

## Retention of records

### Introduction

The requirements for an organisation to retain documentary records vary depending on a number of factors including:

- Legal and related requirements
- Costs
- The organisation's own need to access documents
- Historical value

Each type of document needs to be assessed separately. In the case of many types of document, it is sufficient to keep them only for the period required by statute; others will be essential reference material in future years and the organisation might, therefore, decide to keep them longer than the period required by law.

### The PHG Foundation's position

The tables below are based on the [retention period guidelines](#) set by the University of Cambridge. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the University, the PHG Foundation follows its guidelines.

Retention periods are determined based upon the nature of the information held, not the medium in which it is maintained. For example, information which is held in a digital format should only be retained for the same period as it would be kept if it was in paper form. It is not necessary to retain both paper and digital versions of the same record. Where possible records should be retained in a digital format only; this will allow for easier access when working away from the office.

SUBJECT	RETENTION PERIOD	ACTION
<b>LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND SERVICES</b>		
Contracts and legal agreements on all topics (including supporting documentation and legal advice)	End of contract +6 years (under signature) End of contract +12 years (under seal)	Destroy
Leases and lease agreements	Expiry of lease + 15 years	Destroy
Litigation with third parties	Settlement + 6 years	Destroy
Records relating to Trusts	Until Trust wound up or subsumed	Archival Review
General legal advice on matters of status, governance, industrial relations and health and safety	Until superseded by fresh advice + 12 years	Destroy

General legal advice on other matters	Until superseded by fresh advice + 6 years	Destroy
<b>GENERAL FINANCE</b>		
Annual Financial Statements: final copy	None: one copy to be sent to Companies House	n/a
Financial audits and actions taken to address issues raised	Completion of audit + 10 years	Destroy
<b>ACCOUNTING</b>		
Purchase orders, purchase invoices, sales invoices, credit card records, expenses payments, petty cash handling, retail sales transactions and other transaction records	End of current financial year + 6 years	Destroy
<b>INTERNAL ACCOUNTING AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT</b>		
Preparation and monitoring of annual operating budgets	While necessary for reference and future planning purposes	Destroy
<b>FUNDING &amp; DONORS</b>		
Administration of research grants from external funders/sponsors	End of grant + 6 years	Destroy
Core records about donors and supporters	Held in perpetuity	N/A
Records of transactions with minor donors to the Foundation	End of current financial year + 6 years	Destroy
Records of transactions with major donors to the Foundation	Retention periods will be determined on a case-by-case basis according to any contractual agreements	Destroy
<b>TAX</b>		
Preparation and filing of annual tax returns (incl. VAT)	End of current tax year + 6 years	Destroy
<b>CASH, INVESTMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>		
Opening and closing of bank accounts	Closure of account + 6 years	Destroy
Standing order and direct debit instructions	End of instruction + 6 years	Destroy
Bank statements and associated documentation	End of current financial year + 6 years	Destroy
Overall management of investment portfolio	Disinvestment + 6 years	Destroy
Purchase and sale of investments	Date of transaction + 6 years	Destroy
Valuations of capital assets	Until superseded by new valuation +	Destroy

	6 years	
Authorisations to dispose of capital assets	Disposal + 6 years	Destroy
<b>INSURANCE</b>		
Insurance Certificates	Expiry of certificate + 40 years	Destroy
Records documenting the arrangement and renewal of insurance policies	Expiry of policy + 6 years	Destroy
Claims, and outcomes of claims, against insurance policies	Settlement or withdrawal of claim + 6 years	Destroy
<b>PROCUREMENT</b>		
Evaluations of supplier applications: approved suppliers	End of approval period + 6 years	Destroy
Evaluations of suppliers applications: rejected suppliers	Rejection + 1 year	Destroy
Invitations to tender	End of resulting contract + 6 years	Destroy
Supply contracts (and ensuing variations)	End of contract + 6 years	Destroy
Contract award notices	End of contract + 6 years	Destroy
<b>PAYROLL AND PENSIONS</b>		
Records documenting the calculation and payment of employees' salaries and other payments (for records relating to individual employees, see Personnel Matters section)	End of current tax year + 6 years	Destroy
Employer and employee contributions to Scottish Widows, NHS and any other pension schemes	End of employment + 75 years	Destroy
Records formally documenting the Foundation's involvement in any pension schemes	End of involvement + 5 years	Destroy
<b>CORE STAFF RECORD</b> (relating to individual members of staff)		
Core electronic and paper records about individual members of staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic personal details</li> <li>• initial application for employment, supporting documentation and related correspondence</li> <li>• subsequent successful applications for other jobs within the Foundation</li> <li>• contract(s) of employment and records of changes to terms and conditions</li> </ul>	End of employment + 6 years	HRIS records: Retain in perpetuity  Other electronic and paper records: Destroy
<b>PERSONNEL MATTERS</b> (relating to individual members of staff, and predominantly held within personnel files)		

