

# Employee Files and Records Management

## Frequently Asked Questions

\*For the rest of this document, the term “department” will be used to cover the terms “department,” “unit” and “area.”

### **1. What is my department responsible for in regards to employee records?**

Each university department or unit has a responsibility to preserve and protect of all records that are under its control. Employee records often make up a sizeable part of these records. These consist of files created for new employees, existing files on current employees, and files on former employees no longer with Texas Tech University.

#### **What should be included in an employee’s file?**

Departmental employee files should only include items related to employment. Included are such documents as, correspondence, performance evaluations, job descriptions, leave requests, work schedules, and similar documents. Access to employee files should be restricted to appropriate personnel only.

#### **What should not be included in an employee’s file?**

Items not related to employment should be excluded from an employee’s file. These include such information as background security checks, transcripts, family documents, religious affiliations, medical records, and mortgage applications and other personal financial documents.

In the case of medical documentation required by the university, the information should be kept in a separate file with access restricted to only appropriate personnel.

Hiring documents such as applications, resumes/vitas, letters of reference, authorization for criminal background check, should be retained in a separate, locked file with access restricted to only appropriate personnel.

### **How long should a department keep an employee's file?**

Departments should maintain former employee files for five years following termination of employment. After this period, the departmental employee file may be disposed in the proper manner. Records with confidential information should always be shredded.

Vitas, photographs and biographical information on Texas Tech faculty and administrators should be forwarded to University Archives by contacting Lynn Whitfield at [lynn.whitfield@ttu.edu](mailto:lynn.whitfield@ttu.edu) or by calling (806) 742-8675.

Temporary files created for unsuccessful job candidates are to be kept for 2 years.

### **What about the employee records kept by Human Resources?**

Human Resources (HR) is charged with the areas of employment, compensation, and benefits at Texas Tech University. HR is also required to maintain certain information for 75 years following an employee's termination in order to verify employment.

Requests for employment verification, including dates of employment, should be forwarded to HR at (806) 742-3851.

### **Many TTU documents are now entered online using Banner. Are these electronic records master copies or convenience copies?**

With the advent of the Banner System, many employee documents are now entered online. The electronic record is considered the master copy and as such must adhere to the minimum retention times approved by the State of Texas.

Any print outs and format variations of these electronic records, such as a downloaded file saved on one's computer, are considered "convenience" copies.

### **What is the difference between a master copy and a convenience copy of a record?**

A record is designated as either a master copy or a convenience copy.

The master copy of a record is the **one** official version retained as the original. As such, it is subject to the requirements outlined in the Texas Tech University's records retention schedule and disposition policies. The master version can exist in any format or medium, from paper to digital to microfilm. The format must be readable, either by human eye or machine, during the required retention time for the record. The department in charge of the master copy is responsible for ensuring that the record remains readable. Departments should also be very clear and consistent when determining which format the master copy will reside in.

Convenience (or “duplicate”) copies are all other versions of a record beyond the one master copy. These do not fall under the university retention schedule and may be discarded at any time.

*Caution:* Convenience copies retained after the destruction of a master copy of a record will automatically become a “master copy” and thus are subject to legal discovery and the university’s retention schedule. Therefore, convenience copies should be destroyed along with the expired master copy or destroyed prior to the destruction of the master copy.

### **An overview of departmental employee records versus Human Resources employee records**

The following table offers a guideline for departments to determine what original documents belong in departmental employee files versus Human Resources employee files. The minimum retention time applies to the master copy of a record. Convenience copies can be disposed of at any time.

Many Texas Tech documents are entered online in Banner and, therefore, the master resides in electronic format.

<b>Texas Tech University Record Series</b>	<b>Where to keep the MASTER copy (Require Retention time)</b>	<b>Where to keep the CONVENIENCE copy if needed (Do not keep beyond retention time)</b>
Accident reports and associated documentation	Risk Management (Calendar End + 5 years)	Department Employee File
Faculty & staff applications for employment – hired	Human Resources Employee File (5 years after termination) *See NOTE 1 below	Department Employee File
Student applications for employment – hired	Human Resources Employee File (not to exceed 5 years after termination) *See NOTE 1 below	Department Employee File
Faculty & staff applications for employment – not hired	Human Resources Employee File (2 years) *See NOTE 1 below	Department Employee File
Student applications for employment – not hired	Department Employee File (2 years) *See NOTE 1 below	

Texas Tech University Record Series	Where to keep the MASTER copy (Require Retention time)	Where to keep the CONVENIENCE copy if needed (Do not keep beyond retention time)
Administrative correspondence Documents such as acceptance letters, offers of employment, and written inquiries	Department Employee File (3 years minimum; not to exceed 5 years after termination)	
General correspondence	Department Employee File (1 year)	
Complaint Records	Department Employee File (Final disposition of the compliant + 2 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.	
Counseling records	Department Employee File (Termination of counseling + 3 years)	
Document or verification of citizenship (I-9)	Human Resources Employee File (Termination of employment + 1 year)	Department Employee File
Emergency contact information This can be collected both within a department and in Banner System through the biographical data form.	Department Employee File (Until superseded or termination of employment)  Human Resources Employee File (Until superseded or termination of employment)	
Employee insurance records	Human Resources Employee File (Until superseded or termination of employment)	
Employee recognition records	Human Resources Employee File (Termination of employment + 5 years)	Department Employee File

