

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Policy No. IT-6

Electronic Records Management Policy

1 General

- 1.1 **Scope:** This Policy applies to all faculty, staff, and third-party agents of the University as well as any other University affiliate who is authorized to access Institutional Data. This policy also applies to all electronic records created by or acquired in the course of university business. This includes e-mail and records created on personal computers or electronic devices.
- 1.2 **Statutory References:** West Virginia Code. §5A-8, Public Records Management and Preservation Act.
- 1.3 **Passage Date:** February 24, 2016
- 1.4 **Effective Date:** upon passage
- 1.5 **Background:** Electronic records are information or data files created and stored in digitized form using computers and software. Many types of electronic files are records, and each type of file must be managed differently. All electronic documents will be stored and managed using methods appropriate for the format and contents. The Electronic Records Management Policy will provide guidelines that the academic and administrative units of the University will need to govern their electronic records, addressing the creation, use, and long-term preservation of those records. This policy complements [MUBOG GA-14 Records Retention Policy](#). The associated procedure is [ITP-45 Electronic Records Management Procedure](#).

The intent of the Electronic Records Management Policy is to establish best practices that will protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of institutional records; shield the university from liability; preserve Marshall history; and improve overall efficiency of operations.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Access:** Managing the means and permissions by which users find, request, and receive an electronic record.

- 2.2 **Appraisal:** The process of determining the value of records based upon their administrative uses, and evidentiary and informational content. This assessment will determine the long-term retention and disposition of the record. Appraisal also establishes the linkage of records to each other. Information gathered during the appraisal processes is used to analyze records series and develop official retention schedules.
- 2.3 **Convenience Copy:** Copies of documents kept on individual computers for easy access. Convenience copies should be kept only as long as needed to complete university business.
- 2.4 **Data Classification:** Data classification is the process of sorting and categorizing records and other data into different types, classes, and forms. Data classification allows for efficient processing and sorting of information.
- 2.5 **Data Management:** Management of databases of appropriately updated and preserved metadata.
- 2.6 **Draft (or Working Copy):** Drafts or working copies are the early versions of what may eventually become a final document, or master record copy. Drafts only need to be kept until the final version of the document is finished.
- 2.7 **Electronic Record:** An information or data file that is created and stored in digital form through computing devices. Electronic Records are stored in various formats and on a variety of software platforms and storage types. Whether or not a document is electronic has no impact on whether or not it is considered a record, but does pose unique challenges.
- 2.8 **Electronic Records Management:** The planning, budgeting, organizing, directing, personnel training, and controlling activities associated with managing electronic records and their lifecycle.
- 2.9 **Ingest:** The acceptance of data or information and its preparation for inclusion in the repository. This process may include virus scanning, isolation, and other steps.
- 2.10 **Master Record Copy:** The official copy of a record.
- 2.11 **Metadata:** Metadata, or data about data, is fundamental to preserving electronic files accurately. Metadata describes certain information about a file including, but not limited to, date of creation, name and office of the record creator, software version used to create the record and other information as directed by the Information Technology Division. Metadata must be preserved from all files, in order to maintain the authenticity of the file, provide essential file information, and allow for easier migration of the file to different formats.

- 2.12 **Preservation planning:** Preservation planning is the process of creating policies, procedures, and processes to preserve information for the long term. It may include monitoring internal and external environments and monitoring changes in technology.
- 2.13 **Record:** Records include all books, papers, maps, photographs, electronic reports, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of Marshall University in connection with the transaction of public business and by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the university or because of the informational value in them. (Adapted from 44 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Sec. 3301)
- 2.14 **Storage:** Computer equipment and software that provides long-term storage of electronic records, that is appropriately backed up with periodic scheduled maintenance checks to prevent file degradation and corruption.

3 Roles and Responsibilities:

- 3.1 The University's Archivist and Records Management Librarian (ARML) will administer the electronic records management program within the University. Included in those responsibilities are conducting records inventories, creating a records retention schedule, establishing metadata schemas in collaboration with the Information Technology Division, conducting personnel training, approving transfers to the archives, and ensuring compliance with records management policies. The electronic records management procedure further details these duties.
- 3.2 The University's Information Technology department will collaborate with the ARML and other University divisions to preserve and dispose of electronic records as necessary. This collaboration will include specifying technical characteristics for reading and processing files, identifying outputs and inputs of the files, defining naming conventions, establishing metadata schemas with the ARML, determining restrictions on access, maintaining storage and the integrity of the files, implementing a disaster recovery plan, and ensuring timely disposition of electronic files. The electronic records management procedure further explains these responsibilities.
- 3.3 University offices will work with IT and the ARML to follow the instructions of the electronic management policy and procedure. Units will be required to create their own policies and procedures for electronic records in conjunction with the ARML and IT, create a unit records guardian to work with the ARML, conduct records inventory, follow disposition instructions for records, prevent corruption of records, and ensure the security of confidential files. These responsibilities will be further explained in the electronic records procedure.

- 4 Appraisal of Electronic Records for Retention:** During the inventory and appraisal process, the Archivist and Records Management Librarian will assist the academic and administrative units of the University in data classification of the records, meaning the identification of: 1) working (or draft) documents, 2) convenience documents, and 3) record copies of electronic records. Appraisal decisions on the retention of the record copy include: total retention period, length of time for stored and active use, appropriate formats, the archival value of a record, identification of confidential or private information, and identification of essential records for legal statues. The appraisal process is further explained in the electronic records management procedure.
- 5 Access, Use, Rights and Restriction Management:** Marshall University is committed to open access to records and good faith compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Some information will be restricted as necessary in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations (e.g. FERPA, HIPAA, ERISA), or due to contractual limitations related to proprietary information. Protected information will only be accessible to relevant staff and faculty in the course of university business. Access and use of Marshall University materials must always be in compliance with copyright and intellectual property laws. Marshall University will always attempt to provide information when needed, but due to the changing nature of technology, perpetual access to all digital materials cannot be guaranteed.
- 6 Preservation Model/Strategy:** Long term preservation of electronic records requires several actions. These actions include but are not limited to: maintaining secure offsite backup storage servers, routine normalizing of files (saving in standard formats), routine data migration, (converting files to new formats), having standard naming conventions and rigorous validation of content upon ingest and continuing validation in storage. These strategies are explained in detail in the electronic records management procedure.
- 7 Security Management:** All users will be required to take appropriate measures to prevent corruption or deletion of relevant electronic records over time, either through accidental deletion or file corruption (viral infection, physical damage to hardware, etc.). For further information on this, see the [Information Security Policy, IT-2](#).
- 8 E-mail Policy and Procedures:** See [IT-3, Electronic Communications Policy](#).