

Mississippi State University
Mississippi Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES)
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs)
Guidance for Records Management

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guidance is to provide standard guidance to units within CALS/MAFES regarding records management of major paperwork categories.

BACKGROUND

Entities have varied requirements for the retention of records. This guidance will provide units with standard recommendations for routine records. CALS/MAFES recommends the use of electronic retention of records when possible, as long as a backup/server method is used.

Period of retention: Federal guidance requires that records pertinent to an award (financial, support documents, statistical and all other) must be maintained for three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. Given that a significant number of awards are five-year awards, retention of records for ten years is supported as follows:

- Five year period of performance (most common NIFA award period)
- + three years required retention after close of award (7 CFR 3016.42; 7 CFR 3019.53)
- + one year for split fiscal years + one year 'cushion'
- = ten years retention period

At the end of the ten year retention period, paper records should be shredded (or forwarded to appropriate university department) and electronic records should be deleted (including backup files).

It is important to recognize that MAFES federal funds include not only restricted federal funds (32xxxx and the affiliated 82xxxx) but also our 160000 funds which are coded with federal CRIS projects (Hatch, Hatch Multi-state and Animal Health projects).

Human Resources Paperwork

MSU Policy 60.109 (<http://www.policies.msstate.edu/policypdfs/60109.pdf>) addresses Human Resources paperwork. Because of policies of our major funding partners, CALS/MAFES will extend the records maintenance time periods in 60.109 to 10 years. This includes but is not limited to job search records, departmental employee files, leave records and time records.

Academic Paperwork

As per Section D of MSU Academic Operating Policy (AOP) 13.14: Grade Appeal and Academic Review Board (<https://www.policies.msstate.edu/files/2020-08/1314.pdf>), faculty members are required to keep records on grades, examinations, projects, term papers, and other pertinent material not returned to the students on file for a minimum of one year.

Scientific Paperwork

Records with scientific and/or technological value, if not immediately used or if results remain unpublished, may require lengthy retention periods.

Legal Paperwork

Any records containing evidence or legally enforceable rights/obligation must be maintained indefinitely. These include but are not limited to: leases, titles, claims, cases, legal paperwork, patents. MSU Policy 06.05 provides additional details regarding compliance with federal court rules in federal lawsuits.

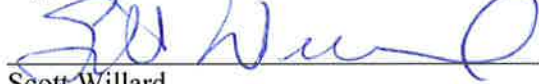
Historical Paperwork

Items of historical value should be maintained indefinitely.

Exceptions

If specific guidance governing an award or document type requires retention of records on paper or for a longer time period than this guidance recommends, that guidance will override these recommendations.

Approved:



Scott Willard

Director, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station
Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Date