

**Document Management/Archiving Records general guidelines for the  
UBC Department of Medicine**

**ADMINISTRATIVE/FINACIAL FILES:**

**Email/Correspondence** - An extremely difficult record type to schedule, some email is clearly important, even evidential, while some may be deleted immediately. It is recommended that records that are informational or transient in nature (general announcements, notice of events, reminders, etc...) be deleted once read. This will include spam, personal correspondence, and other non-UBC correspondence.

Records of an evidential nature (providing evidence) should be printed and filed according to the subject to which they relate, or saved in an equivalent electronic folder. Correspondence may relate to existing files - student, personnel, financial, etc... - And if so, should be filed in the file to which it relates. It will be then retained as long as the file is scheduled to be retained. For example, correspondence related to a particular financial matter, if considered evidential, should be filed with the financial file and retained for current year + 6 years.

In the interests of clarity, record keepers should consider correspondence as constituting both hard copy and electronic forms. Correspondence will be one of three types:

- **Archival/Executive** (vital record) - "This series documents **significant events and the development of administrative structure, policies, and procedures of this office**. It may also record the **historical development of the office**. Records may include: letters sent and received; notes; directives; acknowledgments; and memoranda. Correspondence may be intra-office, within UBC, and with non-UBC agencies, organizations, and individuals"

Recommended retention period - Retain in Department for 5 years.  
- Send to University Archives for permanent preservation.

- **General/Administrative** Record- "Series documents communications received or sent **which contain significant information about an institution's programs**." Records include letters sent and received, memoranda, notes, enclosures, and attachments.

Retain in Department for 5 years or until subject to which it relates is superseded/obsolete, whichever is longer.  
- Destroy

- **Ephemera (Junk)** - "Series documents **communications received or sent which do not contain significant information about an institution's programs**. Records include, but are not limited to, *advertising circulars, drafts and worksheets, desk notes, memoranda, and other records of a preliminary or informational nature*. May also include letters sent and received; notes; acknowledgments; community affair notices; charity fund drive records; routine requests for information or publications; enclosures and attachments." This record series may also include unsolicited correspondence (spam).
- Destroy once superseded/obsolete - these records should seldom be either printed (from electronic) or scanned (from hardcopy), but rather, retained in their original form until destroyed.
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| Record Type    | Retention Period             | Disposition  | Notes   |
|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Correspondence | Executive - 5 Year           | UBC Archives | See above for detailed notes - print email to paper |
| Correspondence | Administrative - 5 year      | Destroy      | See above for detailed notes - print email to paper |
| Correspondence | General/Ephemeral - when S/O | Destroy      | See above for detailed notes - print email to paper |

- **Limited Financial “backup”** - If certain that primary records are maintained by Finance, these records should be destroyed when superseded or obsolete - that is, records should be retained until summarized monthly/annually or no longer needed for ongoing business.
- **Limited HR “backup”** - Destroy when superseded or obsolete (seven years after the termination date) if certain that primary record is held elsewhere. Prior to the destruction of files, separate any records related to commendations and official recognition of exceptional performance, and contact University Archives to ensure appropriate retention of these records. If records are of a supplementary nature to the HR files located within either Medicine or Central HR, they should be merged with that file. (This is for non-Faculty files – staff and student files)
- **Meeting/Committee management** - Many units/persons at UBC will retain a great deal of material relating to committees they sit on, and meetings they attend. For retention purposes it is imperative that we understand who has responsibility for preservation of these records.

#### **Department of Medicine Committees - VITAL RECORDS**

Committees concerning the Department of Medicine and its functions, including those related to appointment of staff and faculty, curriculum, initiatives, and special projects – may contain minutes, agendas, supporting documents including original membership, surveys, interim or final reports and other relevant information that documents the activities of the committee.

**As the single most important record type produced by the University, it is imperative that these records of decision making find their way to the University Archives for permanent preservation.**

| Record Type   | Retention Period                 | Disposition  | Notes  |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Routine annual committee minutes, agendas, reports, final documents | Retain until superseded/obsolete | UBC Archives | Records in this category should be considered as routine - examples might include Fire Safety or Fundraising - Print electronic records to paper |
| Record Type   | Retention Period                 | Disposition  | Notes  |

|   |         |              |   |
|---|---------|--------------|---|
| Department of Medicine Committee minutes, agendas, reports, final documents | 5 years | UBC Archives | Records in this category are considered vital records - will include records related to Curriculum, Finance, Searches, and other decision making- Print electronic records to paper |
|---|---------|--------------|---|

- **University Committees**

Minutes and other material from the Board of Governors and the Senate, as well as President's Advisory Committees and other Ad Hoc Committees are often distributed widely. If the minutes, or the subject to which it relates directly concerns the Department of Medicine, records should be retained for five years then destroyed. If the records are simply informational in nature, they should be retained for one year or until superseded then destroyed.

