

	<i>Responsible Office or Department:</i>	Registrar
	<i>Effective Date:</i>	12/1/2024
<i>Student Academic Records Retention</i>		

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Student Academic Records Retention policy is to establish a systematic approach to managing the academic student records of Niagara University. This procedure ensures:

- Legal and Regulatory Compliance: Adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and accreditation standards governing the retention, student access, and disposal of records, including FERPA, HIPAA, and other state, federal and provincial law.
- Operational Efficiency: Support for the effective and efficient management of institutional records, ensuring they are accessible when needed and disposed of when no longer required.
- Privacy and Security: Protection of sensitive and confidential information throughout its lifecycle, from creation to destruction, to safeguard the rights of individuals and the institution.
- Historical and Institutional Value: Preservation of records of enduring value that contribute to the documentation of the institution's history and legacy.
- Risk Mitigation: Minimization of risks associated with improper handling, unauthorized access, or untimely destruction of records.
- This procedure applies to all records created, received, or maintained by Niagara University, regardless of format, and provides a framework for consistent and responsible records management practices.

SCOPE:

This procedure applies exclusively to academic records and applicant records maintained by Niagara University. It applies to all students regardless of the campus site a student attended - Lewiston, New York or Vaughan, Ontario.

1. Academic Records: Records related to the enrollment, academic progress, and achievements of students, including but not limited to:
 - Transcripts
 - Grades
 - Degree conferral records
 - Academic standing documentation
 - Additional Notes added by Faculty/Staff

2. Applicant Records: Records related to individuals applying for admission to Niagara University, including but not limited to:

- Admission applications
- Supporting documents (e.g., test scores, transcripts, recommendation letters)
- Admission decisions and correspondence

This procedure governs the retention, storage, and disposal of these records in accordance with applicable legal, regulatory, and institutional requirements. It applies to records in all formats, including physical, digital, and electronic communication.

Records not falling within the categories of academic or applicant records are outside the scope of this procedure and are governed by separate policies or practices established by the institution.

MAIN PROVISIONS:

To provide guidelines for the retention of documents relating to a student's studies at Niagara University after 2015. **All records of students prior to 2015 are kept permanently on microfilm.**

Non-Enrolled Students

Niagara University is only obligated to maintain the applications, materials and submitted transcripts of students **who do not enroll** at Niagara University for the period of a year after the term of application, after which the Office of Admissions may purge application materials as needed and these students would be required to resubmit these materials should they re-apply at a later date.

Enrolled Students

Documents and records of students who enroll at Niagara University, in any capacity or campus site (non-matriculated/matriculated), follow the below chart for critical documents required for preservation and the duration preserved. The elements of the student record, as defined below, and the duration are keeping in line with best practices and industry standards as defined by *Student Records Management* by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. (AFG - After Graduation, LTA - Last Term Attended)

STUDENT FILE COMPOSITION OF ENROLLED STUDENTS

Item	Min. Retention Period	Original Source	How/Where Stored
Application	3 Year AFG/LTA	Admissions	Pdf in Student Archive - Records Office
Test Scores	3 Years AFG/LTA	Admissions	Stored in Colleague
Transcripts – High school	3 Years AFG/LTA	Admissions or Records	Pdf in Student Archive File
Transcripts - College & Niagara University	Permanent	Admissions or Records	Pdf in Student Archive file Niagara Record in Colleague
Recommendation Letters, Essays, Etc	NOT REQUIRED POST ADMISSION	Admissions	Reside in Slate until prospect record is purged.
Advisement Records	3 Years AFG/LTA	Faculty/Records	Pdf in Student Archive - Records Office
Academic Warnings/Notes	3 Years AFG/LTA	Deans Offices Records	Pdf in Student Archive - Records Office
Major Changes/Minor Adds	Not required after need met.	Form Portal	Program history is archived in Colleague. Form purged one year after processing.
Degree Audit Records supporting graduation & Transfer credit evaluations	3 years AFG/LTA	Deans Offices Records	Pdf in Student Archive or Generation from Colleague/Self Service
Drop/Add/Force Courses	Not required after need met.	Form Portal	Request Form purged one year after processing. Course transaction logs maintained and available in Colleague
Placement Hours, Clinical Records, competency assessments	Permanent, if submitted by Deans	College Deans	Pdf in Student Archive
Grade Change Forms	Not Required after need met	Form Portal	Form purged three years after processing
Grades End of Term	Permanent	Faculty	Pdf of current transcript in Student Archive and stored in Colleague.
Additional Notes of Record	Permanent if submitted by Deans	Faculty or Deans	Pdf in Student Archive
Internship/Independent Study Contracts	Not required after need met.	Form Portal	Form purged six years after processing.

RECORDS STORAGE

1. Applicant information of students who did not enroll are stored on Slate and on their servers as defined in their contract with Niagara University. The Office of Admissions maintains this system in accordance with their recruitment needs.
2. The materials of enrolled students (in accordance to the chart above) are copied/extracted from Slate by the Office of Student Records and maintained by their office shortly after matriculation. All files are kept in .pdf format and are currently housed on the secure Docuware system contractually defined with Toshiba systems.
3. Any additional physical and electronic student records, transcripts, logs, faculty additions for a student's permanent file of currently enrolled students are turned over to the Office of Student Records shortly after graduation or a student's withdrawal from the university by the college, department or campus that housed them during the student's enrollment. These records are then digitized and added to the student record.
4. Enrolled Student Records prior to 2015: Stored on microfilm located in the Student Records Office and a back-up copy located in the Library.
5. Medaille Legacy Records: As the legacy institution for Medaille University, Niagara maintains ONLY the official academic transcripts on its servers as well as a physical hard drive copy retained by Niagara University IT.

RECORDS ACCESS

Access to a student's academic file while they are either an applicant or enrolled at Niagara is limited to the student, and any campus office with a legitimate educational interest. This includes in most cases but is not limited to: the Office of Admissions, academic college housing a student's major, and the Office of Student Records. The Office of Student Records determines and provides this access as appropriate. Once a student graduates or stops their enrollment at Niagara University, any physical student files or components are returned to the records office, digitized and archived and direct access to the digital student file is restricted. Access to the student files of inactive students is limited to the students themselves, and upon request given appropriate educational interest as determined by the Office of Student Records in accordance with FERPA.

RECORDS DISPOSAL

Any physical application or student file material is shredded and disposed of at the point of scanning or transferring into a digital format (pdf) for preservation. Records that pass their preservation requirement as listed in the above chart - will be permanently deleted on a periodic basis in conjunction with IT.

HISTORY:

- Originated: Existing Practice Documented and Submitted 12/1/2024
- Current Effective Date: 12/1/2024