



**California State University**  
**Office of the Chancellor**

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**Records Retention Guidelines for  
Employment-Related Records**

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**Human Resources Administration**  
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**Introduction**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general retention guidelines for employee documents related to human resources, employee relations, labor relations, payroll and benefits. This guide is intended to be general in nature and is not intended to provide an all-inclusive listing of potential documents.

**Personnel Files**

Typical Documents

An employee’s personnel file typically includes the following documents:

Typical Documents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment applications</li> <li>• Resume/faculty biography</li> <li>• Appointment letters</li> <li>• Required state forms (e.g., Oath of Allegiance, Designation of Person Authorized to Receive Warrants)</li> <li>• New hire paperwork</li> <li>• Position descriptions</li> <li>• Personal data information and changes (e.g., name, address, education level)</li> <li>• Personnel transaction forms and supporting documentation for actions such as reclassification, reassignment, promotion/demotion, timebase changes, etc.</li> <li>• Court procedures (e.g., Notice of Judgment Against Wages)</li> <li>• Employee benefit enrollment and change documentation. Benefits include health and welfare programs, voluntary programs, retirement programs, and tax savings programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent status letters</li> <li>• Memoranda or letters of praise, counseling or reprimand</li> <li>• Notices of training completed</li> <li>• Performance evaluations</li> <li>• Salary adjustment documentation</li> <li>• Separation forms</li> <li>• Emergency Contact information</li> <li>• Other job-related personnel records, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Final disciplinary records, in accordance to collective bargaining requirements.</li> </ul>

Minimum Retention Periods for Personnel Files

Document/File	Minimum Retention Period
Personnel Files for Separated Employees – for the following separation types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deceased</li> <li>• Voluntary Resignation (without fault)</li> <li>• Voluntary Service Retirement</li> <li>• Rejection During Probation</li> <li>• End of Temporary Appointment</li> </ul>	Three years after separation from the CSU.

Document/File	Minimum Retention Period
Personnel Files for Separated Employees – for the following separation types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Retirement</li> <li>• Disability Separation</li> </ul>	Five years after separation from the CSU or final payment, whichever is later.
Personnel Folders for Separated Employees – for the following separation types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWOL</li> <li>• Lay-off</li> <li>• Non-Retention (MPP only)</li> <li>• Resignation with Fault</li> <li>• Involuntary Termination/Dismissal</li> </ul>	Five years after separation from the CSU.

**Employment Records Not to be Kept in Personnel File**

The following records should not be kept in the employee’s personnel file because of privacy concerns or to prevent claims that others’ access to certain information could expose an employee to retaliation:

Document/File	Minimum Retention Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verification of right to work in the U.S. (Form I-9)</li> </ul>	Keep for three years or one year after termination of employment, whichever is longer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEOC Charge of Discrimination and related documents</li> </ul>	Keep for five years after separation from the CSU.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFEH Charge of Discrimination and related documents</li> </ul>	Keep for five years after separation from the CSU.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers’ compensation claims and related documents</li> </ul>	Most workers compensation records should be kept five years after the date of injury or date on which compensation benefits were last provided, whichever occurs later. However, cases involving Permanent Disability should be kept permanently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Americans with Disabilities Act claim documentation</li> </ul>	Keep for five years after separation from the CSU.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical information protected by the California Confidentiality of Medical Information Act</li> </ul>	Keep at least four years from date of document.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of ethnic status or disabled or veteran status for reporting and recordkeeping purposes</li> </ul>	Keep at least five years from date of document.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any information that may be defamatory<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	Keep at least four years from date of document.

<sup>1</sup> Campuses may consult with their campus counsel when determining whether a document contains defamatory information.

Document/File	Minimum Retention Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any information that is not job related</li> </ul>	Keep at least four years from date of document.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any documents related to grievances or complaints, both informal and formal.</li> </ul>	Keep at least five years after separation from the CSU.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HIPAA documentation</li> </ul>	Keep six years from the date the document was created or last in effect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whistleblower documentation</li> </ul>	Keep seven years after the conclusion of the resolution.

## **Pay-Related Records**

### Typical Documents

Pay-related documents typically include the following:

- Records of hours worked
- Leave accrual and usage records
- Employee leave record
- Authorization for compensating time off
- Authorization for extra hours/Overtime documentation
- Records of additions to or deductions from wages
- Work schedules
- Withholding and deduction documentation
- W-2 forms returned by Post Office (also can order from the State Controller's Office)
- W-4 forms

### Minimum Retention Period

Keep as long as documents are in effect plus four years

## **Conflict of Interest Statements (Form 700)**

### Minimum Retention Period

Seven years

## **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Records**

### Minimum Retention Period

Three years from the date of the document or the date of the event, whichever is later.

## **Occupational Safety & Health Records**

### Minimum Retention Period

Most OSHA documents should be kept for five (5) years minimum following the injury or illness. However, documents regarding exposure to toxic substances and/or physical agents should be kept for 30 years.

## **Recruitment Records**

### Typical Documents

A recruitment file typically includes applications, resumes, reference checks, writing samples, advertising records, rating sheets, etc.

### Minimum Retention Period

Three years after the close of the recruitment.

## **Fee Waiver Records**

### Minimum Retention Period

Five years after completion of the class(es) for which the fee was waived.