

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM  
STUDENT ACADEMIC  
GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE**

**June 2009**



## **Introduction**

Records are not only a basic tool of transacting business on behalf of Wisconsin state agencies, they are also the foundation for government accountability. Therefore, records management is both required and regulated by Wisconsin law. Accordingly, this schedule provides guidelines for complying with legal, fiscal, and archival requirements for records retention, as well as guidance regarding cost-effective management of University of Wisconsin student academic records and duplicates.

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this schedule is to:

- Provide University of Wisconsin System institutions with uniform guidelines for the retention and disposition of common records;
- Ensure that University of Wisconsin System institutions retain records as long as needed in order to complete the transaction of business on behalf of the University of Wisconsin System, and to meet legal, audit, archival, and other state of Wisconsin and federal requirements;
- Provide University of Wisconsin institutions with legal authorization to dispose of expired records on a regularly scheduled basis after minimum retention periods are met; and
- Promote the cost-effective management of records.

## **II. Who May Use General Schedules**

The University of Wisconsin System General Schedule for student academic records applies to all fifteen of the University of Wisconsin System institutions.

**III. Records Management Within the University of Wisconsin System.** The University of Wisconsin System bears a unique structure comprising fifteen distinct and autonomous educational institutions, all of which are governed by a single corporate board: The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents' governance authority over these fifteen educational institutions is defined by statute: "The primary responsibility for governance of the system shall be vested in the board which shall enact policies and promulgate rules for governing the system...and promote the widest degree of institutional autonomy within the controlling limits of system-wide policies and priorities established by the board. Wis. Stats. § 36.09(1). Moreover, the Board of Regents may delegate authority to the each Institution within the University of Wisconsin System:

The board shall delegate to each chancellor the necessary authority for the administration and operation of the institution within the policies and guidelines established by the board. The board may also delegate or rescind other authority to chancellors, committees of the board, administrative officers, members of the faculty and students or such other groups as it deems appropriate." Wis. Stats. § 36.09(1)(f).

In accordance with these statutes, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents is responsible for the proper management of the University's records. However, the Board may, and often does, delegate or rescind the administration and operation of records management to chancellors, committees of the board, administrative officers, members of the faculty, students, and other appropriate groups.

Therefore, it is important for University employees who manage University records to ascertain whether, and to whom, the Board of Regents has delegated the administration and operation of these records. Thereafter, the delegated authority shall properly manage public records on behalf of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System and in accordance with records schedules, which have been approved by the Public Records Board.

**IV. Records Series, Titles, and Categories:** Each individual record schedule within this general schedule provides a description of a record series, setting forth retention requirements and providing guidance regarding working Duplicates, or duplicates, of the records. Each record series in a functional area is described in narrative detail, including lists of forms, reports and other items included in the series. All records within a series relate to the same topic and have the same retention requirements.

**V. Electronic Records:** General schedules cover records in all media, including records that are created or transmitted via electronic mail. Moreover, database systems contain inputs and outputs that are commonly understood to contain records, and the data elements in database systems themselves contain records that are subject to minimum retention and disposition requirements

Administrative Rule 12 Electronic Records Management-Standards and Requirements became effective May 1, 2001. This rule applies to all state record keeping systems. (The rule and related information regarding records management for electronic records can be found on-line at the Department of Administration's website.)

Though more and more records are being created in electronic format, records creators and managers should be aware that the scheduling process for these records does not differ from the process for records in paper form or other formats. All public records must be scheduled according to their substantive content, not their format or medium. However, electronic records present their own particular management issues. Records that are born digital must be filed and managed in ways that ensure their accessibility and integrity, including their periodic migration to other media to guard against technical obsolescence, as required by law.

**VI. Retaining Records:** University of Wisconsin institutions are required to follow general schedules, including retention periods and disposition directions for applicable records. However, records may be delayed from destruction if they are useful on an ongoing basis as a business resource. It is also important to understand that under Wisconsin law public records must be delayed from destruction under the following conditions:

- Records are required for a financial or performance audit;
- Records are relevant to an existing, pending, or impending legal proceeding; or
- A relevant public record request has been received and not completed.

Before disposing of a record, the office managing the record must determine if an audit, litigation, or public record request is pending. And notably, after a public records request has been filed, Wisconsin law forbids the destruction of any relevant record until the request is granted, or at least 60 days after the request is denied, and court orders may extend this time period. Wis. Stats. § 19.35(5). If institution staff members have questions regarding the requirements set forth within Wisconsin’s Public Records Law, then the institution’s legal custodian of records or the institution’s legal counsel could provide further guidance.

