



GUYANA POLICE FORCE ACADEMY RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

BACKGROUND

The Records Retention Policy outlines guidelines for the systematic retention, preservation, and disposal of records within the Guyana Police Force Academy. It applies to all records, regardless of format, created or received during its operations, and is governed by the **Public Service Commission Act 1984 and Regulations and the State Records Act 1998**.

The Academy manages numerous records related to recruits, personnel, training programs, policies, finances, facilities, equipment, and operations. However, there are no consistent retention schedules or procedures, leading to potential over-retention or premature disposal. Government regulations require retention minimums for certain documents, and confidential information must be secure and accessible only to authorized staff. This effective retention policy will outline standardized schedules, conversion to other formats, authorized access procedures, secure storage, and archiving protocols, and final disposal methods. Both paper and electronic records management procedures should be established to improve efficiency, ensure compliance, optimize space utilization, and support appropriate information access.

OBJECTIVE

Preserve Institutional History and Documentation

- Maintain a comprehensive and organized record of GPFA activities, programs, policies, and decisions.
- Ensure historical documentation is readily available for research, legal proceedings, and accreditation purposes.
- Safeguard institutional memory and facilitate knowledge transfer between generations of students and instructors.

Enhance Transparency and Accountability

- Document student performance, disciplinary actions, and graduation records for audit purposes.

- Maintain clear and consistent evidence-based trails for administrative decisions and policy implementations.
- Foster public trust and confidence in the Academy's operations by ensuring transparency in recordkeeping.

Streamline Data Management and Resource Allocation

- Establish clear guidelines for record retention periods for different categories of documents (e.g., student applications, financial records, training materials).
- Optimize storage space and resource allocation by securely disposing of outdated or non-essential records.
- Improve efficiency in retrieval and access to frequently used documents.

Protect Individual Privacy and Confidentiality

- Implement safeguards to ensure sensitive student information (e.g., medical records, and personal details) is protected from unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Define clear protocols for data access and sharing permissions within authorized personnel.
- Adhere to relevant data privacy laws and regulations to prevent misuse of personal information.

Promote Continuous Improvement and Policy Review

- Monitor the effectiveness of the Records Retention Policy in achieving its objectives.
- Periodically review and update the policy to adapt to changes in legal requirements, technological advancements, and best practices.
- Foster a culture of compliance and responsible recordkeeping within the Academy.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Academy will categorize documents based on content, legal requirements, and retention periods for appropriate handling and disposal. Each category will have a specific retention period, and secure disposal methods will be employed. A centralized record management system will facilitate efficient cataloging and tracking. Technology integration will be encouraged for electronic record storage and retrieval. Regular training will be provided to all personnel involved in recordkeeping.

SCOPE

The Guyana Police Force Academy (GPFA) Records Retention Policy establishes guidelines for retaining and disposing of various documentation about its students, staff, and operations. This policy ensures:

- **Compliance with Legal Requirements:** The policy adheres to relevant Guyanese laws and regulations governing data privacy, record management, and retention periods for specific document types.
- **Preservation of Institutional History:** It safeguards essential records necessary for documenting the Academy's activities, decisions, and achievements over time.
- **Efficient Resource Management:** By outlining which records to retain and for how long, the policy optimizes storage space and reduces administrative burdens associated with unnecessary document hoarding.
- **Protection of Sensitive Information:** The policy specifies appropriate retention and disposal measures for confidential student and staff information, ensuring data privacy and security.

The scope of the GPFA Records Retention Policy generally covers the following types of records:

- **Student Records:** Application materials, academic transcripts, disciplinary records, medical records, attendance records, and graduation certificates.
- **Staff Records:** Employment contracts, performance evaluations, salary information, disciplinary records, training records, and retirement documents.
- **Administrative Records:** Financial records, budgets, meeting minutes, policies and procedures, operational reports, maintenance records, procurement documents.
- **Training Materials:** Course syllabi, instructional materials, training manuals, presentations, and assessment tools.

Specific Retention Periods

The policy will outline specific retention periods for each record category, taking into account legal requirements, historical significance, and operational needs.

- Student Records (enrollment, grades, assessments, etc.) - Permanently
- Personnel Files - 7 years after employment ends
- Training Records - 3 years after completion
- Academic Policies and Procedures - Permanently
- Course Information/Catalogs - Permanently
- Curricula and Lesson Plans - 10 years after course discontinued
- Financial Records - 7 years

- Contracts and Agreements - 7 years after expiration
- Inspection Reports - 7 years
- Institutional Research Records - 5 years
- Library Circulation Records - 3 years
- Purchase Orders - 7 years
- Inventory Records - 7 years after superseded
- Academic Publications - Permanently
- Accreditation Records - Permanently
- Facilities/Equipment Records - Life of asset plus 7 years
- Grant Records - 7 years after completion
- Insurance Policies - Permanently

Disposal Methods

The policy should also specify secure and responsible methods for disposing of records that have reached their retention period. This could involve shredding confidential documents, securely deleting electronic files, or transferring certain historical records to a national archive.

Shredding

- Physical Shredding: This is the most common and secure method for confidential documents. Use a cross-cut shredder with small particle size (preferably 1/4" or smaller) for enhanced security.
- Micro-Shredding: For highly sensitive information, consider micro-shredding, which reduces documents into tiny confetti-like particles.

Degaussing

- Used for magnetic media like tapes and hard drives, degaussing disrupts the magnetic field, rendering stored data unrecoverable.

Electronic Wiping

- For digital storage devices, secure wiping software overwrites data multiple times with random patterns, making it virtually impossible to recover.

Best Practices and International Standards

- **Data Security Standards**-Align disposal methods with data security standards like NIST SP 800-88 (for media sanitization) and ISO/IEC 27001 (for information security management).
- **Security Measures**- Control access to disposal facilities and equipment, maintain chain of custody records, and use tamper-evident seals for secure transportation.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Regular training, access controls, audits, reporting, and disciplinary actions are crucial for GPFA personnel to ensure policy compliance. Legal repercussions may include unauthorized disclosure or illegal data handling.

REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION

The Force Training Officer is the overall head of the institution and bears ultimate responsibility for ensuring the correct Standing Operating Procedures are being followed and reporting any discrepancy to the force Administration.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy came into effect on September 22, 2023.

REVIEW PERIOD

A review of this policy will be conducted annually. The review will be conducted by the Training Board. The results of the review will be shared with the relevant stakeholders and necessary changes to the policy will be implemented based on the review.

REVISION DATE

Revised in January 2024.

APPROVAL OF POLICY

This Policy was approved by the Guyana Police Force Executive Leadership Team and the Guyana Police Force Academy Training Board.