

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

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August 16, 1991

MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Assistant/Associate Deans, Chairpersons and Directors  
From: Barbara C. Steidle, Assistant Provost for Academic Services  
Subject: Retention and Disposition of Student Academic Records

The attached memorandum is being distributed as a periodic reminder of University policy regarding the disposition of student records. It defines the principles that underlie the practices, defines what constitutes student academic records, and establishes the minimum timelines for retention of such records by the academic unit.

I would note that the 3-year minimum cited in the policy may be too short for some purposes. Based on the potential need for such information as a guide to letters of recommendation and other such purposes, the University Archives recommends the following minima:

Undergraduate files:	5 years
Graduate files:	10 years

The Registrar's records are permanently retained.

The graduate-professional programs may have other requirements, defined internally or by professional accrediting associations.

BCS:jc8.16b

March 1, 1979

GUIDELINES - STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS  
Adviser's and Dean's Folders

1. General Principles

"Michigan State University recognizes the importance of maintaining individual student records to preserve authentic evidence of the events and actions which document the student's educational progress; and which facilitate the intelligent and purposeful guidance necessary to the achievement of the educational goals of the student in a university." (from MSU GUIDELINES GOVERNING PRIVACY AND RELEASE OF STUDENT RECORDS, printed in the Academic Programs section of the MSU Catalog)

Records maintained by persons functioning as academic administrators and academic advisers are critical to the fundamental purpose of this university. Guidelines which follow were compiled for academic administrators and for academic advisers from pertinent portions of various state and federal laws in order to insure compliance with legislation and, at the same time, to preserve the proper use and disposition of such records as essential elements in the educational process.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (Available in MSU Library)

Documents Desk: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (The Buckley Amendment)  
Freedom of Information Act

Reference Desk: MSU - Academic Freedom Report for Students  
MSU - Guidelines Governing Privacy and Release of Student Records

2. Academic Record (Dean's and Adviser's Folders)

These files contain official records directly related to student's performance, status, and progress as a student, and to which the student has access. Included are data, forms, reports, memoranda, and letters which are factual, or explanatory and helpful in understanding the academic status, progress, and goals of the student.

Upon proper identification students must be permitted to view their folders in the presence of a unit representative within 45 days following receipt of their request. Units may require requests in writing. Copies of materials in the Academic Record will be provided to the students upon their request provided sufficient time is allowed the unit. A fee may be assessed for this service.

Students may not remove materials from the folders but items they consider inaccurate or misleading may be contested through regular channels.

Release of information to third parties within the University is governed by the need to know principle. Conditions for release of information to third parties outside the University are set forth in MSU Guidelines Governing Privacy and Release of Student Records.

### 3. Disposition of Academic Records

When an undergraduate student changes major or major preference, or is admitted to a degree college upon attainment of junior standing (85 credits), the Academic Records shall be transferred to the appropriate receiving units. When an undergraduate student applies to a graduate or graduate/professional program at MSU, Academic Records are not transferred but they become accessible to the admitting unit.

Units must develop procedures to insure the security of the complete Academic Record described in section 2.

Inactive Academic Records are stored in the unit for a minimum of 3 years. Registrar's records are kept in perpetuity.

### 4. Personal Record

Administrators, faculty, and staff who function as academic advisers may keep Personal Records on students expressly for their own use. These records are not available to others, shall not be transferred, and may be destroyed at will.

N.B. Reviewed by Undergraduate Committee of the Assistant Deans Group Winter Term 1979.  
Reviewed by Mr. Byron Higgins, Assistant Vice President for Legal Affairs,  
26 February 1979.