



Records Retention for Sponsored Research Programs

Office of Research

Policy No. 3.7

Effective Date: Fall 2020
Last Update: Summer 2023

I. Policy Summary

This policy provides requirements and timelines for the retention of documents for all sponsored research programs. The NJIT policy is to retain NJIT research records for five years.

II. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish NJIT's internal policy and comply with the Uniform Guidance section [2 CFR 200.333](#) on the "Retention Requirements for Records" requirements. Records related to federal and state grants and contracts must be retained in accordance with these guidelines.

III. Policy Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Sponsored Research Projects conducted at or under the auspices of NJIT. While significant attention is placed upon federally funded sponsored research projects, this policy will be administered consistently across all funds and project accounts managed within the Office of Research. The NJIT policy is to retain research records for five years, whereas the Uniform Guidance requires retention of records for three years. In cases where there is a disparity in retention period, the longer period will prevail. In cases where a sponsor does not explicitly delineate a retention period, the NJIT five-year retention policy is to be used.

IV. Definitions

- A. "FSO" – Facilities Security Officer.
- B. "NJIT" includes all NJIT colleges, departments, centers and all entities that are controlled by any of them, except where specifically excluded. NJIT is also defined as the non-Federal entity in this document.
- C. "NJIT Award" means a formal written grant, contract or agreement made between NJIT and a Sponsor to perform a sponsored project. The NJIT award provides important guidance for managing the sponsored project and must be closely reviewed by the principal investigator, the administrator, ambassador and personnel in the Office of Research.
- D. "OMB Uniform Guidance" means The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (also known as the Uniform Guidance), [2 CFR Chapter II, Part 200](#).
- E. "Principal Investigator or PI" means NJIT's principal investigator on the Sponsored Project.
- F. "Sponsor" means a federal, state or local government agency, foundation, or private organization that is providing financial support of a Sponsored Project.

- G. “Sponsored Project”** means an externally funded activity conducted at or under the auspices of NJIT that is governed by specific terms and conditions. Sponsored Projects are usually separately budgeted and accounted for. Sponsored Projects may include projects funded for research, training, education, and other NJIT purposes.

V. Policy Statement

NJIT requires that all NJIT financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to a research award must be retained for a period of five years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report or, for awards that are renewed quarterly or annually, from the date of the submission of the quarterly or annual financial report, respectively, as reported to the awarding agency or pass-through entity in the case of a subrecipient. The Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200 indicates that federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities must not impose any other record retention requirements upon non-Federal entities. The only exceptions are the following:

- a) If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the retention period the records must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.
- b) When NJIT is notified in writing by the awarding agency, cognizant agency for audit, oversight agency for audit, cognizant agency for indirect costs, or pass-through entity to extend the retention period.
- c) Records for real property and equipment acquired with sponsored research funds must be retained for 5 years after final disposition.
- d) Records for program income transactions after the period of performance. In some cases recipients must report program income after the period of performance. Where there is such a requirement, the retention period for the records pertaining to the earning of the program income starts from the end of NJIT’s fiscal year in which the program income is earned.
- e) Indirect cost rate proposals and cost allocations plans. This paragraph applies to the following types of documents and their supporting records: indirect cost rate computations or proposals, cost allocation plans, and any similar accounting computations of the rate at which a particular group of costs is chargeable (such as computer usage chargeback rates or composite fringe benefit rates).
- f) If submitted for negotiation. If the proposal, plan, or other computation is required to be submitted to the Federal Government (or to the pass-through entity) to form the basis for negotiation of the rate, then the 3-year retention period for its supporting records starts from the date of such submission. NJIT requires 5 years for internal records.
- g) If not submitted for negotiation. If the proposal, plan, or other computation is not required to be submitted to the Federal Government (or to the pass-through entity) for negotiation purposes, then the 3-year retention period for the proposal, plan, or computation and its supporting records starts from the end of the fiscal year (or other accounting period) covered by the proposal, plan, or other computation. NJIT requires 5 years for internal records.

VI. OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS

Records related to grants and contracts are the property of the university. They do not belong to the employees who helped create such records. Employees have no personal or property right to any records of the university. No employee may remove or copy a university record for personal use.

VII. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Upon the completion of the records retention period, records can be destroyed in a manner that ensures that documents of a confidential nature will no longer be able to be read or interpreted. The following methods of destruction are to be used:

- Paper records will be shredded,
- Electronic records will be erased,
- Audio, video, or film recordings will be physically destroyed.

Records that are not of a confidential nature can be disposed of or recycled.

VIII. Classified Documents

The university is classified as a Cleared Facility under a Department of Defense Security Agreement and a [Department of Defense Form 254](#), Contract Security Classification Specification, which authorizes the possession of classified documents at the Confidential and Secret levels. Consequently, the university is required to follow the records retention guidelines outlined in the [National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual](#), which sets forth the regulatory issues involved in the management, retention, and destruction of classified material.

The university's FSO has the overall responsibility for document management, which includes receiving, storing, distributing, collecting and destroying classified documents.

Certain documents classified at the Confidential and Secret levels are received via a U.S. Post Office Box dedicated to this purpose. These documents are stored in a secure container maintained in a locked office which is protected by an intrusion detection system that is monitored by the NJIT Police Department.

These classified documents can only be viewed inside of the locked room, and only by employees who are working under the current contract, are cleared at the appropriate security level, and have a "need to know." The date and time duration of access to these documents is recorded and initialed by the viewing employee and the FSO.

All classified documents must be retained in the secure container for a period of two (2) years after the completion of a classified contract.

Destruction of classified documents is accomplished by shredding and burning them upon the completion of the retention period.

The FSO will maintain a file recording all of the above procedures, including the details of the destruction of the classified documents, for a period of at least two (2) years after the destruction of the classified documents.

V. Roles & Responsibilities

Compliance is the responsibility of the principal investigator, Pre-award Services, Post-award Management, and other university departments.

The PI is responsible for the retention of all documents related to his/her grant and contract activities. Such documents include, but are not limited to, technical documents regarding the methods used to conduct the research, results of the research, progress/performance reports, and cost allocation methodologies.

Pre-award Services is responsible for the retention of all documents related to the administrations of grants and contracts. Such documents include, but are not limited to, pre-award documentations, proposals, notifications of award, grant and contract agreements, subcontracts, and correspondence with the awarding agency.

Post-award Management is responsible for the retention of all documents related to the financial and control aspects of grants and contracts. Such documents include, but are not limited to, award budgets, financial reports/invoices, cash management and time and effort certifications.

Other university departments are also responsible for the retention of grant and contract award documents and follow requirements set out in the university Record Retention Policy. The Human Resources Department is responsible for the retention of documents related to the work status of employees, including PIs, faculty and staff members, working on grants and contracts, including, but not limited to, Forms I-9, Personnel Action Forms, and appointment letters. The Payroll Department is responsible for the retention of documents related to the compensation of employees, including, but not limited to, salary information and pay data. The Accounts Payable Department is responsible for the retention of documents supporting expenditures for purchases of equipment, materials and services, and for travel expenditures.

VI. Authority and Responsibility

The Office of Research has institutional authority for the matters addressed in this policy. Questions related to this policy are to be directed to the executive director, sponsored research programs administration.

Related Policies and Regulations

[Records Retention Policy](#)