



## Operating Policy and Procedure

### **OP 10.10: Records Retention**

**DATE:** July 13, 2023

**PURPOSE:** This Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) defines the steps involved in the legal destruction of records that have ceased to have sufficient value to warrant retention.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed every four years in May by the University Archivist of Texas Tech University with substantive revisions forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

1. Yearly, an appointed individual in each department should review records on hand to determine whether departmental documents should be retained or destroyed.
2. The department shall comply with the *Texas Tech University System Records Retention Schedule* (see attachment) prepared by the Texas Tech University System and approved by the State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC). The retention times apply to the primary copy, as provided in [Chapter 441, Texas Government Code](#). These include paper, micro-media, electronic records, or other material that is involved in the transaction of official state business.
3. Primary copy refers to the one original or “primary” version of a document. Convenience copy refers to all duplicate copies of a document. Convenience copies can be disposed of at any time and should not be kept longer than the primary copy’s retention time.
4. The retention time of a record applies regardless of the record’s format, be it electronic, micro-media, or paper.
5. Primary copies of records de-accessioned, disposed of, or destroyed shall be listed on a records disposition log. The department should retain a copy of this disposition log for the appropriate time as listed on the university’s records retention schedule. Currently, this is 10 years.
6. Once a record’s retention time has expired and it is no longer needed, the record should be disposed of in the appropriate manner. Records with no personally identifiable information (PII) or confidential information can be recycled or thrown away. Records containing personal or confidential information, such as social security numbers, credit card numbers, and grades, should be shredded or, if in electronic format, completely deleted from the system.
7. The assigned individual responsible for destroying the records should observe the destruction process to completion if the disposal is done in-house. Should the records destruction be outsourced to an approved TTU shredding vendor, the individual responsible for the records

should complete the disposition log and list the destruction date as the date the records are picked up by the vendor.

8. Record series on the *TTU System Records Retention Schedule* flagged as “I (Transfer to University Archivist)” or “O (Review by University Archivist)” have potential historical value and should be transferred to the University Archives. The University Archivist will make the final decision on whether to keep or dispose of the record.
9. Following the filing of an open records request (also known as a Public Information Act request and, occasionally, incorrectly referred to as a Freedom of Information Act Request) with the Texas Tech University System Office of General Counsel (OGC), documents cited in the request must be maintained while the request is pending. Once the request has been cleared by the OGC, the documents can be appropriately transferred, disposed of, or destroyed in accordance with the guidelines of the *Texas Tech University System (TTUS) Records Retention Schedule*. Any questions regarding open records requests should be directed to the OGC.
10. In the event the OGC is made aware of pending or threatened litigation, it may issue a litigation hold directive to document custodians to preserve all documents and records that pertain or relate to the issues. Until the litigation hold has been cleared by OGC, the litigation hold directive overrides all TTUS and TTU Records Retention policies, as well as all TTUS and TTU Records Retention Schedules that may otherwise call for the transfer, disposal, or destruction of relevant documents. Any questions regarding litigation holds should be directed to the OGC.

[Attachment: Texas Tech University System Records Retention Schedule](#)