



Email: Your Recordkeeping Responsibilities

Do University records management rules apply to email?

Yes. Email is a medium for communicating information and any information sent by email that has operational, legal, financial, or other business value to the University is the property of the University must be managed according to the [Records Management policy](#) and [University of Lethbridge Classification Schedule \(ULCS\)](#).

It is important to ensure that emails containing University records are:

- Classified under the ULCS
- Filed in the office recordkeeping system (e.g. physical file folders, shared drives)
- Retained and disposed of in accordance with approved schedules
- Accessible to authorized staff and available in response to FOIP and litigation requests

Can I use my personal email account for work?

No. All University-related correspondence should be conducted using your University email account.

Do I need to file every email?

No, you do not. Many emails are of only temporary use and are, therefore, considered transitory. [Transitory records](#) are kept for only a short period of time for convenience or reference use; for preparation of revisions or a final version of a records; or to complete immediate and minor transactions. Examples of transitory emails include:

- Working materials and non-substantive drafts
- Duplicate copies retained for reference or convenience
- Messages (e.g. telephone, fax, email, instant messages) that do not document a decision, activity, or transaction, or add any other information needed to meet financial, legal, audit, or other requirements.

Non-records, such as personal email or casual communication (e.g. birthdays greetings, meeting requests, or lunch invitations), also do not need to be filed.

Who is responsible for filing **outgoing** email messages?

University employees are responsible for filing all outgoing email messages (including attachments) that constitute University records.

Who is responsible for filing **incoming** email messages?

You are responsible for determining which of the emails you receive are University records that need to be filed. Consider:

- Is it a personal email?
- Does the email contain only casual communication?
- Is the email of only temporary or transitory use?
- Is it an email from a third party that does not relate to a University transaction?
- Were you sent a 'cc' or 'bcc' copy of the message?

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If you answered yes to all of these questions, the email is most likely a transitory record (or a non-record) and can be deleted as soon as you no longer need it for business purposes. **Do not keep convenience or reference emails longer than the retention period for the official copy.**

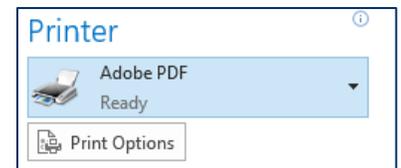
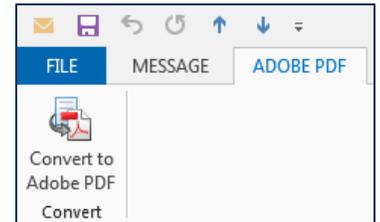
For emails that are widely distributed (e.g. University notices and newsletters), the initiating office (as the sender) is responsible for filing an official copy of the email. Within each receiving office, the first person listed in the "to" or "cc" fields should be responsible for filing the record in the office recordkeeping system. Committees and project teams should decide early on who will be responsible for filing email messages for the group. Other recipients should manage their copies as transitory.

Once the email is filed appropriately, the source email may be treated as redundant and deleted.

How to File Emails in a Recordkeeping System

Until the University adopts an electronic records management system, you have two options for managing emails as University records:

1. **Print** the email and file it appropriately in the existing recordkeeping system. This is easy to implement, but makes it difficult to retrieve information efficiently.
2. **Save** the email to a network drive. There are a couple of ways to do this:
 - a. **File as .pdf** to organized folders on the shared drive. There are two main ways to do this:
 - i. Use the Convert to Adobe PDF function in the Adobe PDF toolbar in Microsoft Outlook (requires Adobe Acrobat; contact ITS Solutions Centre if you do not have this). The default settings of the Adobe PDF Add-In ensures that all attachments and hyperlinks are preserved in one file.
 - ii. Select Adobe PDF as the printer in the print options menu. Printing to PDF does not maintain hyperlinks or attachments, so this should be used only for documents that either do not contain hyperlinks or do not contain any that are relevant to the record. Any attachments will need to be saved separately.
 - b. **File as .msg** to organized folders on the shared drive. To do this, just drag and drop the email from Outlook to the shared drive folder. This preserves the entire message, including all attachments, but users must have Microsoft Outlook installed to be able to open .msg files.



Regardless of which option you choose, be sure to delete the source email once you have confirmed that the record has been filed appropriately.

Additional Resources

[Records Management Policy](#)

[University of Lethbridge Classification System](#) (includes retention schedules)

[Records Management Guides](#)

[Guidelines for E-mail & Notebook Confidentiality Notices](#)

[Computer Use Policy](#)

[Data Storage Standard](#)

[Legal Holds on University Records Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)