Retention Schedule
Introduction and FAQs

Introduction

George Brown College Archives' Records Retention Schedule sets out records retention guidelines for the college. The Retention Schedule provides alpha-numeric retention codes for GBC based on function; departmental staff may assign these retention codes to files, folders, and groups of records in all formats under their control.

These codes provide retention periods in accordance with operational and legal requirements, established College practices, and convenience. Information contained in the GBC Retention Schedule guides departments on matters such as whether or not to transfer records to GBC Archives and/or when records can be securely destroyed.

College operations often change; the Records Retention Schedule is considered a 'living document' that can be revised by contacting GBC Archives

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is this necessary?
The Retention Schedule provides guidance to your department regarding how long to retain records and when to securely destroy records. It demonstrates to the public that records were destroyed in an impartial manner according to objective legal requirements rather than in response to a sudden crisis. Space is created for new records as inactive records are routinely destroyed. The Retention Schedule also provides evidence or proof to an individual submitting a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy request that the records they seek may no longer exist.

When should I assign an alpha-numeric retention code to my folders or records?

Retention codes are designed for records created and held by your department. The codes should be applied to original records providing evidence of departmental activity. Transitory records (usually duplications of an original record) can be securely destroyed at the discretion of departments.

Occasionally, there will be an exception to the rule when a particular transitory record maintained by a business unit is deemed important enough to retain in the official file.

How do I / can I assign alpha-numeric retention codes to electronic documents?

Very nearly all current records are 'born digital' (created electronically). The GBC Records Retention Schedule assigns retention periods by function, not by medium. An alumnus' request for a transcript using the electronic form on the Registrar's Office website, for example, must be treated in the same manner as a request from an alumnus who printed the form and mailed it with her/his payment.

Should I assign retention codes to the documents and file folders in my office?

You surely appraise your own work, possibly without even realizing it. If your file folders contain drafts, printouts, or photocopies, these documents by definition are transitory. If your work creates original records concerning GBC business, assigning a retention code is strongly recommended.

What should I do if no retention code fits the operations of my business unit?

GBC's Records Retention Schedule is a 'living document' that reflects changing laws and operational needs. Contact GBC Archives to suggest revisions to the Records Retention Schedule that meet your department's needs.

What does each column of the Records Retention Schedule mean?

- *Record Code:* Contains the alpha-numeric retention code assigned to particular records of all media. The two letters represent the general function the documents relate to, while the three-digit number represents each secondary record series under each primary function. These codes have no relationship to the names of GBC departments; they reflect the record function only.
- *Record Series and Scope Notes:* Contains the title (Record Series) of the alpha-numeric retention code. The Scope Notes outline what function the records serve.

- *Office of Record:* Identifies the GBC department that creates the original records for that retention code. Often this column identifies "Various Departments" as several departments will create records performing that particular function.

- ***Active:*** Suggests the number of years records under that retention code should be retained by the Office of Record. This column also includes the event trigger (the circumstance of the retention period's beginning) represented by S=Superseded, C=Current Year, P=Permanent, or T=Terminating event.

- ***Inactive:*** States the retention period that this record type will spend in Archives. This is considered only a recommendation, as departments will elect to maintain their records past their active stage.

- ***Total Retention***: Contains the total number of years records assigned that alpha-numeric records retention code must be kept to meet legal requirements.

- ***Comments:*** Contains any comments related to the alpha-numeric retention codes, sometimes including a detailed explanation of the event trigger.

- ***Acts and Regulation Citations:*** Contains the federal and provincial legislation, and GBC policies that apply to the records of each alpha-numeric retention code.