

## Records Management Definitions

The following are the definitions of the terms referenced in this policy. Where possible, the definitions provided in the State Statute and Rules (5 ILCS 160 and Title 44 - Part 4400) are used:

1. **Application for Authority to Dispose of State Records/Retention Schedules:** the document lists the records in each office with corresponding retention, maintenance, and disposition requirements for a record series, based on administrative, fiscal, legal or archival values for the scheduled records. A Retention Schedule is only valid and active upon approval by the State Records Commission.
2. **Born-Digital Records:** records created in a digital format, as opposed to those created in other media and then converted to digital surrogates. Examples include word processing documents, electronics spreadsheets, and digital photographs.
3. **Department Records Tracker:** a document located in each department listing the retention schedule series title, department record information, and disposition of records within the department.
4. **Digital Surrogate:** reproduction of content on analog media that has been scanned, photographed, encoded, or otherwise converted to a digital file that, when printed, viewed, or played, replicates the original content.
5. **Disposal of Records:** is the destruction of the record in a secure manner. This will be the manner noted and approved on the Disposal Request. For additional information on the authorized methods of records destruction, please refer to the University's Information Security Procedure or contact the University Records Officer or Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) for guidance.
6. **Electronic Record:** A record generated, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means. Both born-digital records and digital surrogates of analog records are considered electronic records. Databases or components of databases may or may not be considered records, depending upon their function and contents. Electronic records must be stored/retained using approved storage media. See Electronic Records section of this policy for additional information.
7. **Media Neutral:** items that are included on a record retention schedule, regardless of their medium (i.e., paper, digital, etc.).
8. **Metadata:** Metadata describes the record attributes in a way that enables their management and use/reuse. They also document the relationships between records and the agents that made and use them and the events, or circumstances in which the records are made and used. Metadata supports searching of information assets and maintaining their authenticity.
9. **Non-record Material:** Non-Records may be copies of university records and materials used solely for reference purposes, transitory messages consisting of correspondence of materials created to communicate information of short-term value, and private/personal material not related to public business. Non-records should be disposed of as soon as possible after their primary usefulness has expired. Unlike university records, non-records do not require State approval prior to their disposal.
10. **Office of Record:** any office that has the primary responsibility for maintaining a record as a University Record. There may be multiple offices responsible for maintaining any given record. Offices need to determine if

duplicate copies, convenience copies, etc. need to be maintained in accordance with an established records series. The Records Officer can be consulted on those determinations.

11. **Permanent:** to be retained forever.
12. **Records:** all books, papers, digitized electronic material, maps, photographs, databases, or other official documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed, or received by any Agency/University in the State in pursuance of state law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved for preservation by the University or its successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the State or of the State Government, or because of the informational data contained therein [5 ILCS 160/2].
13. **Records Disposal Certificate:** also called the State of Illinois Records Disposal Certificate. Universities must file the certificate with the State Records Commission prior to destruction of any records present on their approved Application for Authority to Dispose of State Records. This is the document that lists the application number, item no., title, dates, volume, and disposal method of which they wish to request disposal authorization. Universities must file the certificate with the State Records Commission 30 days prior to destruction of any records present on their approved Application for Authority to Dispose of State Records. Western Illinois University departments may not dispose of records until the Certification has been approved and returned to the department by the University Records Officer and the 30-day waiting period has expired.
14. **Records Series:** a group of identical or related documents (either as to form or content) that is arranged under a single filing system or kept together as a unit because they consist of the same form, relate to the same subject, result from the same activity, or have certain common physical characteristics (i.e., maps, blueprints, etc.). A series may contain both forms and correspondence.
15. **Research, Historical or Archival Value:** Records have enduring value when they reflect significant historical events or document the history and development of university or its policy.
16. **Retention Period:** is found in the retention schedule and establishes the length of time required to maintain a record. The time frame for the retention of each record is determined by each office in cooperation with the State Records Commission. An important factor impacting the retention period and record storage location is how often the records are used. For example:
  17. A record that has a retention period of six years and is frequently referenced during the first two years, then infrequently after that time, will likely have a retention period that states:
  18. "Retain two (2) years in office, then transfer to the State Records Center for four (4) years, then destroy in a secure manner."
19. **Retention Schedules:** lists the records in each office at the university and their disposition. It identifies the time frames those records are to be kept before requesting their destruction or transfer to the University Archives. Records not listed in the retention schedule will need to be added before they can be approved for destruction.
20. **Secure(d):** all documents (paper or electronic) that are stored in locked cabinets, spaces, or by a method to prevent unauthorized access (encryption) pursuant to the University's Data Classification Guidelines and Procedures.
21. **University Archives:** the location/managing office of permanent records preserved due to historical, administrative, legal, or enduring value as determined by the University Archives and the State Records Commission.