

Managing the Digital University Desktop



Understanding and Empowering the Individual; Preserving the Public Record and Institutional History

Is email considered an official University record at UNC?

Yes. As a business tool, email is used to rapidly exchange information, collaborate on projects, and make announcements. Many campus units utilize email to transmit reports, meeting minutes, drafts of policies, official memorandums, and other information without realizing that their email correspondence is a public record, according to the **North Carolina Public Records Law (G.S. 132)**.

Email messages, in and of themselves, are not a recognized record series, but rather a means of transmission of information. Retention and disposition of email depends on the function and content of the individual message (**see the Email Filing FAQ and Email Deletion FAQ**).

Employees should be aware of their responsibility to keep electronic messages accessible to the public throughout their retention period. Requests for access to non-confidential electronic messages should be treated in the same manner as requests for other public records.

Electronic messages sent and received by University employees fall into three broad categories:

- **Personal** messages that should be minimal and deleted as soon as they are sent or received;
- Messages with **short term value**, including copies posted to several persons and casual and routine communications similar to telephone conversations; and,
- Records with **continuing value** that document administrative decision-making, committee, faculty, and campus activities.

See “**What Email Can I Delete?**” for examples of messages with short term and continuing value.