

Records management guidance - Retention Schedule

Introduction – what is a retention schedule?

A retention schedule is a list of the time periods that you need to keep records for. These are normally organised by the type of record, then give a time period after which the record can be destroyed or needs to be transferred to an archive.

Why this retention schedule is different

Retention schedules can be very detailed and therefore hard to work with. So, we have approached this from the other direction.

This means we start with a list of time periods, which are followed by the sort of records that need to be kept for that time period.

How do I decide which category my records fall under?

The categories given are fairly broad - this is intentional in order to keep the number of choices to a minimum. We have given the reasons for putting records in their categories below. Sometimes this is the School's recommendation, however, sometimes this is due to an Act or other statutory instrument, which will be shown. Examples are also provided as illustration.

What if I am not sure which category fits?

If you think that your records could fit into more than one category, go for the longer time period. If you are uncertain which category they fit into, contact the Records Manager Rachael Maguire or the School's Archivist Sue Donnelly, who will be able to advise you.

When does the time period start?

With regards paper files, from the date the file is closed. If this is not official recorded on the cover or anywhere else, a paper file can be considered closed from the date of the last piece of paper put on the file.

With regards electronic material held within a folder, from the date of the last document/email/etc added to the folder. It is a good idea to open a new folder on each subject for each academic year e.g. Complaints 2009-10, Complaints 2010-11 and only include the documents/emails relating to that time period. You could also use financial years for budget related folders. Project folders could have a closed date added to the folder title when the project finishes so you know the date to calculate the time period from.

With regards electronic material held in databases, you should be able to purge material that has reached it's end of life on a monthly basis. Consider including a report that alerts you to when material is up for deletion and include deletion within the specification for any database.

There are some records included in the table below which tell you when the time period starts e.g. contract records. However, more general records should follow the guidance above.

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Retention Schedule

Time period	Type of record	Why keep this long
1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam scripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only needed until the appeals process has finished – a year covers any requests for exam related information.
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational records Controlled waste records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operational records are records that you need to get a job done. Once that job is done, you will generally not need them. Two years allows you to keep this year's and the last year's records so you can look at what you did last year, but any records in the category will not need to be kept for any longer than two years. This category includes duplicates of records that you are using for information only where the original is being kept elsewhere. For example: having the documents relating to last year's presentation ceremonies helps you to prepare for this year's presentation ceremonies. After this year's presentation ceremonies, you won't need last year's documents anymore as you can use this year's next year. Legislation table entry 1
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special waste records Accident reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation table entry 2 Unless illness could develop in future
7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial records Contractual records – from the time the contract has ended Non core student records – from the time the student has left Employee records that do not need to be kept for their lifetime – from the time the employee has left Audit records Legal cases and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation table entries 3, 4, 5, 6 Legislation table entries 4, 7, 8, 9 Legislation table entry 4 Legislation table entry 4 Legislation table entry 4 Legislation table entry 4 Legislation table entry 4

<p>10 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy records - from the time the strategy is implemented • Planning records – from the time the strategy is implemented • Records relating to the development of policies and procedures – from the time the policies and procedures are finalised • Records relating to the development and review of programmes and courses • Records relating to research projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and planning cycle means that it can be 5 years between strategy and planning reviews – this allows the previous records to be available during the next review. • Strategy and planning cycle means that it can be 5 years between strategy and planning reviews – this allows the previous records to be available during the next review. • Allows a long enough time to review policies and procedures. • Allows a long enough time to review programmes and courses. • Minimum suggested retention period, according to JISC guidance. Some records may be of permanent value.
<p>12 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal advice, including setting up of contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation table entry 4
<p>40 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident reports where long term illness could develop • Installation, maintenance and decommissioning of safety critical or hazardous operations • Employee health and sickness records • Air monitoring records • Asbestos certificates • Investigation of accidents, dangerous occurrences and outbreaks of notifiable diseases • Environmental incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not statutory but used by Durham University and cleared with Health and Safety • Legislation table entry 10 • Legislation table entries 11, 12, 13 • Legislation table entry 12 • Legislation table entry 12 • Legislation table entry 13 - This is for Group 3 or 4 biological agents, but Durham gives 40 years for all of this group • Not statutory but used by Durham University
<p>75 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records relating to an employee that need to be kept for their lifetime e.g. pensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation table entry 4

Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee minutes and papers • Policies • Deeds, titles, other ownership of property and/or land records until the land or property is no longer owned by the School • Final accounts • Core student records, including programme and course details • Final reports of research projects (and perhaps associated source records) • Core alumni records • Selected personnel records – academic staff above Reader level and senior administrative staff • Official LSE publications • Essays and other works held in plagiarism detection software. 	<p>These records show the history of the School or are important enough to be kept forever.</p> <p>Plagiarism detection software works by comparing previous student work to current, so needs to be kept permanently.</p>
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Legislation

This is not an exhaustive list of all the legislation that affects the School. However, it includes all of the legislation referred to above.

1	S.I. 1991/2839, Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991
2	S.I. 1996/972, The Special Waste Regulations 1996
3	1970 c.9, Taxes Management Act 1970
4	1980 c.58, Limitation Act 1980
5	1994 c.23, Value Added Tax Act 1994
6	HMCE 700/21, HM Customs and Excise Notice 700/21: Keeping [VAT] records and accounts
7	S.I. 1991/2680, The Public Works Contracts Regulations 1991
8	S.I. 1993/3228, The Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993
9	S.I. 1995/201, The Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995
10	S.I. 1998/2306, The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
11	S.I. 2002/2675, The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002
12	S.I. 2002/2676, The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
13	S.I. 2002/2677, The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002