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**How do I know if a record is vital?**

Only a small percentage of your records will be vital. Many records are essential to the operation of the university but can be reconstructed or replaced from other sources.

Answer the following questions about each record series within your department. If you answer “yes” to the majority of the questions for a record series, the records are vital.

1. What function will we be unable to do if this record is destroyed (i.e., can the work be carried out or continued if this record is gone)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_Is our inability to perform this function critical?
3. \_\_\_\_\_If the records are lost, are the consequences to the university severe?
4. \_\_\_\_\_Will any client, employee, or student of the university suffer loss of rights or be severely inconvenienced if these records are lost?
5. \_\_\_\_\_If these records have to be reconstructed, will the cost in terms of time, money and labor be high?
6. \_\_\_\_\_Will the information in these records have to be reconstructed or retrieved in a matter of hours, days, or weeks?

Other considerations to determine if records are vital:

* Uniqueness of the record.
* Relationship of one record to another.
* The type of information needed during and following an emergency.