box,
- The date that the container list was made or submitted,
- The unique box number used to identify this box of records, and
- A list of the file headings for the records contained within the box.

Three copies of the container list should be generated – one to place inside the box of records, one for retention in your unit, and one for transmittal to UARM.

How fast can records be retrieved from offsite storage?

Most records requests are fulfilled on a next business day basis. Emergency orders can be fulfilled on a four-hour turnaround basis.

Can anybody from my unit request boxes from offsite storage, or is this function limited to specific people?

Ordering the return of boxes or files from offsite storage is reserved for the unit director, the unit records management contact, or the alternates to that contact. Exceptions may be made for emergencies at UARM's discretion.

Can I send wet (soaked) or moldy University records to UARM for storage?

No, you absolutely cannot send records affected by mold or mildew to UARM for storage. You also cannot send boxes of records that are wet (soaked) to UARM for storage.

Records disposition and destruction

I received a memorandum asking for permission to destroy records. What do I do?

You received a destruction authorization memorandum. This document requires you to make a decision regarding the disposition of your unit's records. The affected records series and boxes of records will be indicated. You will select whether the records can be destroyed, if you need to review them prior to destruction, or if they need to be retained longer. You should take action within sixty days. Once the selection is made, have the memorandum signed and returned to UARM.

I received a memorandum asking for permission to release records. What do I do?

You received a release authorization memorandum. This document requires you to make a decision regarding the disposition of your unit's records. The affected records series and boxes of records will be indicated. You will select whether the records can be released to UARM for historic review and preservation (not destruction), if you need to review them prior to release, or if they need to be retained longer. You should take action within sixty days. Once the selection is made, have the memorandum signed and returned to UARM.

How do I send records to UARM for destruction?

You can place records and files into records or copy paper boxes, seal the boxes with tape, affix pink destruction labels to the boxes, and transport the boxes to UARM in Pearson Hall. Do not include hanging files, electronic storage media, or metal objects in the boxes to be destroyed. Records to be destroyed should be confidential University records. You may transport the boxes to UARM yourself, or use University Movers. Please contact UARM staff prior to transporting any boxes there.

What is the difference between shredding services offered by UARM and by University Movers?

Records destruction service (shredding) offered by UARM is intended to be used primarily for confidential university records. Shredding service offered by University Movers is intended to be used primarily for non-confidential bulk paper disposal, such as destruction of old brochures or publications. That offered by UARM is free and not charged back to the requesting unit, whereas that offered by University Movers is charged back; contact that unit for information on its rates.

Digital records

How do I manage digital records?

How do I manage email?

If I scan all of a particular set of University records, can I destroy the original paper copies?

Can I send digital records and email to UARM for preservation?

Can I send digital storage media to UARM for destruction?

All of these questions in this section are discussed in detail in the “Digital Records Management Guidance” information sheet and on the UARM website.

External records inquiries and requests

Are University records considered public records?

Some University records are considered public records, whereas other records are not considered public records. Pursuant to state law, (29 Del. C. §100), only those records pertaining to open meetings of the full Board of Trustees and those records pertaining to the expenditure of public funds are considered open records available to members of the public. For additional information and guidance, contact UARM or the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel.

I received a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request or subpoena for University records. What do I do?

You should contact the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel immediately and follow their instructions. Do not provide access to records unless instructed to do so. Do not send the FOIA request or subpoena to UARM.

I received a request from a law enforcement agency to access University records. What do I do?

You should contact the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel immediately and follow their instructions. Do not provide access to records unless instructed to do so.

Should requests for student academic information such as transcripts be referred to UARM?

Requests for student academic information should be referred to the Office of the University Registrar. UARM does not provide individual student academic information of any sort.

Research records/sponsored programs

Do you accept research records for storage?

Under certain conditions, UARM will store, track retention for, and dispose of research records and data. To do so requires permission from the Research Office and may incur fees for storage and/or destruction. For more information, contact UARM directly.

How do I know if I can destroy administrative and financial records related to sponsored programs?

Generally, you will receive notification from the Research Office that sponsored program records can be destroyed. If you receive a destruction authorization request memorandum from UARM for sponsored program records, contact the Research Office to determine if destruction is permitted at that time.

Miscellaneous

How do I get records management training?

You can receive records management training by contacting UARM to set up a training session for you or your unit.

Does UARM charge University units for any of its services?

No, UARM typically does not charge for its services such as offsite storage and destruction of boxes of records. Fees may be incurred in storing research records.

Where do I obtain green delivery and pink destruction stickers?

You may obtain these by contacting UARM. There is no charge for them.

More questions?

University Archives and
Records Management

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