



## Managing the Records of Departing Employees Offboarding Responsibilities

As UW-Madison employees, we all create, receive, and maintain public records as part of our positions. These records document the University's activities and business. They may be in paper or electronic media and exist in various formats, including but not limited to documents, photographs, videos, datasets, maps, social media, texts, and emails.

When an employee leaves their position (i.e., transfers to another department, resigns, retires, is laid off, or is terminated), the records they created and managed remain the responsibility and property of the University and must continue to be managed by their unit. These records must be accessible and managed in compliance with all state and federal legal requirements, Board of Regents and Universities of Wisconsin policies, and UW-Madison records retention schedules and policies.

### Getting Started – Understanding Records Management

If you're not familiar with the basics of records management, such as how to identify public records and non-records, how to determine how long to retain records, and which records need to be destroyed or transferred to the University Archives after their retention period, please review our [Introduction to Records Management training](#).

Other records management guidance can be found on our training [webpage](#).

### Transition Planning

While some employee departures may be sudden and unexpected, there are other situations in which advance preparation is possible. Regardless, plans for transitioning an employee's physical and electronic records should begin as soon as it is known that an employee is leaving.

The supervisor (and the employee, if possible) should determine how to handle any remaining records after the employee leaves. Some questions to consider are:

- Where will the records be stored?
- Who will need access to and take over the management of the records?
- Are any records stored in locations that only the employee can access? Do these need to be moved to a central location or have permissions transferred to other staff?

The answers to these questions can be used to create a plan for managing and accessing the records, if needed by other unit staff after the employee leaves.



## Employee Responsibilities

At a minimum, the employee is responsible for:

- Documenting any physical and electronic locations where they store records before they leave and sharing the document with their supervisor.
- Moving records from personal drives and locations where only the employee has access (e.g., Box, computer hard drive) to an agreed-upon location or granting their supervisor or other staff permissions to access them.

Employees should also:

- Identify applicable records retention schedules for their records
  - Any records that have met their retention periods should be disposed of or transferred to University Archives per the disposition outline in the applicable records retention schedule
  - Any records that still need to be retained should be moved or saved into centralized spaces or drives so they can continue to be accessed and managed by the unit.

## Supervisor Responsibilities

It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the departing employee has documented the records within their possession and their location as well as that the employee has moved or provided access to the records.

If the employee was unable to fulfill their responsibilities before departing, the supervisor will need to complete them on the employee's behalf.

The supervisor must ensure that the records are:

- Disposed of or transferred to University Archives if they have met their retention period per an approved [University records retention schedule](#)
- Managed appropriately if they are still required to be retained until they have met their retention.

To ensure ongoing compliance, the supervisor may also want to incorporate these tasks into the unit's offboarding policies and procedures.

*Refer to Appendix A for a checklist of tasks to complete.*

## Other Campus Resources for Electronic Records

DoIT also maintains a [guide](#) outlining the steps that need to be taken when an employee leaves the University. Employees and their supervisors should work with DoIT to make sure all electronic records and data created and managed by the separating employee are accounted for and managed appropriately.

## Where Can I Get Help or Additional Training?

You can ask questions and get additional help by contacting the Records Management Program at [recmgmt@library.wisc.edu](mailto:recmgmt@library.wisc.edu) or 608-262-3284. We also have additional training on records management topics on our website at [www.library.wisc.edu/archives/records-management](http://www.library.wisc.edu/archives/records-management).



## Appendix A: Checklist for Departing Employee Records

Departing employees and their supervisors may find it helpful to create an [inventory of records](#) managed by the departing employee to ensure all records are accounted for. This list can be used to track what records need to be maintained by the unit or if records have been destructed/deleted or transferred to the University Archives.

Records should NOT be disposed of or deleted just because they are "old" or have not been used in a long time. Records should be managed, disposed of, or transferred to the University Archives in accordance with the University's approved [records retention schedules](#).

Any records that are part of an active public records request, audit, or litigation should NOT be disposed of or deleted.

- Check and document all physical and electronic spaces where records may be kept or saved.
  - ☐ Desk and office area
  - ☐ File cabinets, storage spaces (e.g., attics, basements, closets, etc.)
  - ☐ Offsite storage (e.g. State Records Center)
  - ☐ Email account
  - ☐ Internal Hard Drives (typically the C-drive on computers) and Computer Desktop
  - ☐ Google Drive, SharePoint, Box, or other cloud storage
  - ☐ USBs, external hard drives, and/or other external storage devices
  - ☐ Any other spaces, physical or electronic, where you may hold records
- If you are the owner, administrator, or permissions manager for an electronic resource used by your office, assign that role to your supervisor (or their designee)
- If you are an Authorized User for unit records being stored offsite at the State Records Center, notify Records Management at [recmgmt@library.wisc.edu](mailto:recmgmt@library.wisc.edu) to let them know you are leaving. If possible, provide the name of your replacement in that role or the name of someone who can help determine who will take that role.
- Use records retention schedules to determine how long the records need to be maintained before disposing of or transferring to the University Archives.
  - ☐ Notify the supervisor of any records that have not met their retention period and still need to be maintained by the unit
  - ☐ Destroy, delete, or [transfer to the University Archives](#) any records that have met their retention period



- For records you manage that have not met their retention period and must still be held by the unit:
  - ☐ Move electronic records from locations that are only accessible by the departing employee (e.g., C-Drive, Box), to a central location or grant permission for the manager (designee) to ensure they can continue to be managed by your unit.
  - ☐ Document the location of all paper and electronic records that have not met their retention period and still need to be maintained by the unit
  - ☐ Review the list with your supervisor