

## University Records Centre: An Overview of Services

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### 1. What is the University Records Centre?

The University Records Centre, or URC, is a secure storage area for semi-active University departmental records. Shelf spaces are numbered and their status recorded in a database to facilitate the storage and recall of records by University departments. There are currently three storage areas designated to the URC, with a total storage capacity of approximately 8,000 boxes. Records stored in the URC remain under departmental control. The URC is not part of the University Archives, which contains records that have been permanently transferred to the ownership of the Archives.

### 2. Why use the University Records Centre?

*Cost savings.* Due to the higher overhead costs of using prime office space for storage, the cost of storing records in the URC is about half that of storing them in departments. The URC is a custom-designed space, using specialized shelving to maximize storage and ease of retrieval. Records stored within departments are often difficult to locate and staff time to track down important files is limited, which can be especially taxing when faced with an access request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. SFU Records Management uses a custom database to track and record box locations in the URC, allowing for efficient retrievals. The Records Management process also includes a timeline for records destruction, so records that have outlived their usefulness are removed from storage according to the designated Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA), ensuring they are not taking up valuable storage space. RRSDAs are developed and administered by SFU Records Management in consultation with departments.

*Ease of use.* Records Management has complete, step-by-step instructions and the necessary paperwork for records transferred to the URC. Once a department has packed and prepared its boxes, Records Management staff collect them, do the data entry, apply unique, computer-generated labels and shelve the boxes. The department then receives a complete, computerized listing of its holdings, showing the shelf location, box number, general contents, date range, final disposition and disposal date.

*Full pick-up, file retrieval and disposal services.* In addition to collecting boxes that are ready to be placed in storage, Records Management staff also provide file retrieval and re-file services. A file retrieval database is used to track all file requests and monitor their progress and status. On a semi-annual basis, Records Management does a search for records scheduled for destruction or transfer to Archives' control according to the appropriate RRSDA. A Destruction or Archival Transfer letter is sent to the department advising that records are due for final disposal. Records Management staff remove the boxes and ensure that they are either destroyed in a confidential manner or transferred securely and processed into the University's permanent archival holdings.

*Security and confidentiality.* The University Records Centre is able to provide secure storage beyond the capacity of most departments. Access to the URC is restricted to Archives and Records Management staff, ensuring



that confidential and personal information is protected in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The environmental conditions in the URC are monitored daily to minimize risks to the records from poor air quality or the presence of moisture. Taking advantage of the services offered by SFU's Archives and Records Management Department ensures that important records are safe and secure and your department is in compliance with provincial law.