

CORPORATE RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

Guide to Records Management for Senate Committees

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Introduction

The work of committees is essential to the academic and administrative governance of Carleton University. Depending on terms of reference, committees and committee members must meet certain records management standards for the work and official records they produce. This guide serves as an introduction to the general responsibilities of committee chairs, secretaries, and members regarding management of their records.

This guide is for all Senate Committees, including ad hoc committees, task forces, and working groups of senate committees. Specific questions regarding your use of this guide can be directed to either the Assistant University Secretary or the Corporate Records and Archives Department.

Overview

This guide covers:

- Types of Records
- Governance of Records
- Records Retention and Disposition for Senate Committee Records
- General Records Management Responsibilities
- Organizing and Managing Senate Committee Records

Types of Records

Records are evidence of any transaction or decision, regardless of format or material. Carleton's policies that regulate the creation, use, and management of records apply to both hard copy and born-digital records, regardless of any possible format. Your committee records may include minutes and agendas, emails, reports, working documents, distribution lists, spreadsheets, database records, audiovisual recordings, architectural or technical drawings, photographs, and more.

Not all records are equal in value however. Your committee's records might be **transitory** or **official**. Recognizing the difference between the two will help in disposing of low value materials efficiently while also retaining high value records needed for reliable decision-making, keeping historical evidence, maintaining accountability, or meeting Carleton's responsibilities to private and confidential records.

Transitory Records

Can destroy once no longer needed.

- Transitory correspondence (e.g. emails confirming meeting attendance, dates, meeting space and catering confirmation, etc.)
- Reference and research materials from external sources
- Multiple drafts of documents with no annotations of importance

Official Records

Manage retention and disposal according to the Carleton University Retention Schedule, specific Senate policies or directives, or Corporate Records and Archives guidance.

- Agendas, minutes, and supporting documentation
- Terms of reference, procedural guidelines, and policies
- Final versions of reports and recommendations
- Correspondence documenting major decisions, recommendations, awards, announcements, etc.
- Specific drafts or versions of documents with annotations of importance

Born Digital Records

Reduce paper waste.

- Digital records are official records too. Unless needed for specific operational requirements, you do not need to print digital records in order to save them as "final versions".

Governance of Records

Employees of Carleton have an obligation to create records that adequately document their actions and decisions. Employees must maintain, retain, and dispose of official records in a manner that supports Carleton's obligations to public accountability as well as to its students, staff, and faculty. This **duty to document** is supported at Carleton through the university's *Corporate Records and Archives Policy*. Records by Senate committees can be further governed by related Senate policies, committee terms of references, and university policies.

Corporate Records and Archives Policy

All Carleton staff, including committees, must meet the standards and regulations of the Corporate Records and Archives Policy (2019). The major points of the policy state that:

1. In compliance with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, departments must protect records from inappropriate access, alteration, and usage.
2. All corporate records are the property of the University and subject to its overall control.
3. The policy guides management of records so that context, authenticity, and reliability of the university's records are maintained over time, throughout the records lifecycle.

The [complete policy](#) is available through the University Secretariat's website.

Senate Policies

Certain Senate Committees must also adhere to records retention regulations as stipulated by their governing Senate policies; specifically the **Academic Integrity Appeals Committee** and the **Honorary Degrees Committee**. Chairs of these committees should ensure that all members are familiar with their obligations to records produced by their work under their Senate policies.

Terms of Reference

Beginning in 2022, the Corporate Records and Archives Department will be requesting documented terms of reference from committees, working groups, and task forces across Carleton. Having official terms of reference registered will make it possible for Corporate Archives staff to assist committees in maintaining best records management practices, including retention and disposition. Senate committees already have terms of references documented with the Senate office. If you or your committee members have questions as to how these terms of reference may affect record retention and disposition, contact the Assistant University Secretary for more information.

Other related policies

Your committee should also be aware of other university policies that affect the creation and use of official records, including:

- Access to Information and Privacy Policy
- Email Use Policy
- Information Security Policy

These policies are accessible through the University Secretariat's website: carleton.ca/secretariat

Records Retention and Disposition for Senate Committee Records

Annual deposit with Senate Office

All Senate committees must deposit records of significance to the Senate office annually. Selection of which records to be deposited for each committee will be decided at the beginning of each academic year by the Committee chairs, the Clerk of Senate, and the Assistant University Secretary with the support of Corporate Records and Archives.

