Academic Records   
Retention Schedule

Approved: 11/28/2017 (or earlier)  
Last Updated: 5/13/2025

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Description automatically generated

Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance

**About this Retention Schedule**

The following retention schedule is comprised of Michigan State University specific record series. Please be advised that this retention schedule is under review and may be updated or replaced at any time. You should refer to the Record Retention website to find current versions of this and any other retention schedule. This document is only accurate as of its last update.

If you cannot locate the correct record series, contact [OARC.temporaryrecords@msu.edu](mailto:OARC.temporaryrecords@msu.edu) for further assistance.

**Record Destruction Requirements**

[BOT 302 (Retention of Records and University Archives)](https://trustees.msu.edu/bylaws-ordinances-policies/policies/02-12-01.html) states “…University records of any format may not be destroyed without approval from both the record creator or maintainer and the University Records Manager.” Before disposing of any university records, you should consult an applicable record retention schedule to determine retention requirements. If records have met retention, and there is no litigation, audit, or other legal proceedings pending, you must submit a Record Destruction Form for review and approval before destruction occurs. If you need a copy of the form or further instructions on how to complete the form, you can learn more on the Record Destruction page.

**Permanent Records or Records with Archival Value**

University Archives & Historical Collections (UAHC) was first established in 1969 and is the designated repository for permanent or historically significant university records. Records with permanent retention or those designated as having archival value should be reviewed by UAHC prior to initiating disposal. If you have any questions about what is considered an archival record, or if you would like more information on how to transfer records for preservation, visit [their website](https://lib.msu.edu/ua) or contact them via email at [archives@msu.edu](mailto:archives@msu.edu).

**Non-record Materials**

[Schedule GS1 (Non-records)](https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/-/media/Project/Websites/dtmb/Services/Records-Management/RMS_GS1.pdf?rev=4226d45fc16d43528dd40d0465fb41d6&hash=EDAF0CAAF1941B99BF0B6D312BD0EB16) describes records that have no administrative or archival value but are in possession of an office or department. Non-records can be disposed of at any time, and they are not required to be documented on a Record Destruction Form.

Examples:

* Drafts replaced by new or final versions
* Convenience copies or duplicates
* Publications or mail received outside of MSU used for reference or informational purposes
  + (e.g. brochures, catalogs, newsletters, flyers, junk mail, advertisements, etc.)
* Spam email
* Research or reference materials from outside sources not used to document any final decisions or actions

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| **Schedule & Item Number** | **Record Series Title** | **Description** | **Retention Period** | **Disposition** |
| MSU | Certificate Programs – Type 3 Certificates | These are records of Type 3 Certificate Programs that are not related to a degree program. These programs are not listed on official MSU Transcripts, and do not require approval via academic governance. The Registrar’s Office does not maintain records for these programs; the Academic Schools and Units administering the certificate programs must maintain all records for these certificate programs. Records should contain: type of certificate, dates of participation and completion, and copies of certificates issued. | Permanent | Retain one copy in office of creation permanently. |
| MSU | Class Rosters | Lists of students registered for classes (may include drops and attendance records.) | EV + 1 YEAR | Retain 1 year after semester ends, then destroy. |
| MSU | Class Schedules | Information about class scheduling times and locations. | EV + 1 YEAR | Retain 1 year after semester ends, then destroy. |
| MSU | Course Syllabi, Curriculum, and Instruction Notes | These records show course requirements, class descriptions, and required readings. | Permanent | Retain records until no longer active, then transfer to UAHC. |
| MSU | Graduate Student Files – Completed Degrees | These are departmental copies of student information. | EV + 3 YEARS | Retain 3 years after graduation, then destroy. |
| MSU | Graduate Student Files – Incomplete Degrees | Records for students who have not completed their degree. | EV + 5 YEARS | Retain 5 years after date of last enrollment, then destroy. |
| MSU | Student Application Files – Graduate Program – Not Admitted / No-shows | Files contain information from students being considered for admission to a graduate program. | EV + 1 YEAR | Retain 1 year after application, then destroy. |
| MSU | Student Files – Foreign | This schedule applies to the records of any student (undergraduate or graduate) who is or at any time was classified as a foreign student. | EV + 3 YEARS | Retain 3 years after graduation, then destroy.  *Before destroying, send original material to the Registrar’s Office to be added to the student’s official file.* |

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| **Schedule & Item Number** | **Record Series Title** | **Description** | **Retention Period** | **Disposition** |
| MSU | Student Files – Professional Schools | Professional schools are those whose graduates are licensed by a federal or state agency. They also usually maintain a special accreditation. These include Human Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Education, College of Veterinary Medicine, and College of Law. | EV + 10/50 YEARS | If accrediting bodies do not have retention requirements:  Retain 10 years after graduation OR 50 years after graduation in the event of disciplinary action or expulsion, then destroy. |
| MSU | Student Testing Documents | These records include final examinations and all grading records. ([MSU’s Code of Teaching Responsibility](https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.aspx?Section=514)) | EV + 1 YEAR | Retain 1 year after the end of the semester, then destroy. |
| MSU | Transcripts – Permanent Academic Record | These are official student records and represent the core academic achievement of MSU students. | Permanent | Retain permanently in the Registrar’s Office. |
| MSU | Undergraduate Student Files – Completed Degrees | These are departmental copies of student information. | EV + 3 YEARS | Retain 3 years after graduation, then destroy. |
| MSU | Undergraduate Student Files – Incomplete Degrees | Records for students who have not completed their degree. | EV + 3 YEARS | Retain 3 years after date of last enrollment, then destroy. |