

## Information about the audio file

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### Introduction

Welcome to this audio podcast from the Archives and Records Management Department of Simon Fraser University.

The purpose of this podcast is to answer frequently asked questions from records creators around the university about records management. Every employee of the University is responsible for creating records in the course of their work, and we want to answer your questions quickly so that you know all you need to know to create great records that can be used today, tomorrow, and maybe even 50 years in the future.

[music of SFU Pipe Band playing bagpipes during the 1969 SFU Convocation ceremony]

### Episode Introduction

This is episode one: What is a record of the university?

In this episode we'll look at a simple test that can tell you if you are dealing with university records.

This is important, because records management applies **ONLY** to records. So, in order to use any records management tools, you first need to know if you have a record. Or, whether you actually have is a non-record.

Retention schedules, for example, can only be applied to university records. They can't be applied to personal documents, or faculty or staff intellectual property. This is why knowing whether what you have is a university record or not a record is fundamentally important.

Have you ever thought about the different hats that you wear at the university?

You're an employee. You may also be a student here.  
You might be a faculty member or instructor. You might be involved in a trade union.

Keeping in mind our different roles is important anytime we interact with the university - **but it becomes super important when you think about the records you create.**



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Today we are going to talk about what is a university record - SFU's property, as it were - and what isn't.

At the end of this podcast, you'll be able to recognize what is a record of the university and what is a non-record. You'll also be able to use a simple category matrix to distinguish between university records and non-records.

Let's begin.

There are 4 main considerations to take into account when determining if you are working with a university record.

### **# 1. The Persons involved**

The first thing you consider is WHO is creating or receiving the document.

First ask,

- Is a University employee involved?
- Next, is that person doing something that's related to their private life or other roles in their life?

Or,

- Are they doing something related to their job? Is the document from a staff person in Financial Aid who is evaluating a scholarship application from a student? Is it from someone in Procurement approving a purchase?

**Those of records of the university.**

Finally, ask

- Is that person a faculty member doing research or teaching?

Things like lesson plans or research work are RECORDS but they aren't records of the university. They are considered intellectual property of that person who created them.

### **# 2. The second thing to consider is: Does the document provide evidence of university actions?**

A record MUST capture a decision, action, policy, agreement, or so on.

**If it does, it's a university record.**

### **3. The third thing to consider is: Is the document needed for later use?**

Ask yourself next if the document is needed later to provide evidence of something. If you need it for an audit, or to reconstruct why a decision was made, **it's probably a university record.**

On the other hand, if the only use that you have for it in the future is convenience – say, you wanna use it as a template, or it's just handy to have around, **it may not be a record.**

#### **4. Consider what version it is.**

Records are complete and final. Working documents and notes that haven't been formalized or finished are **not records**.

A final and approved version of a report or memo is a **record of the university**.

I hope that you have a better idea of what's considered a **record of the university** and what's not.

The four things you need to consider are: Who is involved? Does the document provide evidence? Is it needed for later? What version is it?

Things that are records of the university fall under special provisions like FOI request or requirements to send them to the archives or destroy them after a certain period of time.

Now that you know what is a record and what is not a record, you can apply records management tools like retention schedules to manage the records of the university.

#### **Credits**

This brings us to the end on how to test to see if you have a university record.

This podcast has been brought to you from the Archives and Records Management Department of Simon Fraser University. If you have suggestions for other topics to cover in future podcasts, please contact Archives at [archives@sfu.ca](mailto:archives@sfu.ca)

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