



University Communications and Public Records Guidance

University business should generally be conducted on a work computer or within UW enterprise systems rather than on personal devices and accounts. This document provides guidance and best practice for work communication records and their required retention.

What is a university record?

- All materials, regardless of physical form or device used, that are created or received by employees in connection with university business are likely a public record. This includes communications with other employees as well as communications outside of the university if it is related to university business. All public records are considered the property of the university.

How do I manage university records?

- Each university employee is responsible for managing their records in accordance with the appropriate [records schedule](#). The length of time a record needs to be held is determined by its content, not the format or device used. This [decision tree](#) gives guidance on managing email but can be applied to records created or received through other communication methods (text, Teams Chat, etc). The [Records Management website](#) has additional email and electronic records management guidance.

Which devices and accounts should I use?

- Communications about university business should be conducted on university-supplied devices and stored on the university network whenever possible. You can use many enterprise systems on your personal devices that keep communications within the university network. Logging into your wisc.edu account or communicating via MS Teams from a personal device are good examples. Your unit may have additional departmental guidance for communications in your area of work.

Which accounts should I not use?

- Personal email accounts (ex: @gmail), text messaging apps, and other similar communication methods on personal devices that remove the communication from the university network are not recommended and should not typically be used for work. However, sometimes this is unavoidable. University records stored on personal devices or apps are subject to collection, review, and release where required in the law.

What if I have university-related communications on my personal devices?

- If you use personal email or messaging to conduct university business, it is your responsibility to preserve this business in an enterprise system. Once you do so, remove them from your personal device.

Email: Forward the conversation thread to your wisc.edu account and delete it from your personal account.

Messages: Email a screenshot of the state business message to your wisc.edu account with a subject title and delete it off of your device.

Additional Questions? If you have questions regarding this guidance, please reach out to: Records Management at recmgmt@library.wisc.edu or Office of Compliance Public Records office at public_records@wisc.edu or 608-890-4881.



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