UW Faculty Search Records Retention – Quick reference

For search chairs, committee members, and administrators

Core rule: Keep finalized, substantive search records until the hiring process is complete, then retain them for 6 additional years. Records already retained in Interfolio remain there for the appropriate retention period. Delete downloaded copies and other transitory materials once the search is complete, after confirming the official record is preserved.

Please note that for search committees for executive leaders of major administrative or academic divisions (e.g., President, Provost, Dean, Vice President, Vice Provost, Director, etc.), records should be retained for 10 years after the end of a search.

UW faculty-search records guidance • Outreach & assessment guidance

1. Major principles

Principle	What it means in practice	Quick reference
Keep one official search file.	Gather finalized substantive records in a secure, centralized UW location. Interfolio is the system of record for posting data, applicant materials, and evaluative data added there.	UW records-management policy
Retain substantive records.	Keep records showing what was posted, who was considered, how candidates were evaluated, what the committee recommended, and how the search concluded.	Outreach & assessment stages
Do not retain every copy.	Duplicates, downloaded applicant materials, routine logistics, and purely personal working notes can usually be deleted when no longer needed—after checking that the official record is complete.	Transitory-record guidance
Electronic records count.	Email, texts, Teams chats, calendars, notes, recordings, and files may be UW records when they concern University business. Create and record only what is needed.	UW Public Records Act guidance
There are instances where you should not delete records.	Do not delete, alter, or “clean up” records responsive to a public-records request, audit, investigation, lawsuit, or reasonably anticipated lawsuit.	UW records-management policy; Public Records Act guidance

2. What to keep and what can be deleted

In most cases, the administrative team supporting the search will be responsible for keeping these records. The search committee chair should work closely with their administrative and academic HR partners to ensure records are kept in accordance with UW policies.

Record type	Examples	Keep / delete	Practical action	Retention / timing
Posting and outreach	Final posting, position criteria, required forms, outreach announcements	KEEP	Keep final posting and a record/list of where advertised. Interfolio retains posting data; keep one copy of outreach announcements outside Interfolio when needed.	Hiring process completed + 6 years.
Applications and references	CVs, cover letters, statements, reference letters	KEEP official copy; DELETE duplicates	Leave materials in Interfolio. Avoid downloading. If downloaded for a reference purpose, purge/shred the local copy when that purpose is served.	Interfolio: appropriate retention period. Downloaded copies: transitory; purge after purpose is served.
Evaluation records	Shortlists, rankings, rubrics, interview notes, finalist feedback, meeting minutes	KEEP substantive records	Admin/chair gathers finalized records. Committee members send finalized records to admin, then delete duplicate versions.	Hiring process completed + 6 years.
Recommendation and closeout	Final recommendation, approvals, offer/acceptance or search cancellation	KEEP	Keep record showing final recommendation and how search ended. Coordinate transfer of appointment/personnel records with academic HR.	Hiring process completed + 6 years; confirm if another personnel schedule applies.
Routine logistics	Scheduling, room reservations, reminders, travel coordination	MAY DELETE	Delete when no longer needed, unless message documents a substantive decision, evaluation, dispute, or approval.	As soon as no longer needed.
Personal working notes	Non-substantive reminders or notes	MAY DELETE	Delete after search is complete, once official substantive record has been provided to admin/chair.	As soon as search is completed.

3. Outside search firms

Practical rule: Treat substantive records created or received by an outside search firm for the UW search as records that UW must be able to access and manage. UW's faculty-search materials do not establish a separate shorter retention period for search firms; include clear requirements in the contract and confirm unusual cases with Records Management Services.

Contract / firm record	What the UW unit should require	Timing / disposition
Contract and statement of work	Specify UW access, confidentiality/security, records transfer, public-records cooperation, legal holds, subcontractor obligations, and end-of-contract closeout.	Keep with UW procurement/contract file under applicable schedule.
Candidate materials and assessments	Require firm to transfer or provide access to official candidate materials, interview assessments, reports, and recommendations in a UW-designated location.	Preserve for applicable UW search retention period.
Firm communications	Keep substantive communications about candidate evaluation, recommendations, approvals, or process decisions. Routine scheduling duplicates may be deleted when no longer needed.	Substantive records: hiring process completed + 6 years, unless a different approved schedule applies. Note for major leadership positions (e.g., Dean), retain records for 10 years, as above.
Closeout	Require written confirmation of what was transferred to UW, what remains in firm custody, and what was deleted—with UW authorization for deletion.	Do not authorize deletion if a hold, request, audit, investigation, or dispute applies.

4. Search closeout checklist

1. Confirm the official Interfolio record is complete and accessible.
2. Gather finalized outreach, assessment, deliberation, recommendation, and closeout records in one secure UW location.
3. Ask every committee member to submit unique substantive records and delete duplicate copies after confirmation.
4. Delete downloaded applicant materials, personal non-substantive notes, duplicate files, and routine logistics when no longer needed.
5. Record the date the hiring process was completed—or the date the search was formally closed if no hire was made.
6. Retain substantive local records until the hiring process is complete, plus 3 years.
7. Before any deletion, check for a public-records request, audit, investigation, lawsuit, reasonably anticipated lawsuit, or other hold.
8. For an outside firm, obtain required records and written closeout confirmation before authorizing destruction.

5. When in doubt

Do not delete if there are questions or concerns. Pause and contact UW Records Management Services for the applicable record series, official copy, retention trigger, and disposition method. Route public-records requests to the UW Public Records and Open Meetings Office. No record may be destroyed if it is responsive to a public-records request or covered by a preservation hold.

Source links

- Records Related to Faculty Searches — UW Records Management Services
- Search Committee Records: Outreach & Assessment Stages
- UW Public Records Act guidance
- APS 57.11 — Records Management Services

Publication note

This is a practical operating guide created first with the UW AI assistant, Purple, and subsequently reviewed by UW and SoM leadership. It is not a substitute for the current UW-approved retention schedule. Before issuing a unit-specific version, confirm the record series, official custodian, retention trigger, and disposition authority with Records Management Services. See links above.