Records for annual deposit will vary depending on the committee and **may** include, but are not limited to:

- Annual reports
- Minutes and agendas
- Correspondence of significance
- Work plans
- Reports and working documents

Transfer to new Chair

At the end of their tenure, Committee Chairs must also ensure that their committee records are transferred to incoming chairs. While the amount of records retained may vary by committee, Corporate Records and Archives recommends a **minimum** of 3-5 years of records should be maintained as active by a committee, depending on its functions, terms of reference, and current work plans.

Your method of transferring records will depend on your committee's current storage and organization of its records. Actions might include:

- Transferring ownership of a committee's MS Teams site.
- Forwarding all significant emails and attachments to a new chair or secretary.
- Ensuring that active records being maintained in a network drive or transferred or made available to the new chair or secretary.

If you have questions about ways to improve or simplify this process, Corporate Records and Archives staff is available to review and make recommendations on best practices.

Inactive Committee Records

If your committee is in possession of records that are now completely inactive and no longer required for immediate work, please contact Corporate Records and Archives to schedule an appraisal of the materials. Our staff will work with committee chairs and secretaries and the Senate Office to ensure that materials are disposed of appropriately.

General Records Management Responsibilities

In support of the described records governance and retention scheduling, **Committee Chairs** should ensure that steps are taken to:

- Ensure that **copies** of confidential or sensitive records are returned by committee members and/or appropriately destroyed once the *copies* are no longer needed.
- Destroy transitory records in a timely manner.
- Ensure that official records are created, stored, and transmitted using university-approved technology only (e.g. official Outlook accounts, MS Teams, department network drives, etc.).
- Contact Corporate Records and Archives for guidance on appraising older, inactive committee records for final disposition.
- Ensure that the appropriate committee records, including emails, are transferred to incoming chairs if applicable.
- Establish records management practices, such as file classification and naming conventions, which are consistent and efficient.
- Deposit records of significance annually with the Senate Office.

Organizing and Managing Senate Committee Records

As CUCollab is phased out, committees must establish records sharing and management procedures on other Carleton-approved platforms. Committees should use and organize their records based on the type of work. In other words, use the right tool for the right job.

- Do you only share documents with each other, rather than editing them collaboratively?
- Do you require tools to edit and mark documents between the committee members?
- Where will your final documents be maintained for longer retention periods?

Outlook

If your committee mainly shares documents through email rather than working collaboratively on materials, you can support your work through use of Outlook. However, Outlook is **not** a long-term storage repository for official university records. For longer retention periods, attachments and emails of significance should be maintained in an appropriate network drive location or MS Teams site that has a supporting records management plan

Teams

Teams supports collaborative work within and between site members and departments in cloud-based virtual environments. It is especially suited for committees with members contributing to documents at the same time and, if used properly, can help avoid draft confusion and needless duplications of records. If using Teams for your committee, please consider that:

- Teams is best suited for organizing and maintaining records that are active or semi-active. Corporate Records and Archives currently advises that permanent records and records with other specific requirements may need to be stored on network drives. Contact Corporate Records and Archives to review requirements of your records so that an appropriate retention plan is followed.
- Access and use of Teams by your committee members is based on permissions that you or your committee secretary must manage. If committee members change, you must update the Teams channel to remove ex-members and grant membership to new ones. Likewise, as Chairs transition, the ownership of the Teams site must also be updated.
- If your committee's use of its Teams site ends, you must remove committee records, retain or dispose of them in the appropriate location (e.g. network drive, with the Senate Office, etc.), and then arrange for the deletion of site.

OneDrive

Corporate Records and Archives does not advise the use of OneDrive for committee records. OneDrive is cloud-based storage for individual users, both staff and faculty. While OneDrive does provide for sharing between users, it is not suited for collaborative work. Maintaining committee records on an individual's account could also create problems in effective transfer and disposition of materials.

Network Drives

If your committee currently uses a departmental network drive for organization and retention of its committee records, please inform Corporate Records and Archives. Corporate Archives staff will follow up on retention and disposition needs of your committee regularly.

For more guidance on the organization, retention, and disposition of committee records using Teams, please see the *Records Management in Teams* guide from Corporate Records and Archives.