

# **DRAFT**

## **ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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### **I. Electronic Records (General Statement):**

The Archives and Special Collections, I. D. Weeks Library, is responsible for preserving university records of enduring historical value. A *record* is defined as all forms of information regardless of format that is received or filed in the course of university business transactions, research, or legal obligations. With technological advances, administrators, faculty, and staff increasingly create, store, access, and maintain a variety of computer files. Examples of common electronic records include word processing documents, electronic mail, databases, and web sites. Therefore, records created and utilized in electronic formats must be managed along with traditional paper copies concerning retention and disposition schedules for records management purposes.

### **Major Points:**

1. Information held in electronic formats will be appraised and evaluated as paper records for evidentiary or permanent value by the university archivist.
2. Written policies will document the management for electronic recordkeeping, individuals or units having designated responsibilities.
3. Electronic records will be maintained in reliable recordkeeping systems.
  - a) The electronic recordkeeping system will include audit trails and routine testing to ensure the accuracy of data input and output.
  - b) Electronic records will include metadata that captures the context of its creation such as sender, recipient, subject, title, date, and time.
  - c) Reliable and accurate links will be maintained between records so the transaction is documented.
4. University will develop strategies to ensure that information is retained or deleted according to records management schedules. This information should also be accessible and effectively migrated with IT (Information Technology) system upgrades. Once proper schedules have been determined, university officials can retain, migrate, or destroy data as instructed.
  - a) These strategies will conform to state and federal laws.
5. Electronic recordkeeping will be part of routine work processes and business procedures by university offices and units.

6. Electronic records will be inviolate and secure from tampering.
  - a) Electronic records will be protected from either accidental alteration or intentional deletion.
  - b) Authorized personnel will only be permitted to create, capture, or delete electronic records.
7. Electronic recordkeeping will follow IT (Information Technology) protocols, policies, and procedures found at: <http://www.usd.edu/its/>

## **II. Electronic Mail (E-mail) (General Statement):**

University employees are increasingly reliant upon e-mail correspondence from students, faculty, administrators, vendors, and the general public. Work-related e-mail messages are university records and, in many cases, the only evidence or documentation of business transactions and policy statements. It is essential that such records be managed properly according to records management guidelines. The significance of e-mail is tremendous and will be a primary objective for records management and preservation.

### **Major Points:**

1. E-mail as a *record*.
  - a) E-mail that is received or created in the course of undertaking and completing a university business transaction or university affairs is a record.
  - b) Provides the relevant content and context in which record was created or produced. For example, header information (to, from, date, subject, time) will be retained by personnel.
  - c) The retention and disposition of e-mail will follow records management schedules that have met legal, fiscal, and historical requirements (as one would do with paper files).
2. Organizing e-mail
  - a) Each employee must take responsibility for organizing e-mail in files according to personal versus professional/work-related correspondence.
3. Capture
  - a) E-mail records should be captured with a reliable electronic recordkeeping system with metadata that explains the content, structure, and context of the message.
  - b) If an electronic recordkeeping system is not available or not possible:
    - \*Print and file the e-mail as one would a paper-based recordkeeping system.
    - \*Recordkeeping functionality can be placed into an electronic messaging system.
    - \*NOTE: Back up tapes are not considered a form of a recordkeeping system, and are not considered an acceptable format for capturing or maintaining e-mail records.
4. Attachments
  - a) Attachments to an e-mail message will be preserved for contextual purposes.

## 5. Distribution Lists

- a) E-mail will retain e-mail addresses for all senders and recipients

## 6. System Security

- a) E-mail records will be protected from alteration or unauthorized use with security and access policies.

## 7. Preservation

- a) Conversion strategies should be developed to update hardware, software, and storage media.
- b) The University Archivist will be contacted with questions regarding long-term preservation of e-mail records, especially those records that should be transferred to the archives.

## 8. Policy Review

A periodic review (every 3-5 years) will be undertaken to keep this policy current with new technology and practices concerning e-mail.

## References

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