Texas Tech University Record Series	Where to keep the MASTER copy (Require Retention time)	Where to keep the CONVENIENCE copy if needed (Do not keep beyond retention time)
Employment Selection records Includes notes of interviews with candidates, questions asked of applicants, audio and videotapes of job interviews, driving record and previous injury checks, pre-employment physical examinations, pre-employment drug screening test results, polygraph examination results; and all other records that document the selection process.	Department Employee File (2 years) *See NOTE 2 below	
Grievance Records	Department Employee File (Final decision on the grievance + 2 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.	
Health & medical documents Includes sick leave pool applications, FMLA, disability claim forms, doctor's notes, leave status reports, etc.	Human Resources Employee File (Fiscal end + 3 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.	Department Employee File *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.
Letters of resignation or termination from faculty & staff	Department Employee File (5 years after termination)	Human Resources Employee File
Letters of resignation or termination from student employees	Department Employee File (not to exceed 5 years after termination)	Human Resources Employee File
Personnel information or action forms (PAFs) Includes changes in pay grade, position classification, employee number, evaluation date, and termination of employment	Human Resources Employee File/ ePAF system (2 years)	Department Employee File
Personnel corrective action documentation	Department Employee File (Termination of corrective action + 5 years)	
Performance appraisals- staff and non-tenure track	Human Resources Employee File (2 years)	Department Employee File
Performance appraisals- tenure track	Human Resources Employee File (6 years)	Department Employee File

Texas Tech University Record Series	Where to keep the MASTER copy (Require Retention time)	Where to keep the CONVENIENCE copy if needed (Do not keep beyond retention time)
Performance appraisals- teaching assistants	Department Employee File (Completion of course or lab + 3 years)	
Position/job descriptions (PDQs)	Department Employee File (Until superseded or job eliminated + 4 years)	
Reports – employee/activity	Department Employee File (1 year)	
Resumes, references, and related supporting documentation – hired	Department Employee File (Termination of employment + 5 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual’s regular employee file.	
Resumes, references, and related supporting documentation – not hired	Department Hiring File (2 years)	
Security access records Records relating to the issuance of keys, identification cards, building passes, passwords, signed statements or similar instruments of access to agency or state facilities, equipment or automated systems	Department Employee File (Until superseded, date of expiration, or date of termination, whichever sooner, + 2 years)	
Security clearances/criminal history checks	Human Resources Employee File (After immediate purpose served for which it was obtained)	
Time Cards and Time Sheets	Department Employee File/Web Time Entry System (Fiscal End + 3 years)	
Time Off and/or Sick Leave Requests	Department Employee File (Fiscal End + 3 years)	

Texas Tech University Record Series	Where to keep the MASTER copy (Require Retention time)	Where to keep the CONVENIENCE copy if needed (Do not keep beyond retention time)
Training and Educational Achievement Records (Individual) Certificates of completion, licenses, transcripts, test scores, or similar records documenting the training, testing, or continuing education achievements of an employee.	Department Employee File (Termination of employment + 5 years)	Human Resources Employee File
Unemployment claim records	Human Resources Employee File (After claim filed + 5 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.	
Unemployment compensation records	Human Resources Employee File (After compensation paid or rejected + 5 years) *keep in confidential employee file separate from the individual's regular employee file.	
Work Schedules/Assignments	Department Employee File (1 year)	

\*NOTE 1: For applications and resumes submitted through the Texas Tech Jobline web pages, the original will be kept on file electronically through this process. For each staff new hire, a signed copy of the employment application should be submitted with the ePAF and will be retained in the Human Resources Employee File

\*NOTE 2: Employment Selection Records should be kept in a separate file, in a locked file and should include, but not be limited to:

Applications, resumes, letters of reference, interview questions and answers, evaluation documents, employment reference checks, scheduling correspondence, and authorizations for criminal background checks.

The files above should **not** be sent to the University Archives. The exception would be for upper administrative positions such as the Chancellor and President, in which case only the resume, the list of interview questions [and not the answers!], the interview itinerary, and position description should be forwarded to the University Archives.

For more information regarding the Records Management program at Texas Tech, contact Lynn Whitfield at [lynn.whitfield@ttu.edu](mailto:lynn.whitfield@ttu.edu) or call (806) 742-8675.

The full Texas Tech University System Records Retention Schedule can be found at <http://www.swco.ttu.edu/recordsmanagement/rrs.html>