Records Management Compliance

What Are Transitory Records?
Records of temporary usefulness that are not an integral part of a university records series, that are not regularly filed within the university’s recordkeeping system, and that are required only for a limited period of time for the completion of an action by an employee of the university or in the preparation of an on-going records series. Transitory records are not essential to the fulfillment of statutory obligations or to the documentation of university functions.

Examples Of Transitory Records
Announcements and notices of a general nature; Notifications of meetings, special events, holidays, acceptances or regrets; Memos to all staff of a routine nature where you are not the originator; Drafts; Preliminary drafts which don’t reflect or record significant steps in the preparation of a final document or record decisions; Working papers where the results have been written into an official document and which are not required to support it; Convenience or duplicate copies; “cc” copies which require no action; “FYI” copies made and kept only for convenient reference or for information and that are not annotated or changed in any way; Printouts or extracts from databases; Minutes and agendas received from other parts of the university or external groups which require no action; Messages where the information has no legal, fiscal, administrative or operational value; Personal messages, for example: “meet me for lunch at noon”; Business messages, for example: emails to schedule or confirm meetings; etc.

When To Dispose Of Transitory Records
As a general rule, destroy transitory records as soon as they have served their primary purpose. A Disposition Log is NOT required to destroy transitory records. Clearly identify draft items and discard once the final version of a document is prepared. Destroy the following transitory records as soon as their purpose has been served:

- Notices – once event has taken place unless you are the originator
- Preliminary drafts – when the final version of a document is issued
- “FYI” – when no longer referenced
- “cc” copies – when issue is resolved or concluded
- Review and delete transitory email messages regularly

Exercise Judgement On Those That May Need To Be Kept
- Drafts and working papers of Legal documents (e.g. relating to various negotiations) often need to be retained to document how the final agreement was reached
- Versions which show major changes in policy or approach may have longer term value for historical research purposes
- Budgets or policies may have future value in the unit responsible for their creation
- A telephone message slip or transmission document may be kept as evidence of contact at a certain time and date
- An envelope may be kept because of the postmark
- An annotated copy of a convenience or duplicate copy showing significant input should be filed and saved with other records related to the same activity or function

Remember
Official university records furnish the most conclusive information on a particular business function or activity. They provide evidence of policy, decision or obligation, they have legal, fiscal, administrative and possibly historical value and must be filed and maintained according to the terms and conditions of the university’s certified records retention schedule.

Transitory records have no ongoing legal, fiscal, operational, informational, evidential or historical value and can be disposed of as soon as you have finished with them.

More Information
Records Management Compliance
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