

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.

What do I do with the records of graduate students who graduate, withdraw, or fail to show?

Pull files of students who graduate, withdraw, or fail to show. Box together files that share the same disposition date and disposition action together. Number the boxes, create file lists for each box, and note the disposition date and disposition action. Maintain box lists in electronic format for easy searching. Store boxes until the disposition date. Once the disposition date is reached, either destroy the boxes or transfer them to the Archives as per the applicable records schedule.

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, 56-0001, and 56-0002. 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. To summarize the records schedules:

1. Master and Doctoral programs (up to 30 June 1999):

See schedules 34-0001 and 34-0002.

i. Records that are duplicated at SGS – until the student graduates + 2 years and then destroy.

ii. Records used for OCGS appraisal – until the student graduates + 7 years and then destroy.

iii. Records not covered by points i and ii – until the student graduates + 7 years and then destroy.

It is assumed that most offices will preserve all of the record for until the student graduates + 7 years.

2. Master and Doctoral programs (1 July 1999-current):

See schedules 56-0001 and 56-0002.

Maintain records current (until the student graduates) + 7 years. Then destroy M.A. students' records and transfer Ph.D. students' records to the University Archives.

For more information, please see the University Archives' on-line Retention and Disposition Schedules database [embedded link to:

<http://archives.library.utoronto.ca/dbtw-wpd/textbase/webschedule/>].

How should graduate records be transferred to the University Archives?

For information on transferring records to the University Archives, please see transferring records to Archives [embedded link to <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/university-administrators/disposing-of-records/transferring-records-to-archives>]. Questions concerning these procedures may be directed to the Records Archivist, Loryl MacDonald [embedded email link].

How should graduate records be destroyed?

Student files contain personal and confidential information and should therefore be shredded in a secure manner. Student records being destroyed should be listed and their destruction documented. These documents provide an important audit trail and must be retained permanently. Such information is necessary to protect the legal position of your office and the University by providing accurate information on records that have been destroyed and on the procedures followed in their destruction. For further information, please go to our website [embedded link to: <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/university-administrators/disposing-of-records/destruction>].

What help is available?

The University Records of Toronto Archives and Records Management Services provides advice, guidance, and training on records management. Our website [embedded link: <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/university-administrators>] contains a wide range of records management tools for university administrators. If you cannot find the advice you

need on our website, please contact Records Archivist, Loryl MacDonald [embedded email link].

DRAFT