



Common Records And Their Retention Periods

The following are common records and their retention periods from the **General Records Schedule** (GRS), Harvard's policy on how long to keep different types of records. Following each item is its GRS code. Contact **Records Management Services** for assistance in interpreting and applying the GRS and for records with the retention plan of transfer to or contact archives.

Financial records

- Accounts payable records (GRS 0410) – retain copies of documentation sent to Central Administration for 1 year; retain original documentation not sent to Central Administration for 4 years
- Journal records (GRS 0460) – retain for 4 years after end of fiscal year
- Payroll records (GRS 0550) – retain faculty and staff appointment forms for 6 years after employee leaves, then destroy; retain faculty and administrative staff time sheets and sick, personal, and vacation days tracking documentation for 4 years after end of fiscal year

Human resource records

- Personnel records (GRS 0675) – retain for 6 years after separation, then destroy
- Faculty personnel records (GRS 0705) – permanent retention for junior and senior faculty
- Search records (GRS 0765) – retain for 3 years after the end of the search, then destroy

Committee records

- Standing committee records (GRS 1027) – transfer to archives
- All other committee records (GRS 1030, 1032, 1035) – contact archives for review

Program and project records

- Executive administrative records (GRS 1053) – contact archives for review
- Program planning and management records (GRS 1120, 1125, 1127, 1135, 1150) – contact archives for review
- Special project records (GRS 1175) – contact archives for review

Publications

- University Publications (GRS 1665) – transfer 2 copies to archives, retain additional copies until no longer needed

Special events, conferences and programs records

- Special event, conference, and program records (GRS 1825, 1850) – contact archives for review

Academic program and student records

- Academic program administration records (GRS 3100) – contact archives for review
- Course records (GRS 3157) – transfer to archives
- Curriculum development and review records (GRS 3160) – transfer to archives
- Undergraduate student concentrator records (GRS 4270) – transfer to archives seven years after student separation
- Graduate student records (GRS 4150) – transfer to archives

Faculty records

- Faculty biographical records (GRS 3320) – transfer to archives
- Faculty personal and professional papers (GRS 3380) – contact archives for review

READING THE RECORDS SCHEDULE

Series Title

A generic title describing the type of records.

Retention Plan

This tells you how long you will need to keep materials and what their final disposition will be (review, archives, destruction). Some series have multiple retention plans, indicated by a letter (a, b, or c). Read the descriptions to see which plan best fits your records.

How to Break It Down

If the plan says:
"Retain 4 years after the end of the fiscal year."

"**Retain**": Indicates that the records must be kept for a certain period of time before they are ready for their final disposition.

"**4 years**": Indicates how long the records must be kept.

"**after end of fiscal year**": Indicates the trigger for when to begin counting the retention period.

Accounts Payable Records (0410)

This series documents the payment for vendor, travel and other expense reimbursement, PCard, and petty cash transactions by local units.

Records include invoices, receipts, or other original supporting documentation (e.g. packing slips), web voucher cover pages, petty cash vouchers, petty cash logs, petty cash receipt slips, corporate card monthly statements, PCard settlement system reports (weekly sweep reports), Harvard University Universal Expense Forms (UEF), Missing Receipt Affidavits, and payment request forms or memos.

Retention Plan:

- a) Non-Sponsored Accounts: All original documentation not transferred to Central Administration: *Retain 4 years after end of fiscal year.*
- b) Sponsored Accounts: All original documentation not transferred to Central Administration: *Retain 6 years after final account closing unless longer period specified by granting agency.*
- c) All Accounts: All copies of documentation transferred to Central Administration: *Retain 1 year after end of fiscal year.*

Legal Citation: 26 C.F.R. §§ 31.6001-1, 301.6501; 34 C.F.R. § 74-53; 48 C.F.R. § 4-7; 31 U.S.C. § 37; OMB Circular A-110; M.G.L. c.62C, § 24; M.G.L. c.260, § 2

Notes:

- 1) Web voucher invoices, travel and reimbursement receipts or other supporting documentation are imaged and maintained centrally. Local units are responsible for submitting them to Central Administration and maintaining copies to support day-to-day questions and operations.
- 2) Central Administration does not image receipts for Pcard and petty cash. Local units are responsible for maintaining original documentation of Pcard and petty cash transactions.

See Also:

- [Equipment Maintenance Records](#)
- [Procurement Records](#)
- [Computer Hardware Records](#)
- [Contract and Agreement Administration Records](#)

Records Schedule Number

A four-digit code used to identify the type of materials. Needed when filling out paperwork for transfers.

Function & Contents

The function statement describes why the records were created and maintained and how they are used to support office activities.

Legal Citation

Reference to the legal or regulatory requirements concerning these materials. Not all series have legal citation.

Notes

The notes are special instructions for using the schedule or for maintaining or disposing the records in the series.

See Also

A cross reference for other useful or related series.