

SOP: Academic Records Retention and Disposal Schedule

This SOP details the **academic records retention and disposal schedule**, covering the systematic management of student records, ensuring compliance with institutional policies and legal requirements, defining retention periods for various types of academic documentation, procedures for secure storage, guidelines for confidential disposal and destruction of records, and responsibilities assigned to staff for maintaining accurate academic records throughout their lifecycle.

1. Purpose

To provide a standardized approach for the retention, secure storage, and disposal of academic records in compliance with institutional policies and legal requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all student academic records, including but not limited to admissions documents, transcripts, grade records, graduation records, disciplinary actions, and correspondence handled by the academic administration.

3. Definitions

- Academic Records:** Any document related to a student's academic progression, performance, or status.
- Retention Period:** The length of time an academic record must be kept after creation or last use.
- Disposal/Destruction:** The permanent removal or shredding of documents following the conclusion of their retention period.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Registrar:** Overall management, oversight, and enforcement of this retention and disposal schedule.
- Records Staff:** Classification, secure storage, monitoring retention periods, and safe disposal of records.
- Academic Departments:** Proper transfer, storage, and preliminary review of academic records.

5. Retention Schedule

Record Type	Retention Period	Disposition
Student Transcripts	Permanent	Archive securely, never destroy
Admissions Applications (Enrolled)	7 years after graduation or separation	Confidential disposal
Admissions Applications (Not Enrolled)	2 years after application	Confidential disposal
Grade Records	5 years after course completion	Confidential disposal
Disciplinary Records	7 years after graduation or separation	Confidential disposal
Graduation Records (Awards, Degrees)	Permanent	Archive securely, never destroy
Correspondence (Routine)	1 year	Confidential disposal

6. Secure Storage Procedures

- All records must be stored in locked cabinets or access-controlled digital systems.
- Access restricted to authorized personnel only.
- Electronic records to be regularly backed up and protected by cybersecurity protocols.

7. Disposal and Destruction

- Records beyond their retention period must be cross-checked before disposal.
- Paper records: Shred using a cross-cut shredder or through certified confidential destruction services.
- Electronic records: Permanently deleted using data wiping software; storage media physically destroyed if necessary.
- A destruction log must be maintained with date, type, and method of destruction, and authorized staff signatures.

8. Compliance and Audit

- Periodic audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with this SOP.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action according to institutional policy.
- Legal and regulatory requirements take precedence over institutional policies if conflicts arise.

9. Revision and Review

- This SOP shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legal, regulatory, or institutional requirements.
- All staff will be notified of SOP updates and retrained if significant changes are made.

10. Related Documents

- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy

11. Approval and Implementation

- This SOP is effective upon approval by the Registrar and the institution's leadership.
- Staff training and implementation to follow immediately after approval.