



Retention and deletion plan for research material

Ref: 100-1012-13

Birgitta Olsson
University Archivist



This retention and deletion plan for Umeå University's research activities applies with the support of *Riksarkivets föreskrifter och allmänna råd om gallring av handlingar i statliga myndigheters forskningsverksamhet* (Swedish National Archive's regulations and general advice on deletion of documents in public authority research activities) RA:FS 1999:1 (amended 2002:1).

The plan consists of two parts: Part one introduces the rules that apply for retaining research material. Part two introduces a retention and deletion plan for research material with examples of how different types of documents are to be retained or deleted.



Rules and regulations for retention and deletion of research material

Umeå University is a public authority, and the principle of public access to official records applies to authorities' research activities. This means, among other things, that the authority's documents must be accessible to the general public, so-called public documents. Public documents are those documents that

- have been received or created by the authority
- are stored by the authority.

This means that documents within Umeå University's research activities are public documents and shall be stored in our archive. Certain documents can in certain cases be eliminated or deleted from the archive.

An authority's archive should be retained, organised and looked after so that it fulfils

- the general public's right to see public documents
- the need for information for justice and administration
- the needs of research.

Deletion or elimination of documents from our archive must therefore take place in such a way as to ensure that these three points are fulfilled.

Deletion and elimination

Deletion means that public documents from the archive are destroyed. This can only be done in line with the statutes or following a decision by parliament, the government or the National Archives. Those documents that remain after deletion must fulfil

- the general public's right to see public documents
- the need for information for justice and administration
- the needs of research.

Elimination means that documents that are not public documents are destroyed. There is no requirement to archive documents that are not public, and these may therefore be destroyed without any official decision.

Retention of research material

Research material includes all documents within a research project: primary material, working material, report material and documents within administration, planning and finance. A research project is defined here as:

A research activity that can be defined in time and purpose, often linked to particular tasks or particular people.



This definition applies to basic research, applied research and development work, no matter how the project is funded.

The main rule is that all research documents should be retained in our archive. Various types of working material, such as drafts and excerpts, may however be eliminated on an ongoing basis during the course of the project.

Once the research project has finished certain documents may be deleted from the archive, while others must continue to be retained. Documents within administration, planning and finance as well as report material may not be deleted but must be retained. Primary material must be retained for at least 10 years. Read more under the heading "Exceptions from retention of primary material".

How the various types of research material are to be retained, deleted or eliminated is described in greater detail in the *Retention and deletion plan* at the end of this document.

Exceptions from retention of primary material

Primary material must be retained for at least 10 years, but may then be deleted if it is not considered to have special value or be of particular public interest.

Material is judged to have a special value or be of particular public interest if it has

- continued scientific value within the subject
- cultural historical value
- value for another research area
- personal historical value
- scientific historical value

or

- is of particular public interest.

If the primary material **cannot** be considered to have special value or be of particular public interest according to the point list, it may be deleted after 10 years. The head of department decides whether or not material can be regarded as having one of these values.

Responsibility for archiving research material

Research material must be included in the archive of the relevant department. The head of department is ultimately responsible for this archive. He or she is responsible for ensuring that documents within the department's research projects are archived and deleted according to the rules for public documents.

In the first instance the head of department decides whether primary material is to be deleted or retained on the basis of the rules on exceptions from retention. This decision may also be made by a person appointed by the head of department. If



possible, the person heading that particular research project should also be consulted in the decision.



Responsibility for practical management of research material

The person responsible for research is also responsible for ensuring that the material within the research activity is well organised. This means, above all, that he or she must ensure that the material is clearly labelled. It must be possible to easily identify which material is to be retained, and which to be deleted or eliminated.

Media and data carriers

The retention and deletion plan applies to all media and data carriers, for example, paper, hard disks, CDs, DVDs, optical disks, cassette tapes and video tapes. It is important that the documents should be produced in such a way that they can be read, understood and transferred to another data carrier during the whole time they are to be retained.

Read more

Further information on handling research material can be found in the *Archive guide for research material* at

<https://aurora.umu.se/Sharepoint/Universitetsf%C3%B6rvaltningen/Universitetsledningens%20kansli/Arkiv/Arkivhandbok%20forskningsmaterial-131001.pdf>



Retention and deletion plan for research material

The types of document in this plan are examples of documents that may occur in a research project. Thus not all documents will be found in all projects.

Administration, planning and finance

Documents within administration, planning and finance must be retained. They may not be deleted or eliminated.

Documents:	Action:	Comments:
Grant applications	Retain	To be recorded
Decisions on funds granted and contracts	Retain	To be recorded (even the rejections)
Project description and project plans	Retain	
Method description and method instructions	Retain	Separate description of methods only if they are of a basic nature.
Survey form	Retain	
Correspondence with funding providers/principals	Retain	
Financial final reports	Retain	
Permit applications for projects and decisions on permits from, for example, ethics committees, the Swedish Data Inspection Board and environmental testing bodies	Retain	
Minutes or equivalent notes from steering group or reference group meetings	Retain	
Project diaries	Retain	



Primary material

Primary material must be retained for at least 10 years, but may then be deleted if it is not considered to have a special value or be of particular public interest. If primary material is considered to have special value or to be of particular public interest, it must not be deleted but should instead be retained.

Material is judged to have a special value or be of particular public interest if it has

- continued scientific value within the subject
- cultural historical value
- value for another research area
- personal historical value
- scientific historical value

or

- is of particular public interest

If the primary material **cannot** be considered to have special value or be of particular public interest according to the point list, it may be deleted after 10 years. Also,

- all publication of results must have been completed
- the final thesis associated with the material must have been defended.

The head of department determines whether material is to be deleted or continue to be retained after 10 years.

Primary material:	Determined on the basis of exception:	Comments
Surveys	Retain for at least 10 years	
Audio and/or video recordings	Retain for at least 10 years	
X-rays	Retain for at least 10 years	
Data files from computerised analysis instruments	Retain for at least 10 years	
Measurement and test results	Retain for at least 10 years	
Protocols from investigations and	Retain for at least 10	



trials	years	
Code lists	Retain for at least 10 years	
Patient record excerpts	Retain for at least 10 years	
Laboratory diaries	Retain for at least 10 years	
Other primary material	Retain for at least 10 years	
Blood, tissue and organ samples	Retain for at least 10 years	Retention regulated in another way.
Medical testing	Retain for at least 10 years	In issues concerning medical testing, special rules apply according to the regulations of the Medical Products Agency - Sweden.
Patient records	Retain for at least 10 years	Belong to another archive. Retain according to other provisions.



Working material

Documents included in working material are in most cases not public documents and can therefore be eliminated. This should be done once the project is finished.

Documents:	Action:	Comments:
Draft	Eliminate	
Concept	Eliminate	
Rough copies that are to be reworked	Eliminate	
Summaries	Eliminate	If they are of the nature of interim reports they should be retained.
Calculations	Eliminate	
Excerpts	Eliminate	
Data files that are dependent sections of ongoing data processing	Eliminate	

Report material

Documents that are included in report material are to be retained. They may not be deleted.

Documents:	Action:	Comments:
Interim reports	Retain	
Articles	Retain	
Conference reports	Retain	Unpublished conference reports count but posters do not.
Theses	Retain	
Scientific final reports	Retain	