

## Introduction

You can dispose of information that is:

- no administrative value;
- of personal value;
- of temporary usefulness;
- does not reflect the activities or operations of your unit;
- having no ongoing value beyond an immediate and minor transaction;
- serves as a draft for the preparation of another document; or
- where another individual or unit has been identified as the information owner.

This information is transitory and can be deleted when no longer needed.

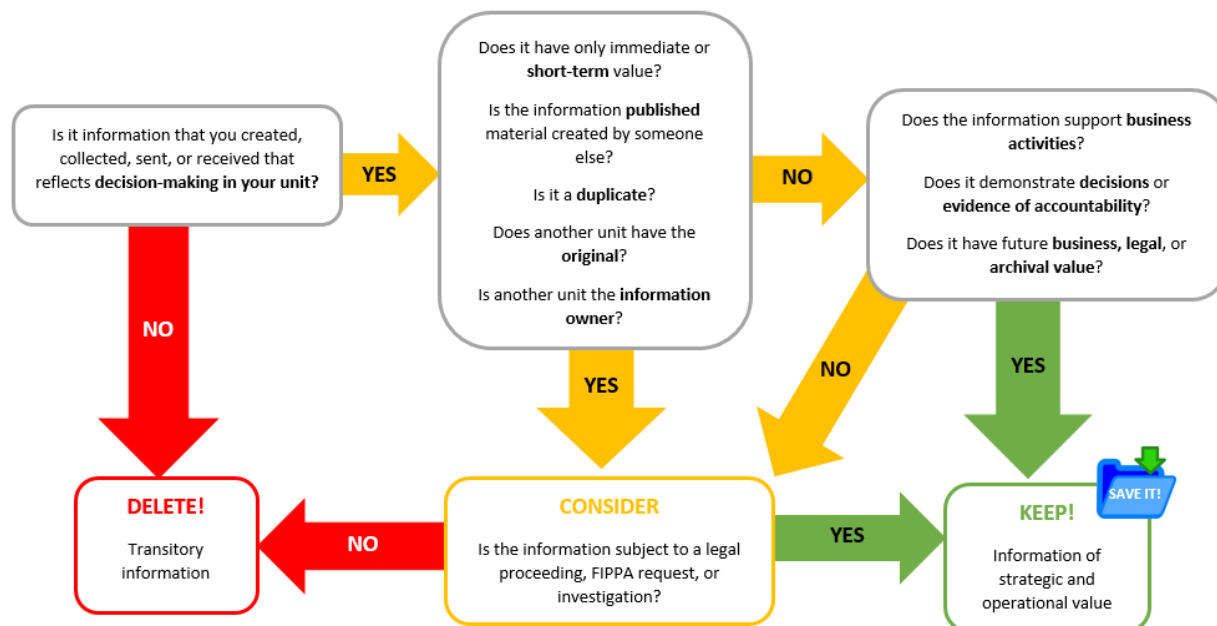
Please consult the best practice on *What to keep* to determine what information provides evidence of policy, decision or obligation and is therefore information that must be retained, classified, and stored.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Although they have no ongoing value, they are still subject to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). You must disclose all your related transitory information when responding to an access to information and protection of privacy requests. You must search all information under your control including transitory information sent or received. Once a request is received, it is a criminal offense to delete affected transitory information. Contact [aipo@uottawa.ca](mailto:aipo@uottawa.ca) for more information or if you have any questions.

The same applies to information identified or affected by a legal proceeding.

## How do I identify transitory information?





Some examples of transitory information

1. Advertising materials not created from your unit
Advertising materials include solicited or unsolicited information you receive from organizations and individuals advertising their products or services. Some of this material may be relevant to your work and you may want to file it for future reference.

Note that the format does not matter when identifying transitory information. Electronic and paper carry equal weight, it's the content that is important.

However, some may be considered junk mail and you can routinely discard it.

Examples:

Table with 2 columns: Transitory information, Reason. Rows include Brochures, Sales letters, Menus, Price lists.

2. Publications not originating from your unit

External publications, whether printed or electronic, that have no future value can be discarded once you are finished with them.

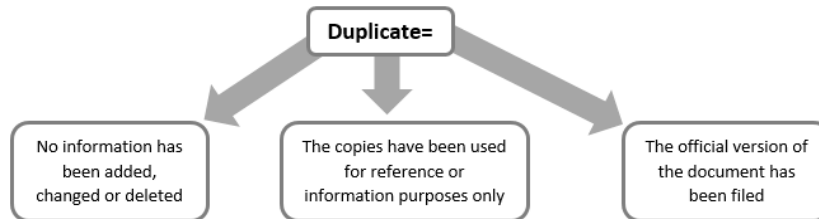
IMPORTANT NOTE: Publications produced by the University of Ottawa are not transitory and should be retained and filed by the unit who produced them. Please consult the best practice on What to keep and the University of Ottawa Classification and Retention Schedule.

