

## Record Retention – Best Practices for Departments

The University strives to retain records long enough to satisfy internal and external requirements, but not so long as to incur unnecessary costs or burdens (BFB-RMP-2).

Below are some tips and best practices for departments to consider when developing a process for record retention and destruction of departmental records.

**Federal Guidance:** Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200 Subpart D 200.333) states that “financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-Federal entity records pertinent to a Federal award must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.”

**The UC Records Retention Schedule** prescribes a period of 6 years after the expiration/termination of an award, unless otherwise specified in the award agreement. Because the UC has a longer record retention period for contracts and grants, our campus follows this record retention cycle.

The retention schedule is very detailed and can be accessed here:  
<http://recordsretention.ucop.edu/>

### **Tips & Best Practices\*:**

1. Create an internal process that works best for your department. Consider purging files once a year, on a fiscal year basis. This allows time during the summer months to purge. Timely destruction of records that have reached the end of their retention period will reduce future audit and litigation risks as well as eliminate unnecessary storage expense.
2. Maintain a departmental procedure to enable accurate and timely retrieval of records as well as the timely destruction of records that have reached the end of their retention period.
3. Be mindful that the policy is media neutral so both paper and electronic files are subject to the retention schedule.
4. **Some agencies may require a longer retention schedule so be sure to review the award terms and conditions carefully and identify your records appropriately.**
5. **Some records may not be able to be destroyed at the end of their retention period. Records involved in legal proceedings, ongoing investigations, or pending/ongoing audits must be retained until the department has been notified that it is allowed to proceed with destruction.**

Appendices A and B of BFB-RMP-2: Records Retention and Disposition include recommendations for records maintenance/storage and records destruction that may be helpful for departments.

**Resources:**

UCSB Records Management (under Audit Services)\*\*: <http://www.policy.ucsb.edu/information-stewardship/records-management>

UC Record Retention Schedule (see “Full Schedule” and FAQ’s too):  
<http://recordsretention.ucop.edu/>

University Records Management Project (BFB-RMP-1):  
<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7020453/BFB-RMP-1>

University Records Retention and Disposition (BFB-RMP-2):  
<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7020454/BFB-RMP-2>

\* This document was prepared by the UCSB Contracts and Grants Advisory Group and serves as a tool for departmental liaisons and departments.

\*\* This website does not appear to be maintained on a regular basis.