

For the Record...

CREATE GOOD RECORDS

Understand the Records You Create

Records include all forms of recorded information and serve as evidence of the university's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, and other activities. While records are easily recognizable in paper formats, most records are now created electronically, including email, word-processing files, databases, web pages, and a variety of other electronic formats.

What are Good Records?

Good records should demonstrate what happened, who was involved, what advice/instruction was given, what was decided/recommended and by whom, and the order of events. Good records:

- Support decision making;
- Allow you and the university to operate more efficiently and effectively;
- Support the university in meeting its compliance requirements (audit, legal, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Personal Health Information Act);
- Document corporate knowledge/memory of the university;
- Support knowledge transfer and business continuity.

Tips for Creating Good Records

- As a general rule, always create records assuming someone will ask to see them.
- Create records with the expectation that they may be needed to support compliance requirements.
- Store records in shared folders on network drives, or in another shared location such as your unit's document management system or database, so that they can be readily accessed by anyone authorized to access them. Documents stored on a hard drive may be lost if a computer fails.
- Do not password protect individual documents or folders in a network drive, as they may not be able to be accessed if passwords are lost or forgotten.
- Organize records in ways that facilitate access.
 - Use meaningful subject lines in your email.
 - Start a new email if an email thread begins to stray from its original topic/subject.
 - Use meaningful naming conventions for your folders and documents. Seek advice from [Information Management & Protection](#).

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- Provide sufficient information that would allow a third party to understand the activity, service or event.
- Delegate someone in a meeting to take meeting minutes.
- Follow-up a significant business phone call or conversation in which a decision was made or direction was given with a document/email summarizing what was discussed.
- Before hitting send on a 'heated' email response, ask someone to review the email or take a moment to 'cool down' and then re-read the response.
- Include only the minimal amount of personal/confidential information. Use initials or file numbers instead of a person's name so that if an email goes astray there is less likelihood of causing a privacy breach.
- Remain focused on facts and your expert opinion rather than your personal opinion.