The Custodian of Records, pursuant to the authority of UWG Policy 8.4, establishes the following procedures to comply with Georgia’s Records Act:

A. Definitions

1. **Data** - facts about an object. A *data* file is a set of collected facts and is related numeric, graphical or textual information organized in a strictly prescribed form and format.

2. **Disposition** - the action taken to remove *records* no longer needed for business. These actions include transfer from active to inactive storage, transfer to off-site storage, transfer from one unit to another, transfer of *Permanent Records* to Special Collections, and disposal.

3. **Electronic record** - information recorded in a machine-readable format (e.g., information that only a computer/machine can process, and which, without a computer/machine, would not be understandable to people). Recorded electronic information becomes an *Official Record* when it satisfies the statutory definition of a *record* and is the same definition applied to *data* recorded on paper.

4. **Form** - a document used to facilitate procedural implementation or document procedural objectives.

5. **Non-records** - work-related documents that do not qualify as *records*; such as duplicate copies, convenience/reference copies, and stocks of publications.

6. **Office of record** - the unit, department, or division designated as having responsibility for retention and timely destruction of official University *records* and is assigned to the unit’s administrator or a designee.

7. **Official record** - the complete (final), authoritative version, retained and required for business or legal reasons. *Official records* provide evidence of the University’s business activities, decisions, procedures, operations, internal or external transactions, and reflect the University’s intent to preserve such information. *Records* are considered official when they are in their final form and held by the designated Office of Record.

8. **Permanent records** - *Records* appraised as having sufficient historical or other value to warrant continued preservation beyond the retention period for administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes. Once transferred to another location, such as Special Collections, the *records* are under the receiving unit’s legal custody.

9. **Personal Materials** - anything belonging to an individual that is not used to conduct agency business.

10. **Public Record** - documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, computer based or generated information, *data*, data fields, or similar material prepared and maintained or received by an agency or by a private person or entity in the performance of a service or function for or on behalf of an agency or when such documents have been transferred to a private person or entity by an agency for storage or future governmental use.[Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-70)]. All *Public Records* are open to public inspection by law or custom.
11. **Record** - a document created, received and maintained stating results achieved or providing proof of activities performed. For example, *records* used to formalize traceability and to provide evidence of verification, preventive action, and corrective action.

12. **Records Retention Schedules** - a document that describes University *records*, establishes a length of time the University shall retain record, and provides instructions for what to do with them when no longer needed for current University business.

13. **Retention Period** - the minimum length of time *records* are to be kept.


**B. Authorities/Responsibilities**

The Custodian of Records, shall oversee the Record Information Management (RIM) Program to ensure the appropriate maintenance of University records. All employees are responsible for following the *Records Retention Schedules*, UWG’s *record* management procedures, and using proper and approved *forms* and templates.

**C. Procedures**

*Records* are maintained to provide evidence of the conformity, implementation, and effective operation of the Record Information Management (RIM) procedures and other business activities of the University. All *records* are required to be legible, accurate, readily identifiable and appropriately retrievable. Units are required to maintain *records* (electronic or paper, if necessary) to ensure compliance with the federal, state, Record Management regulations and policies by promoting the management of *records* throughout their life cycle in an economical, efficient and effective manner.

**D. Records and Maintenance**

All work activities performed must be documented and maintained to assure information is identifiable, searchable and retrievable. Unit *records* may include but are not limited to:

1. Emails for official business
2. Electronic *records*
3. Memorandums
4. Meeting minutes and agendas
5. Work plans
6. *Records* such as corrective and preventive actions, complaints & feedback, audit and assessment results, document change requests, transmittal notices, master lists, and standard operating procedures.
7. Personnel and training *records*

**E. Record Identification**

All University *records* must be identifiable for retrieval. *Records* may be identified by *record* series, process/product, person or event to which they pertain, dates, and contain either the person and/or unit who established the *record*. 
F. **Recording and Error Correction**
   1. All work performed must be recorded legibly,
   2. Electronic *records* must have an audit trail to document change(s), and
   3. *Data* or information must not be discarded without explanation and approval.

G. **Maintenance and Storage of Electronic Records**
   1. Electronic *records* and *data* files are systematically backed-up regularly to safeguard and preserve against the loss of information due to equipment malfunction, failure, catastrophe, or human error.
   2. External labels for storage media are recommended to facilitate accurate filing and retrieval of electronic *records*.
   3. All electronic *records* must be scheduled, managed, and *dispositioned* (handled) in accordance with approved *Record Retention Schedules*. System controls must be in use to ensure electronics *records* are authentic, not altered or tampered with, auditable and produced in systems which utilize security measures to ensure integrity. Security controls are in place to limit risk, mitigate loss, misuse, or unauthorized release of information.

H. **Access**
   1. Access to all *records* is restricted to prevent unauthorized use or alteration of information.
   2. *Records* containing sensitive or confidential information are to be secured at all times.
   3. Electronic *records* should have password or file protection, or read-only capabilities, where applicable.
   4. Employees shall comply with all system access control standards, procedures, and requirements used in the performance of their duties.
   5. Employees shall act ethically, take the initiative, and accept responsibility for safeguarding information resources under their control.
   6. Employees shall keep alert to threats and vulnerabilities, stay abreast of security policies and issues, and report all known or suspected incidents to the appropriate contact.

I. **Record Retention**
   Each unit should regularly review the current USG *Records Retention Schedules* and, when required, propose updates to current schedules as the needs evolve.

J. **Disposal of Records**
   After the retention period has expired, *records* are either destroyed, if authorized, or transferred to University Special Collections after receiving approval of acceptance.

K. **Forms**
   Certificate of Records Destruction
   Additional operational forms are accessible on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment website.

L. **Reference Documents**
   Records Information Management (RIM) Document Control and Compliance Manual (*living document*)
M. Violation of the Act

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-102. Records as public property; disposing of records other than by approved retention schedule as misdemeanor; a person acting under article not liable.

(a) All records created or received in the performance of duty and paid for by public funds are deemed to be public property and shall constitute a record of public acts.

(b) The destruction of records shall occur only through the operation of an approved retention schedule. The records shall not be placed in the custody of private individuals or institutions or semiprivate organizations unless authorized by retention schedules.

(c) The alienation, alteration, theft, or destruction of records by any person or persons in a manner not authorized by an applicable retention schedule is a misdemeanor.

(d) No person acting in compliance with this article shall be held personally liable.

N. Additional Guidelines Published by University Units

Any unit may publish guidelines that address these issues as it applies specifically to the unit. In the event any specific unit guideline(s) conflict with the UWG Policy 8.4 or Procedures 8.4.1, the latter will control.

O. Exclusions

*Personal Materials* are documentary materials belonging to an individual. *Personal Materials* are not government owned or used to conduct university business and therefore excluded from the legal definition of a *Public Record*.

*Issued by the Custodian of Records, the 24th day of May, 2019.*

Signature, Custodian of Records

Catherine A. Jenks, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Provost:

Previous version dated: N/A