

Record Management Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of the Record Management Policy is to promote proper management, retention, preservation, and disposal of records of college operations, in order to ensure efficient current and future operations, preserve a historical record, comply with legal obligations, and eliminate outdated and unnecessary records. The policy also provides guidance to individual departments and offices regarding their legal obligations with respect to the retention and disposal of specific categories of documents within their units.

1. What records are covered by the policy?

“Official records” are covered by the policy. An “official record” is any tangible thing containing information that is created, received, used, recorded, or filed in the course of college educational and/or business operations, regardless of format, except for the categories of documents listed in FAQ #2.

2. What records are not covered by the policy?

1. Records of immediate or transitory value only, such as routine letters or memoranda of transmittal, telephone messages, notices, or memoranda that give only logistical information such as a change of location for a meeting and “for your information” notes
2. Faculty research records and notes
3. Duplicate materials and blank forms
4. Personal or private documents (including e-mail) neither created nor received in connection with college operations
5. Magazines and newspapers not published by Goucher
6. Published reports and other documents produced by entities other than Goucher
7. Notes, drafts, or working papers once a project is completed, unless they provide more complete information than the final report

3. If a record is not an official record covered by the policy, do I have to worry about it?

Some materials that do not constitute official college records could nevertheless have historical value to the college and provide important information to retain for the college’s institutional memory. For example, personal faculty papers are not official records, but are actively collected in the archives. Please see the *Guide to Transferring Materials to the Archives*, attached as Appendix A to the policy. Any questions about preserving materials for historical value should be directed to the college curator.

4. What if I can’t determine whether a particular document is an official record?

Questions about whether certain material constitutes an official record subject to the retention guidelines should be directed to the Contract and Compliance Manager.

5. What are my responsibilities as a Goucher employee under this policy?

If you work as the curator of special collections and archives [curator] or as a program director or an office supervisor, you have specific responsibilities that are listed in the policy. If you do not fall into one of these categories and you handle any records of the college, whether they are official or unofficial records, you should read the section of the policy entitled “Disposition of Records.” That section describes how long you are required to maintain certain documents and how to dispose of documents after the retention period has passed.

6. Are there any special requirements I need to follow when I am destroying college documents?

Generally, you should remember two important things about document destruction. First, if the document is confidential in nature, you must take care to dispose of it in a confidential fashion, such as shredding. Second, if you are instructed by legal counsel to suspend document destruction in your department, you must follow that instruction.

7. Where can I find the particular retention periods for documents in my department?

The policy lists types of documents under the department where they are located. The policy does not include all documents at the college, so if you have a question about the retention period for a particular document that is not listed, contact the Contract and Compliance Manager for assistance. Once a retention period has been determined, that document type will be added to the schedule for future reference.

The policy also includes guidelines for the maintenance of records of various programs and committees. Generally, each program and committee should establish an ongoing process of records management for the program or committee to ensure that personnel transitions do not interrupt ongoing records management for these entities.

8. How should I treat electronic documents?

For purposes of applying the retention periods, you should treat electronic documents in the same way as you treat paper documents. If you have questions about the storage of electronic information consult with the department of information technology.

9. What if I don't have room in my office to store all the records I am required to keep?

If you have questions about the storage of records, or need assistance in identifying appropriate storage space, contact the Contract and Compliance Manager.