

RECORD RETENTION

2.20080 DP
DISTRICT PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Record retention guidelines help an institution: (1) to adequately protect and maintain necessary records and information; and (2) to properly discard records and information that are no longer needed or are of no value.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the disposition of records and information used in the administration and management of Metropolitan Community College (MCC) district programs, departments, business, and activities. Following the designated expiration of their retention period, records should be disposed of appropriately.

APPLICABILITY

Each department shall promote sound records management practices by: (1) establishment of a realistic records retention and disposal schedule for all its records; (2) development of a vital records protection program for all permanent and essential records in the department; and (3) development and maintenance of filing systems that will assure efficient usage and prompt retrieval of records.

Each department within MCC is in charge of complying with the records retention schedules set forth in the: (1) "General Records Retention Schedule;" and the (2) "Community College Records Retention Schedule" (collectively, the "Schedules") approved by the Local Records Board and available on the Missouri Secretary of State's website at: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/localrecls/schedules>. The Schedules establish minimum retention periods based on federal and state mandates, record surveys, business needs, and general knowledge as to how long records should be kept. Using the Schedules as a guide and without seeking further approval from the Local Records Board, MCC departments may regularly dispose of any of its records that appear on the Schedules, subject to certain exceptions set forth in the Schedules.

The following exceptions and limitations should be noted:

- (1) The Schedules do not relieve MCC departments of retention requirements mandated by other state and federal statutes and regulations. When such an obligation exists, then the longer retention period takes precedence.
- (2) The Schedules generally reflect audit requirements in the prescribed retention periods, but audits are not always completed in a timely fashion. Therefore, any record required for an audit must be retained until completion of that audit, regardless of its stated retention period in the schedule.
- (3) The Schedules do not authorize destruction of records that could be deemed relevant to current or pending litigation.

All members of MCC should adhere to these guidelines. These guidelines are "media neutral," meaning the type of medium with which a record is created has no bearing on retention time requirements. These guidelines do not obligate a department to create records that did not exist previously.

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RECORDS IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

Some records may fall within two categories. When that is the case, apply the longest applicable retention period.

ELECTRONIC BACK-UP

Electronic records serve the same functions as paper records and have the same retention requirements. It is the responsibility of each department to understand MCC's procedures regarding back-up of electronic information and data and to ensure these guidelines are applied with respect to data kept and/or backed up on electronic servers. It should be noted that data on individual users' computers is not backed up; each user is responsible for ensuring appropriate application of these guidelines to his or her individual computer.

INVESTIGATION AND LITIGATION HOLDS

Do not dispose of any records or data if an investigation, legal action or proceeding, audit, program review, or other accreditation review is forthcoming or in progress. An MCC employee who becomes aware of the following shall notify the applicable department that MCC has been served with a subpoena or request for documents, that there is a governmental investigation or audit concerning MCC, or that there is forthcoming litigation against or concerning MCC. The same department shall take necessary steps to inform personnel to "hold," meaning suspend, disposal of records and information as necessary. Disposal of any related records and information shall be suspended until the applicable department, with the advice of counsel, determines otherwise.

COLLEGE RECORDS

Any papers, books, electronic record, electronic image, maps, photographs, original microfilm, or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed, or received by any employee in connection with the transaction of college business.

The following are college non-records:

1. Extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference or where file copies have been retained for record purposes.
2. Material not filed as evidence of department operations or for its informational value such as telephone call slips, letters of transmittal, route slips, etc.
3. Preliminary drafts of letters, memoranda, reports, work sheets, and informal notes which do not represent significant basic steps in the preparation of the record document.

RECORD DISPOSAL

College records may be disposed when they have met retention requirements per the approved disposition schedule and in accordance with this policy.

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Records which are not of a confidential or sensitive nature should be disposed of by means of regularly established departmental practices for handling recycled or waste paper.

Confidential records must be disposed of according to their retention periods in a manner that preserves their confidentiality (e.g., by shredding). Determination of what constitutes confidential or sensitive records is the responsibility of the department.

REFERENCE

2.20080 BP Record Retention Board Policy