



Best Practices for Managing Graduate Student Records

Why maintain graduate student records?

The creation and maintenance of student records are essential to:

- document the student's academic progress
- manage the relationship between the student and the University
- provide support to the student after they leave the University

What laws and policies apply to graduate student records?

Graduate student records are subject to the Ontario *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and to the University of Toronto *Policy on Access to Student Academic Records*.

Where and how should graduate student records be stored?

The nature of graduate student records and the personal information they contain demand that they be stored in facilities and equipment or in electronic systems which are secure and accessible only to authorized staff whose work requires them to have access. Staff responsible for student records should maintain a record of the content, format and location of all student records.

How should graduate student records be filed?

Graduate student records should be filed so that they can be identified and retrieved quickly and easily. It is recommended that Ph.D. student records and M.A. student records be separated and filed alphabetically by the student's last name. Once a student has graduated, disposition can be aided by filing based on the year of the student's graduation.

How long should graduate student records be kept?

The University's recommendations for how long you should keep your graduate student records are set out in the graduate student records retention schedules 34-0001, 34-0002, 56-0003, 56-0004, 56-0005, and 56-0008. The retention periods outlined in these schedules should be followed and applied to both departmental student files and to any convenience copies held by faculty.

In summary, these schedules stipulate the following:

1. Master and Doctoral programs for students enrolled from July 1999-current:

(See schedules [56-0003](#) and [56-0004](#))

- The rules found in these schedules is to maintain records as '**current (until the student graduates) + 7 years**'.
- After 7 years, graduate departments may **destroy Masters' student records**, and **transfer Doctoral student records** to the University Archives.



2. Master and Doctoral programs for students graduating *prior* to 30 June 1999:

(See schedules [34-0001](#) and [34-0002](#))

- Records that are duplicated at SGS – until the student graduates + 2 years and then destroy.
- Records used for OCGS appraisal – until the student graduates + 7 years and then destroy.
- Records not covered by the above points should be kept until the student graduates + 7 years, and then destroyed.
- It is assumed that most offices will preserve the entire student record until the student graduates + 7 years.

3. Master and Doctoral Awards, Funding, and Postdoctoral Records:

(See schedules [56-0005](#) and [56-0008](#))

While these schedules should be reviewed in detail, there are some general rules:

- Most postdoctoral records can be destroyed 7 years after their last date of use
- While the retention for awards records varies, award lists and information should be transferred to the University Archives.

How should graduate records be transferred to the University Archives?

For information on transferring records to the University Archives, please see the [transfer procedures](#) available on our website. Records being transferred to the University Archives must be listed and packed in Bankers Boxes prior to transfer.

How should graduate records be destroyed?

Student files contain personal and confidential information and should be destroyed securely. Student records being destroyed should be listed, and their destruction should be documented in a [destruction form](#). These documents provide an important audit trail and must be retained permanently.

For further information, please go to our [website](#) or contact one of the Records Archivists at [UTARMS](#)