

Retention and disposal schedule for research material

Approved by the Vice-Chancellor

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Instructions on the retention and disposal of research material at Uppsala University

Research and the principle of public access to official documents

Research projects led from the University must be regarded as a University activity. However they are financed, research activities at public authorities are subject to the principle of public access to official documents. This means that the provisions of the Freedom of the Press Act regarding official documents apply. Chapter 2, Article 3 of the Freedom of the Press Act states that a document is official if it is held by a public authority and can be considered to have been received or drawn up by the authority. For research to be credible, methods and results must be documented so as to be available for review both while the research is in progress and after the project has been completed.

Research projects

A research project is “a research activity conducted for a limited time and a defined purpose, often associated with a specific task or mandate and/or specific persons” (Swedish National Archives Code of Statutes 1999:1, Section 2).

The Copyright Act

Researchers are authors of their works and have the right to publish their research results, which, as a result, come under the Copyright Act, which applies to published works. The Act protects the results that a researcher arrives at, not the research material as such.

The Archives Act

Archives are part of the national cultural heritage and must be preserved and kept in order to satisfy the right to access official documents, and the need for information for the purposes of justice and public administration, and for the needs of research. The Archives Act states that the archives of public authorities consist of official documents from the authority’s activities. These documents then belong to the authority’s archives and must be retained and disposed of in accordance with instructions, and, where relevant, registered or stored in a consistent manner.

Disposal

Official documents may be disposed of, but only if the collection that remains satisfies the purposes stated in the Archives Act. Disposal is only permitted as allowed by statutes. Primary material may be disposed of, with the exception of documents deemed to have the following qualitative values:

- Continuing value within the field
- Value for another research area
- Value for cultural history
- Biographical value
- Great public interest

Archiving

The material should be included in the department’s archive. The head of department is responsible for ensuring that the documents are archived and disposed of in accordance with the statutes. Decisions on disposal can be delegated, e.g. to the leader of the research project. The person leading the research must ensure that documents that have come into being during the process are kept in

order so that they reflect the course of events in a comprehensible manner. The material must not be dispersed and no documents may be removed from the department. Disposable documents are to be disposed of when the retention period has expired.

Retention and disposal schedule

The documents listed in the retention and disposal schedule should be regarded as examples of the types of documents that can be associated with a research project. The schedule applies irrespective of the data medium on which the documents are recorded (e.g. paper, optical disk, cassette tape, videotape or photographs).

Based on the Swedish National Archives Regulations and General Advice on the disposal of documents associated with research activities at public authorities (RA-FS 1999:1), the attached retention and disposal schedule applies at Uppsala University.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE FOR RESEARCH MATERIAL

Documents	Measure	Comment
Administration, planning, financial, accounting materials		
Grant applications	Retain	Register
Decisions on granted funds/contracts	Retain	Register
Applications and decisions or opinions from authorising authorities or bodies, e.g. ethics committee, environmental appraisal bodies	Retain	Register
Project descriptions	Retain	
Methodology	Retain	
Minutes or similar notes from steering group and/or reference group meetings	Retain	
Questionnaires	Retain	
Laboratory/project journal	Retain	
Conference reports	Retain	Unpublished conference reports of a descriptive nature
Important correspondence	Retain	Register
Interim reports	Retain	
Final reports	Retain	
Articles	Retain	
Dissertations	Retain	
Financial final reports	Retain	

Documents are not to be disposed of if they are deemed to have:

- Continuing value within the field
- Value for another research area
- Value for the history of science or culture or biographical value
- Great public interest

Documents	Measure	Comment
Primary materials		Dispose of after 10 years, provided results have been reported and published and a final financial report has been made
Questionnaire responses	Dispose of	

Code lists	Dispose of
Audio and visual recordings	Dispose of
X-rays	Dispose of
Records of experiments or examinations	Dispose of
Measurement and test results	Dispose of
Patient medical records	Belong to another archive
Medical record extracts	Dispose of
Working materials	Dispose of when no longer current
Drafts	"-"
Outlines	"-"
Calculations	"-"
Overviews	"-"
Excerpts	"-"
Automatic data processing recordings that are subsidiary stages of ongoing data processing	"-"
Proofs for review	"-"

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