Job applications: successful applications	Held as part of successful applicant's core staff record	See CORE STAFF RECORD
Job applications: unsuccessful applications	Closing date for vacancy + 1 year	Destroy
Unsolicited job applications	Receipt of application + 1 year	Destroy
Records of training and development programmes attended	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Annual appraisals and records of subsequent actions	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Promotions: re-grading confirmations and justifications	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Performance, disciplinary, complaint, grievance and capability proceedings (correspondence outlining concerns, confirmations of implemented support, outcomes of both informal and formal reviews, appeals)	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Remuneration and reward of an individual employee (including records of special rewards and employee authorisations for non-standard deductions from salary)	End of employment + 6 years (where held in personnel files) End of current tax year + 6 years (where held as financial records)	Destroy
Administration of an employee's contractual holiday (annual leave) entitlement	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Administration of an employee's absence due to sickness	End of employment + 6 years (where held in personnel files) End of current tax year + 6 years (where held as financial records)	Destroy
Administration of an employee's special leave (e.g. compassionate, study, research)	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Administration of an employee's parental leave	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Entitlements to and calculations of an employee's Statutory Maternity Pay	End of current tax year + 3 years	Destroy
Records concerning termination of employment (redundancy)	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Retirement records	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
References provided by the Foundation to third parties about an employee	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Staff welfare records about individual members of staff	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
Records relating to an individual staff member's visa status	End of employment + 6 years	Destroy
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		

Health and safety inspections and audits and records of actions taken to address issues raised	Completion of inspection or audit + 10 years	Destroy
General risk assessments of health and safety hazards	Until superseded by updated risk assessment + 5 years	Destroy
Occupational Health records (throughout employment) for employees exposed to hazardous substances	End of employment + 40 years	Destroy
Occupational Health records (throughout employment) for all other employees	End of employment + 8 years	Destroy
<b>OTHER RECORDS</b>		
Handling of formal complaints	Last action on complaint + 6 years	Destroy
Fraud and whistleblowing case files	Last action on case + 6 years	Destroy
Records regarding the Foundation's interactions with the Information Commissioner's Office	End of current financial year + 6 years	Destroy
Requests for personal data under data protection legislation	Last action on request + 6 years	Destroy
Records of consent under data protection legislation	Until relevant personal data is anonymised or destroyed	Destroy
Trustee Annual Reports / Accounts	Permanently	n/a
Trustee / director minutes of meetings / discussions	Permanently	n/a

### **Documents retained for non-statutory purposes**

The PHG Foundation may retain records for its own purposes e.g. documents which support programmes of work, have historical or other intrinsic significance. These may be held in a variety of formats including paper based and digital.

Whilst there may be no statutory requirement to retain such documents, the PHG Foundation will ensure that appropriate security is maintained and in particular any records containing personal data are held in accordance with the requirements of current Data Protection legislation.

Where documents are held in digital format storage servers will be backed up to ensure that data integrity and continuity is maintained. Folders and files stored in digital form will be reviewed regularly and appropriate archiving or deletion undertaken.

Retention of paper records for non-statutory purposes is discouraged due to costs and availability of storage space. It is recommended that at the end of individual projects or initiatives all paper files are reviewed and any non-essential papers removed and destroyed securely.