## **VII. Archival Repositories**

For some records series that have been appraised to have archival value, the disposition will indicate “transfer to an archival repository.” An archival repository is responsible for processing the records, making them available to researchers, and providing for their safe-keeping and preservation. An official archival repository is one that has been reviewed and designated as such by the Wisconsin Public Records Board according to Wis Stats. 16.61(13)(b). In general, transferring to an archival repository means transferring records to either the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archival Depository or a University of Wisconsin Archival Depository, which has been designated by the Public Records Board.

**VIII. Confidentiality of Records:** Some records may contain confidential or restricted access records such as social security numbers. If in doubt as to whether or not a specific record is confidential, it is always a good idea to check with institutional legal counsel.

**IX. Personally Identifiable Information:** Some records in this schedule contain personally identifiable information as defined by Wisconsin law. Wis. Stats. §§ 19.62(5) & 895.507. Public access to personally identifiable information is restricted by law. Therefore, University of Wisconsin institutions should abide by the requirements set forth within relevant federal and state laws and regulations. If further information is required regarding these laws and regulations, then contact University of Wisconsin System legal counsel before taking action affecting records that contain, or may contain, personally identifiable information.

## **X. DEFINITIONS**

**Official Record:** The official record is the document that is most likely to be used for multi-institutional audit purposes.

**Duplicate or Working Duplicates:** All duplicate, working, and convenience Duplicates of official records are classified as non-records under Wis. Stats. § 16.61. Therefore, in the interest of efficiency, do not keep non-records longer than needed, and thereafter, destroy them as soon as possible. It is also important to understand that under Wisconsin law, if non-records are not properly destroyed, then they must be provided to a requester in response to relevant: public records requests, audits, and litigation, even if the official record previously expired and was

destroyed in accordance with approved records schedules. Finally, do not send non-records to the State Records Center because they will needlessly consume expensive storage space.

**Retention Period:** The retention period is the minimum length of time an office must keep particular records. This is usually expressed in terms of years, months, days and may be contingent upon an event date or specification date that triggers the “clock.” Most often, retention periods are triggered at: creation(CR), event(EVT), or fiscal(FIS).

**Creation(CR):** The retention period starts when a record is created or received.

**Event(EVT):** The retention period is triggered or tied to event dates; thus, retention does not begin until the specified event occurs. For example, if a record series has a retention of EVT+ 1 year and the event is defined as the life of an asset, then all records in this category would be retained one year after the asset is sold, scrapped, or otherwise taken out of service.

**Fiscal(FIS):** This retention period is tied to the current fiscal year, and unlike CR and EVT retention periods, FIS record series are managed in blocks by fiscal year. For example, “FIS+4 years” indicates that records must be retained for the current fiscal year and four complete additional fiscal years.

**Disposition:** The final state in a record’s life cycle, involving: destruction or transfer to the individual University of Wisconsin archival depositories for permanent preservation.

## XI. LEGAL TERMS

**Public Records.** Public records are defined as: “all...materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, or received by any state agency or its officers or employees in connection with the transaction of public business...” Wis. Stats. § 16.61(2)(b).

**Exceptions to Public Records.** Public records do not include: (a) **Wisconsin Legislators:** records and correspondence of any member of the legislature; (b) **State Depository Library:** any state document received by a state document depository library; (c) **Duplicates:** duplicate Duplicates of materials the original Duplicates of which are in the custody of the same state agency and which are maintained only for convenience or reference and for no other substantive purpose; (d) **Library Materials:** materials in the possession of a library or museum made or acquired solely for reference or exhibition purposes; (e) **Unsolicited Notices:** notices or invitations received by a state agency that were not solicited by the agency and that are not related to any official action taken, proposed, or considered by the agency; (f) **Preliminary Materials:** drafts, notes, preliminary computations and like materials prepared for the originator’s personal use or prepared by the originator in the name of a person for whom the originator is working; and (g) **Routing:** routing slips and envelopes. Wis. Stats. § 16.61(2)(b).

**Personally Identifiable Information.** This is information that can be associated with a particular individual through one or more identifiers or other information or circumstances. Wis. Stats. §§ 19.62(5) & 895.507.

## **XII. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE**

University of Wisconsin employees should also consult with the following resource staff for additional information and assistance with records management concerns.