Examples:

Table with 2 columns: Transitory information not created by your unit, Reason. Rows include Books, Magazines, periodicals, journals, Brochures and pamphlets, Newsletters and newspapers, Newsletters, publications, etc. from inside the University.

### 3. Duplicates

Duplicates are exact copies of information.



Information **must meet all three of these conditions to be a duplicate**. If something has been added, changed or deleted then it is no longer a duplicate. It could still be transitory, however, depending on the significance and future value of the addition, change or deletion.

**Examples:**

Transitory information	Reason
You photocopy or scan a paper document	Nothing has been added, changed, or deleted by scanning the document. The official version is the paper version, and it remains filed.
Stocks of in-house publications which are now obsolete and no longer useful	The original version has been filed, these are for information purposes only, and no changes have been made to them
Duplicate audio or video recordings	Nothing has been added, changed, or deleted by duplicating the recording, and the original is saved and filed.
You print out an official document that you have classified, stored, and saved appropriately	The official version is the electronic version, and it has been filed and stored properly. Nothing has been added, changed, or deleted by printing it.
You print out an email and file it accordingly, and keep the electronic version.	The printed version is the official version since you filed it. The electronic copy is a duplicate and can be disposed of.
You receive a copy of a publication such as The Gazette, or final minutes from a Committee you are a member of.	These are duplicates of the official version, and are sent to you for information purposes only.
You receive two versions of a report; one is branded with the uOttawa colors, and the other is not.	The information is the same, even though their appearance/format is different. You may dispose of the duplicate.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please consult the University of Ottawa Classification and Retention Schedule to determine which information you own.

4. Draft documents and working materials

These may include materials used in the preparation of documents and earlier versions of the final document.

Official correspondence, reports and other documents usually go through several drafts or versions before they are finalized and distributed.

Usually, drafts and working materials do not have future value and can be discarded as transitory information once the final version is produced.

Not all drafts are automatically transitory. In some cases, units responsible for drafting legal documents, policy, budgets, standards, guidelines or procedures might need to be kept to track the evolution of the final product (version control). These units may need to keep various drafts, research and working materials in order to have a record of changes that were made and why.

**Examples:**

Information	Is it transitory?
The drafts created in preparation for your units annual report.	Transitory. The final version of the annual report is the one that needs to be saved as the official record. Drafts that lead up to that final version do not need to be kept.
Versions of a policy drafted by your unit, and where your unit is responsible for the policy.	Not transitory. Versions of official University policies are important to show the evolution of a policy over time.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please consult the University of Ottawa Classification and Retention Schedule to determine which information you own.

5. Information of short-term value

We receive many documents containing information that is of little or no interest or importance to us or is useful for only a brief period of time, after which it has no further value.

These do not have to be filed and can be routinely disposed of once we are finished with them.

**Examples:**

Transitory information	Reason
Memos regarding holidays or special events circulated to all staff or posted in public folders	Only useful for informational purposes. No decisions or business activities are included in this material.
Notifications of meetings, acceptances, or regrets	Useful only for a short time, Once read, can be discarded.



### What to delete?

Transitory information	Reason
Emails that you are cc'd on, and require no action on your part	Being cc'd on an email is to keep you informed. These can be discarded once you no longer need to refer to the information within.
Copies of documents made and circulated as "FYI's" and for reference purposes	The original is stored elsewhere, so these should only be kept as long as they are useful
Minutes and agendas that you receive which require no action	For immediate use, and informational use only.
Manuals, telephone directories from another unit	If they are not regularly referred to, or applicable to your operations, they only have short-term value.
Instant message confirming an action item	The action item is captured and stored in the original document. Instant messages are transitory interactions. (See <i>Instant Messaging best practice</i> for more information)
Other issues not pertaining to your office, such as notice of a water leak in another building	Does not apply to your unit, and requires no action on your part.
Messages from colleagues or external to the University coordinating lunch, walks during break, or other personal items	Not relevant to the unit operations. Discard once it has been read.

Telephone messages, memos, notes, messages, and envelopes are usually considered to have only immediate or short-term value and may be discarded as transitory information.

In some cases, these may have future value and should be filed, for example, a note providing evidence of an individual calling at a certain time and date.

**Review and delete transitory information immediately as this will reduce the clutter in your filing cabinets, your emails, personal drives, and devices as well as shared drives.**

**HELPFUL TIP:**

If it is challenging to purge immediately, schedule regular times to review and delete, such as **weekly or monthly**.