

	<i>Policy Level:</i>	President's Cabinet
	<i>Responsible Department:</i>	General Counsel
	<i>Effective Date:</i>	03/24/2026
Document Retention Guidelines		

PURPOSE:

To set the guidelines for document retention.

SCOPE:

University wide.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

None

MAIN PROVISIONS:

Departments may adopt their own document retention procedures as appropriate, but must follow this policy absent written permission from the General Counsel for any deviation from the below Retention Schedule. University units are encouraged to consult with the University Archivist before destroying, deleting, or discarding records that may have historical value.

The Records Retention Schedule that follows lists different types of Records and the length of time those Records must be retained. Since no document list can cover all situations, questions regarding the retention period for a specific document or class of documents not included in the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule should be addressed to the General Counsel.

All Records pertaining to ongoing or pending audits or lawsuits (including reasonably anticipated lawsuits) should not be destroyed, damaged, or altered, even if the records retention date has expired, until the matter has been resolved and you have been specifically advised in writing by the General Counsel that such Records may be destroyed. If you have reason to believe that a Record scheduled for destruction may pertain to any of these matters, do not destroy the Record and contact the General Counsel.

PROCEDURES:

Documents shall be retained and/or discarded according to the following Records Retention Schedule.

Records Retention Schedule

By Department/Area	Type	While Active	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years	7 years	10 years	Other	Perm anent
Controller	Accounts payable ledgers and schedules						x			
Library	Acquisition Records, including invoices						x			
Admissions	Applications, acceptance letters						x			
General Counsel	Articles of Incorporation									x
Controller/General Counsel	Audit reports									x
General Counsel	Audit/Whistleblower Compliance Committee Records					x				
Human Resources	Background investigations						x			
Controller	Bank reconciliations			x						
Controller	Bank records generally (minimum)						x			
Controller	Bank statements				x					
Controller	Checks (for important payments)									x
Library	Circulation Records, including Library fines and fees								Permanent unless vendor changes, then 3 years Inactive patron accounts are purged every 7 years	x
Campus Safety	Clery reports and records						x			
Student Affairs	Clery reports and records						x			
Controller	Contracts (still in effect) - keep in fireproof safe and/or backed up digitally									x
General Counsel	Contracts, notes, and leases (after expired)						x			
University wide	Correspondence (general)			x						
General Counsel	Correspondence (legal and important matters)									x
Controller	Correspondence (with vendors)				x					

By Department/Area	Type	While Active							Other	Perm anent
			1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years	7 years	10 years		
Library	Deeds of Gift									x
General Counsel	Deeds, mortgage, and bills of sale - keep in fireproof safe									x
Controller	Depreciation Schedules									x
Library	Digital Repository Release Forms									x
Library	Donation Receipt Letters						x		Log maintained permanently	
Institutional Advancement	Donor memoranda - keep in fireproof safe									x
Controller	Duplicate deposit slips			x						
Human Resources	Employee files (after termination date)						x			
Human Resources	Employment applications				x					
Library	Equipment Waivers				x					x
General Counsel	Evidence								Until litigation is resolved	
Controller	Expense analysis/expense distribution schedules						x			
Library	Financial								Permanent unless vendor changes, then 6 years	x
Controller	Financial (unless otherwise specified)						x			
Office of Sponsored Programs	Grant related documents								Consult OSP ¹	
University wide	Incident reports							x		
Controller	Insurance policies									x
Controller	Insurance records, claims						x			
General Counsel	Intellectual Property (trademarks)									x
Library	Interlibrary Loan Records	X							Permanent unless vendor changes, then 5 years	x

¹ For grant related documents, please see [External Funding Practice: Records Management](#)

By Department/Area	Type	While Active	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years	7 years	10 years	Other	Perm anent
Controller	Internal audit reports				x					
Controller	Invoices (to customers, from vendors)						x			
Human Resources	Job announcements/advertisements		x							
Health Services	Lab Logs						x			
Library	Library material censorship and complaint records						x			
University wide	Licenses (after expiration)						x			
Library	Licenses and Contracts								Purged 7 years after the license ends	
General Counsel	Litigation Records								Five years after litigation concluded	
Health Services	Medical Records						x		Electronically stored	
Athletics	Medical Records (after NU separation)						x			
General Counsel	Minute books, bylaws and charter									x
General Counsel	Patents and related papers									x
Human Resources	Payroll records and summaries						x			
Human Resources	Personnel files (terminated employee)						x			
University wide	Planning Documents				x				After expiration	
Human Resources	Retirement and pension records									x
Counseling Center	Student mental health records, counseling notes						x			
Controller	Tax returns and worksheets									x
Business Affairs	Timesheets						x			
General Counsel	Trademark registrations and copyrights									x
Student Accounts	Transcripts									x
Business Affairs	W-2, W-4						x			

By Department/Area	Type	While Active	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years	7 years	10 years	Other	Perm anent
Information Technology	Web content (after inactive)					X				
Business Affairs	Withholding tax statements						X			
Controller	Year end financial statements									X

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

None

REFERENCED POLICIES:

For information related to student academic, disciplinary, and grant-related records, see the following policies:

- [Student Academic Records Retention](#)
- [Judicial Records Retention \(Dean of Students\)](#)
- [External Funding Practice: Records Management](#)

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

- Originated: 01/01/2008
- Current Effective Date: 03/24/2026
- Next Review Date: 03/23/2039
- Revision/Renewal Log:
 - Rewritten by General Counsel and approved by Cabinet - 03/24/2026