- **External Committees**

Again, some external minutes will relate directly to the Department while others will be simply informational in nature. It is unlikely that all minutes need to be kept and likely only the most recent version need be. Still, as a minimum, records should be kept for one year. Do not destroy until it is clear what value records hold.

- **Official Letters - Award, Discipline, etc**

As a general rule, such documents should have both a lengthy retention period and secure storage. Most official letters including award and discipline need to be retained for seven years after the termination date as these records become part of the employee's Department file. **This series will require consultation so prior to destroying any records, contact University Archives to ensure proper retention.**

- **Outside (non-UBC) interests** - Personal research, scholarly reviews, etc - *These are not UBC records and should be retained according to the Head's needs.*

- **Scheduling** - Records should be retained for one year. Records of a summary nature - appointment books, day-timers, organizers and calendars, etc - may be sent to Archives as a record of activity.

| Record Type                    | Retention Period   | Disposition | Notes  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| Scheduling/Appointment records | 1 year after event | destroy     | Records of a summary nature - appointment books, day-timers, organizers and calendars, etc - may |

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|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | be sent to Archives as a record of activity. |
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### **Department Internal/External Communications**

- **Annual Report** - A complete set should be kept in office, and a duplicate hardcopy sent to the University Archives.
- **Divisional Review** - Retained in office until superseded by a more recent review - superseded hardcopy sent to the University Archives.
- **Projects**

“**Initiatives**” - Project files related to and providing evidence of initiatives undertaken within the administrative office. Records should be retained in office until no longer needed for business. They can then be culled of reference material and working documents. Final reports, recommendations, minutes, correspondence, and other material relating to the final outcome of the project should be sent to University Archives.

| <b>Record Type</b> | <b>Retention Period</b>        | <b>Disposition</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| “Project” Records  | Period project active + 1 year | UBC Archives       | cull reference material and working documents |

- **Planning**  
Records provide evidence of decision making within the Department, and may involve annual, three-year and five-year corporate plans, and planning of general and specific objectives for administrative units (See CREPUQ 01.21) Retain for one year after time period to which plans relate, then cull reference material and working documents. Minutes, final reports, recommendations, correspondence, and other material relating to the implementation or final outcome of the plan should be sent to University Archives.

| <b>Record Type</b> | <b>Retention Period</b>  | <b>Disposition</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                  |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Planning Records   | Planning period + 1 year | UBC Archives       | cull reference material and working documents |

### **PERSONNEL FILES:**

- **Searches -**  
Unsuccessful Staff and Faculty applicant files may be destroyed after 1 year. Successful applicant files should be retained in their entirety for three years. Successful applicant files may be retained longer at the discretion of the office. These records contain personal information and require adequate security. Most successful applicant material may be included in personnel file.  
Successful Staff, M&P, and Faculty searches - destroy after three years.  
President, Vice President, Dean, Director’s search records should be retained in office for length of appointment.

| <b>Record Type</b>                      | <b>Retention Period</b>  | <b>Disposition</b> | <b>Notes</b>   |
|---|--|--------------------|--|
| Search - Staff, Unsuccessful Applicants | Minimum of 1 year after the appointment process has been completed | Destroy            | Unsolicited applications so not need to be retained and can be destroyed at the discretion of the Department |

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| Search – Faculty, Unsuccessful Applicants | Minimum of 2 years after the appointment process has been completed | Destroy | Unsolicited applications so not need to be retained and can be destroyed at the discretion of the Department   |
| Search - Staff, Successful Applicants     | 7 years after the termination date                                  | Destroy | The application file (including Resume/CV) and the appointment letter of the successful applicant becomes part of the Department employee file. Foreign hires may have further retention requirements – contact UBC HR |

- **Faculty Files** - For background see UBC Archives - <http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/rrsda.html>

The Department must retain Faculty files in office seven years after the termination date. However, units may, for administrative purposes, keep them longer. To define retention requirements for the Department, **consultation is needed.**

#### RESEARCH FILES:

**Grant approval** - Recommended retention varies depending on the source of the funds and who the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) is.

| Record Type                  | Retention Period   | Disposition   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Animal Care Committee Files  | Permanently by Research Services   | they are held in the office while current, then placed in storage |
|                              | Other offices holding copies   | retain while current, plus one year, then destroy                 |
| Human Ethics Committee Files | Permanently by Research Services   | they are held in the office while current, then placed in storage |
|                              | Other offices holding copies   | retain while current, plus one year, then destroy                 |
| Committee Files              | Held by Research Services while the Researcher is employed by the University, plus three years   | Held in the office while current, and then placed in storage.     |
|                              | Other offices holding copies   | retain while current, plus one year, then destroy                 |
| Grant Applications           | Records of successful applications are retained by Research Services while the research project is ongoing, plus three years; those of unsuccessful applications are retained for two years. |   |
|                              | Other offices holding copies of these records shall  | retain while current, plus one year, then destroy                 |
| Grant Accounts               | Retained by Research Services  |   |