**Records Management Officer:** Each University of Wisconsin institution has a designated records officer who serves as liaison to the Public Records Board. The records officer is responsible for agency-wide records management planning, program development, and assistance.

**Legal Custodian of Public Records.** Under Wisconsin law, each University of Wisconsin institution is required to designate a legal custodian for public records requests. Wis. Stats § 19.33. The legal custodian shall be vested with full legal power to render decisions and carry out the duties of the University of Wisconsin institution under Wisconsin's public records law, and in cooperation with University of Wisconsin System Legal Counsel. Wis. Stats. § 19.33(4).

**Department of Administration Records Management Section:** The Department of Administration Records Management Section provides free training sessions, as needed, on implementation of general records schedules.

**Public Records Board:** The Board's Executive Secretary can offer technical assistance and training to assist institutions with records management, including records scheduling and interpretation of schedules.

**Wisconsin Historical Society:** The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) assists institutions with records management, particularly in identifying the small percentage of records that have historical value.

**University of Wisconsin Institution Archival Depositories:** University of Wisconsin Institutions have delegated authority to operate archives for historical institutional records. Often, the University of Wisconsin archives also function as the focus for records management related activities on the campus.

**University of Wisconsin System Legal Counsel.** Whenever a lawsuit or public records request is filed with a University of Wisconsin institution, affected University employees must contact University of Wisconsin System Legal Counsel in order to ensure that all relevant legal and regulatory requirements are both known and fulfilled.

## Student Academic Records General Schedule

	<b>Representative Documents</b>	<b>Official Copy- Minimum Retention</b>	<b>Copies-Suggested Retention</b>	<b>Description</b>
ACAD001	Academic dishonesty records	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Materials relating to academic dishonesty
ACAD002	Acceptance letters	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Notification letters sent to admitted students
ACAD003	Add/Drop records	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Completed course change forms and related records for add/drop
ACAD004	Applications for graduation	EVT + 1	EVT + 1	Completed by students prior to graduation. Trigger degree audits
ACAD005	Applications, Admission	EVT + 5 for enrolled students, EVT + 1 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Completed by prospective students for admission or readmission to the institution
ACAD006	Audit authorizations	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Documentation completed by students to audit a course, instead of enrolling for academic credit
ACAD007	Catalog	Permanent	Administrative need only	Course catalog providing overview of admissions policies, course offerings and degree requirements
ACAD008	Change of grade documentation	Permanent	EVT + 1	Update documentation supporting an approved change of grade
ACAD009	Class schedules/timetables (institutional)	Permanent	Administrative need only	Official list of courses offered each semester, with information regarding course numbers, names and credits; instructors; times; and course location
ACAD010	Correspondence, staff	EVT + 5 for enrolled students, EVT + 2 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Correspondence between Enrollment Services staff within units or with students, relevant to admissions and academic progress
ACAD011	Correspondence, policy-setting	Permanent	Administrative need only	Policy-setting correspondence within Enrollment Services units

EVT - graduation or date of last attendance (semester, term)

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	<b>Representative Documents</b>	<b>Official Copy- Minimum Retention</b>	<b>Copies-Suggested Retention</b>	<b>Description</b>
ACAD012	Course change records	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Completed forms and related records for course changes, including but not limited to: add, drop, withdraw
ACAD013	Course File, master	Permanent	n/a	Official courses offered throughout the history of the institution
ACAD014	Course management systems	Retain 6 months after close of the semester in which grade submitted	n/a	Examinations, coursework assignments, etc. as retained by academic departments to serve as source documents for submitted official grades. This series includes Desire2Learn (D2L) course support instructional materials
ACAD015	Credit by examination	EVT + 5 for enrolled students, EVT + 2 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Advanced placement, CLEP, PEP, test score results, prior learning documentation, etc. used for advanced placement within degree program
ACAD016	Credit/no-credit approvals	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Completed request forms and related records for options such as pass/fail, course audit, etc.
ACAD017	Curriculum change authorizations	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Approved changes and authorizations to individual student degree program requirements
ACAD018	Degree audits	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Records used to verify progress made in student degree program requirements

