

Records and Information Management Services

Communication 003:

Identification of University Records versus Non-Record Materials

Introduction

University Records are considered State Records whether they are in physical or digital formats and, as such, they must be managed according to the requirements put forth by the Illinois State Records Act.ⁱ However, not all informational materials received or generated by the University are University Records. Most materials are Non-Recordⁱⁱ materials and therefore can be managed as necessary to best support current business processes. Non-Record materials should be disposed of as soon as possible when they are no longer necessary. This Communication is intended to clarify the difference between materials that are University Records and materials that are Non-Records.

Identification of University Records versus Non-Record Materials

University Records typically have one or more of the following attributes:

- The material is part of a contract or binding agreement.
- The material accounts for the receipt or expenditure of funds.
- The material contains facts concerning administrative decisions needed for immediate day-to-day functions.
- The material indicates a formal approval or denial of some service, action, or policy decision.
- The material was intentionally created or collected as evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations, or for its evidential value.
- The material represents an official action or position of the University.
- The material has clearly identified historical or archival value.

Non-Record materials typically have one or more of the following attributes:

- The material is of a transitory nature, communicating information of short-term value. (For example: messages sent via email or instant messaging (IM), telephone messages, or office announcements)
- The material is a working paper or draft. (For example: documents representing work-in-progress toward the development of policies, procedures, or best practices)
- The material is used specifically for reference purposes. (For example: A downloaded version of a professional journal article)
- The material is a duplicate of a University Record for which another department or office has authority to manage. (For example: recipient copies of internal communications or copies of signed contracts)

For further examples of Non-Record material, refer to the Records and Information Management Services resource *A Guide for the Clarification of Non-Record Materials*. For the *Guide* and for help identifying University Records, visit the Records and Information Management Services websiteⁱⁱⁱ.

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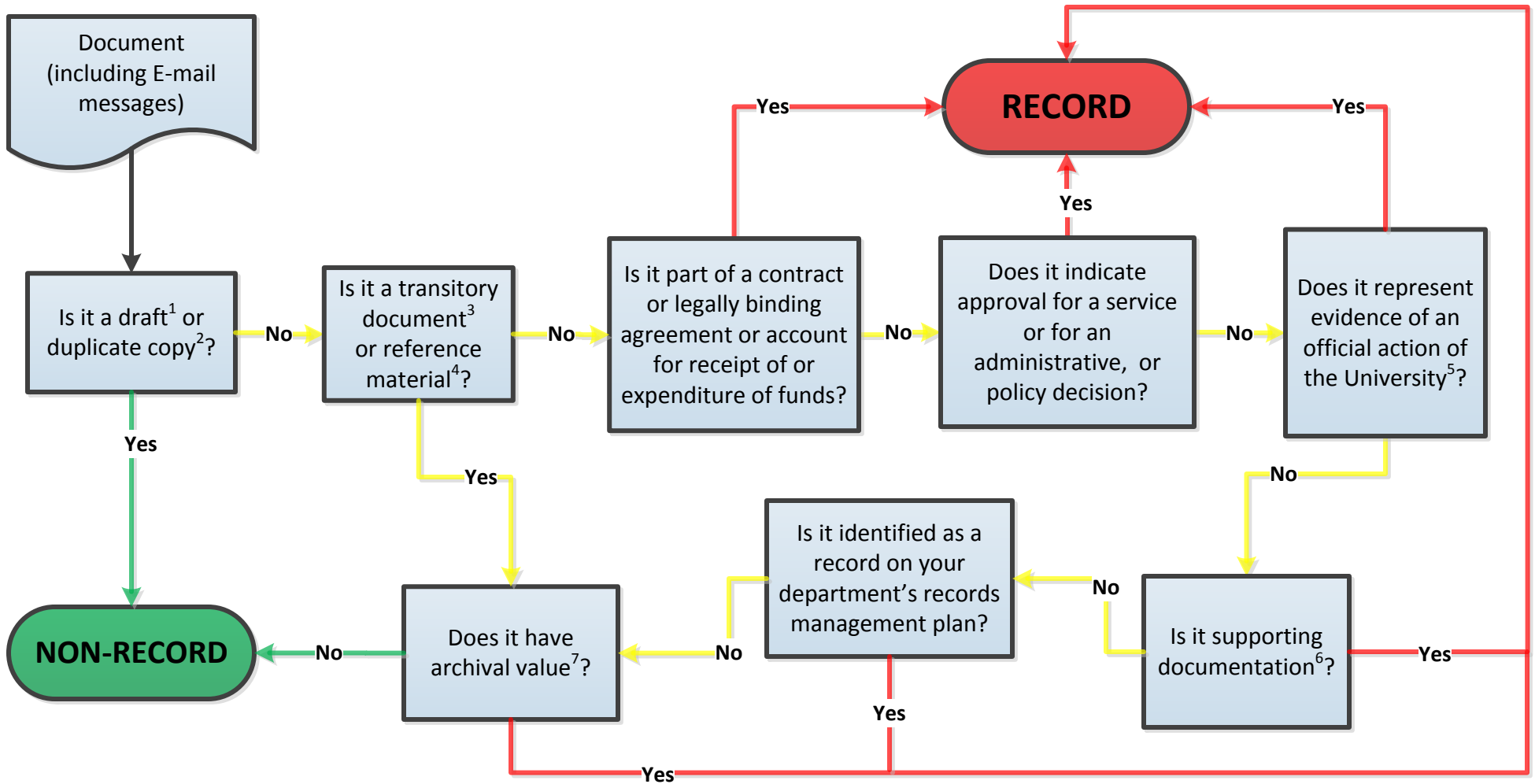
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ⁱ General recordkeeping requirements are found in the Illinois State Records Act ([5 ILCS 160](#)) and Administrative Code ([JCAR 4400](#))

ⁱⁱ The Records and Information Management Services office defines Non-Record materials as materials which are not State Records according to the Illinois State Records Act. Non-Record materials are still typically public records according to the [Illinois Freedom of Information Act](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ The Records and Information Management Services website is located at www.cio.uillinois.edu/rims.

Is It A Record?



If you are unsure, please contact your Records Liaison or the Records and Information Management Services Team <http://www.cio.uillinois.edu/rims/>

1 **Draft:** A preliminary version of a document which may be subject to revision, and is not yet able to accomplish its intended purpose. A draft document has no legal authority, and therefore should not be considered a Record.

2 **Duplicate copy:** A copy of a Record that is not the authoritative copy. Typically a single office or unit holds the recognized authoritative copy of a Record, and as a result every other copy is purely a duplicate not susceptible to the strict controls that surround authoritative Records.

3 **Transitory document:** Transitory documents are those records that are required only for a limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or the preparation of a subsequent record. Transitory records include correspondence that requires no administrative action, policy decision, or special handling; and non-record notices, such as memoranda, that are not used as the basis of an administrative or program action or decision.

4 **Reference material:** Documents retained by an office or individual solely for reference use.

5 **Evidence of an official action of the University:** A record created by, received by, sanctioned by, or proceeding from an individual acting within their designated capacity as an official of the University. Official actions of the University can be located in official communications, decisions, policies, or rulings issued by the University.

6 **Supporting documentation:** Documents that provide context to help understand other records.

7 **Archival Value:** The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation beyond their immediate business need. Records that hold Archival value contain usefulness or significance for understanding the history of a College, Department, notable individual, or the University at large.