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|                        | while the research project is ongoing, plus seven years.                       |   |
|                        | Other offices holding copies   | retain while current, plus one year, then destroy |
| Grant Related Material | 5 Years after grant period ends – or retention schedule as per granting agency | Responsibility of the Principle Investigator      |

**UBC REQUIREMENTS:**

Please refer to UBC Policy No. 85 for complete detail;

- all primary data must be recorded in clear, adequate, original and chronological form
- in scientific departments, a record of the primary data, regardless of ownership, must be maintained in the laboratory and cannot be removed.
- original data for any given study must be retained in the unit of origin for at least 5 years after the work is published or otherwise presented (if the form of the data permits this, and if assurances have not been given that data would be destroyed to assure anonymity)

**CLINICAL FILES (Patient Records):**

**Record retention period**

Physical medical records of a physician must be retained for the statutory requirement of 6 years beyond the last office encounter or in the case of an infant patient under the age of 19 years until those patients reach the age of 25 years. The College Quarterly recommends that the records be retained for 7 years and the CMPA recommends that this period be extended to 10 years beyond the date of last office encounter.

The statutory requirement in British Columbia for the retention of medical records is 6 years or 6 years beyond the age of majority (i.e., age 19) for children. Because prospective plaintiffs are given a year after filing a suit to follow up on that action, the College recommends another year for retention of records, making the total recommendation 7 years. Statutes of limitation vary from province to province and therefore CMPA, in the physician's best interest, recommends 10 years for records retention.

**Destroying/disposing of Electronic Medical Records (EMR)**

- When destroying patient information in electronic form, ensure the (EMR - electronic medical records/EHR - electronic health record) is permanently deleted or irreversibly erased. This may require physical destruction of the electronic storage device.

As with paper records, procedures are required to ensure adequate disposing of electronic records. The following are some key points to keep in mind when considering the retention and destruction of EMRs:

- The required retention period for medical records – whether print or electronic – generally varies significantly depending on the jurisdiction. The CMPA recommends that members maintain clinical records for at least 10 years from the date of the last entry, or for at least 10 years from the age of majority in the case of minors.
- Beyond the required retention period, patient information contained in an EMR/EHR should normally only be maintained for as long as is necessary for the purpose for which the information was collected.

- Once the retention period has been exhausted, the information in the EMR/EHR should generally be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality.
- Physicians should be familiar with all applicable rules or obligations for destroying medical records.

Some privacy legislation requires physicians to keep a record of:

- The individual whose personal health information is destroyed and the time period to which the information relates; and
- The method of destruction and the person responsible for supervising the destruction.

Effective destruction requires the EMR/EHR be permanently deleted or irreversibly erased. When destroying the information, members must consider whether it is necessary to destroy not only the "original records", but also any copies of these records, including back-up files.

Some privacy commissioners have recommended the physical destruction of the electronic storage device (e.g. hard drive) to ensure the permanent deletion of patient information stored on these devices. This may include physically destroying the electronic storage device, or it may be sufficient to employ wiping software to delete the information contained on the hard drive. However, depending on the sophistication of the software, wiping may not irreversibly erase every bit of data on a drive. Selling or giving away electronic storage devices that contain or once contained patient information should be avoided.

Given the technological expertise required to effectively destroy electronically stored information, it is preferable to engage an accredited service provider to destroy patient information maintained in EMRs. Some privacy commissioners have stated that when engaging a commercial service provider to dispose of patient information, physicians must enter into a written contractual agreement with that service provider. The agreement should clearly spell out the responsibilities of the service provider to securely destroy the health information records, how the destruction will be accomplished, under what conditions, and by whom. While not currently a requirement in all jurisdictions, this is a prudent practice for all members who engage the services of a records disposal company.

### Procedures for sending records to the University Archives

1. Ensure records have reached the end of their retention period and have been weeded of non-archival material - contact Archives if you have electronic records - in most cases print to paper
2. Create a file list of records to be sent
3. Pack records in box - attach file list to outside of box (package by year if possible)
4. Notify Archives of amount of material being sent
5. Send to:

Attn: University Archives  
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre  
1961 East Mall  
Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada  
V6T-1Z1  
(604) 822-5877

If you need supplies or help contact:  
University Records Manager  
Alan Doyle  
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre  
1961 East Mall  
Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada  
V6T-1Z1  
(604)827-3952  
[alan.doyle@ubc.ca](mailto:alan.doyle@ubc.ca)

See **UBC Policy 117 – Records Management**  
<http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy117.pdf>

See **UBC Records Management Manual** means the source of instruction and reference for creating, receiving, preparing, processing, storing and disposing of Records.  
[http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/manuals/rm\\_manual.pdf](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/manuals/rm_manual.pdf)

See **Records Retention Schedule** is a control document that describes the Records at a series level and indicates the length of time each series should be retained as semi-active prior to final Disposition; and the final Disposition of each series. This document serves as the legal authorization for the disposal of Records.  
<http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/rrsda.html>

Created: May 2008  
Updated: April 17, 2012