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ACAD019	Desire2Learn (D2L) materials	6 months after close of semester in which grades are submitted or completion of course	n/a	Examinations, coursework assignments, etc. as retained by academic departments to serve as source documents for submitted official grades. This series includes Desire2Learn (D2L) course support instructional materials
ACAD020	Disciplinary records for academic dishonesty	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Documents relating to academic dishonesty such as plagiarism
ACAD021	Enrollment and class lists	Permanent	1 semester	Reports generated by Enrollment Services during any given semester reflecting student enrollment rosters, class size, graduation lists
ACAD022	Enrollment verifications and certifications	EVT +1	EVT + 1	Records used to verify student enrollment for purposes such as loan applications, insurance discounts, and Social Security benefits
ACAD023	Entrance examinations and other placement test records	EVT + 5 for enrolled students, EVT + 2 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Student scores from standardized tests, including but not limited to: ACT, SAT, GRE, credit by examination, advanced placement, and CLEP
ACAD024	Examinations and course assignments	6 months after close of semester in which grades are submitted or completion of course	n/a	Retained by academic departments to serve as source documents for submitted official grades. This series includes Desire2Learn (D2L) course support instructional materials

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## Student Academic Records General Schedule

	<b>Representative Documents</b>	<b>Official Copy- Minimum Retention</b>	<b>Copies-Suggested Retention</b>	<b>Description</b>
ACAD025	Grade Books, original (academic departments) - Final grades as submitted. Includes all formats - paper and electronic	2 years after close of semester in which grades are submitted	n/a	Materials that include student grades recorded by professors and instructors to support the official, awarded grades that are submitted to the Registrar
ACAD026	Grade changes	Permanent	EVT + 1	Records supporting an approved change of grade
ACAD027	Grade reports/statistics	Permanent	1 semester after distribution	Reports of official grades awarded, degrees conferred, grade lists, academic standing, grade point averages, degree statistics
ACAD028	Grades, submitted - electronic or hard copy	Permanent	2 years after close of semester in which grades are submitted	Official student grades, which are supported by grade books and instructional materials, and submitted by professors and instructors to the Registrar. Includes material submitted in all formats - paper, electronic, D2L, etc.
ACAD029	Honors Lists	Permanent	Administrative need only	Lists of students who have achieved academic distinction, including but not limited to the Dean's List
ACAD030	Instructional materials	6 months after close of semester in which grades are submitted or completion of course	n/a	Examinations, coursework assignments, and correspondence between faculty and students relating to coursework, as retained by academic departments to serve as source documents for submitted official grades. This series includes Desire2Learn (D2L) course support instructional materials

EVT - graduation or date of last attendance (semester, term)

## Student Academic Records General Schedule

	<b>Representative Documents</b>	<b>Official Copy- Minimum Retention</b>	<b>Copies-Suggested Retention</b>	<b>Description</b>
ACAD031	Name change authorizations	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Identity change documentation
ACAD032	Pass/Fail requests	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Forms completed by students in order to obtain approval to take courses for pass/fail credit
ACAD033	Placement records/scores	EVT + 5 for enrolled students EVT + 2 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Results used to support admission to the university; advanced placement, PEP, CLEP, test score results, credit by examination
ACAD034	Registration forms	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Forms completed by students at the time of registration
ACAD035	Residency records	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Records used to determine student residency classification for tuition purposes
ACAD036	Transcripts, official	Permanent	EVT + 1	Official student academic transcripts
ACAD037	Transcripts, other institutions	EVT + 5 for enrolled students, EVT + 2 for nonenrolled students	EVT + 1	Transcripts from other institutions used to support the admissions process
ACAD038	Transcripts, student requests	1 year after date submitted	1 year after date submitted	Student requests for official copies of their transcripts
ACAD039	Transfer equivalencies	Until superseded	n/a	Transfer credit equivalency information, developed to evaluate course credits from other institutions
ACAD040	Transfer credit evaluations	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Forms used to determine actual student credit transfers

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## Student Academic Records General Schedule

	Representative Documents	Official Copy- Minimum Retention	Copies-Suggested Retention	Description
ACAD041	Veterans records	EVT + 3	EVT + 1	Records related to student enrollment for federal/state military benefits such as application, copies of discharge form DD214, VA eligibility certificates, study grants, VA vocational rehabilitation agreements, VA fee vouchers, and correspondence
ACAD042	Withdrawal authorizations	EVT + 5	EVT + 1	Forms completed by students in order to officially withdraw from the institution
	<p><b>Note:</b> While some campuses no longer produce or retain these records in paper format, the approved retention periods remain the same no matter the records format. Arrangements must be made to capture and refresh the information as necessary to provide access to the information contained in these documents for the length of the approved retention periods, and to meet State of Wisconsin electronic records standards and requirements.</p>			
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