

## Guide for Retention and Disposal of Student Records

The recommended minimal retention period as identified by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is listed below:

### Retention Schedule B

#### Admissions Data/Documents for Applicants Who Enroll

Representative Admissions Data Documents	Recommended Minimal Retention Time
Acceptance letters	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Advanced placement records	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Applications for admission or readmission (reentry)	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Correspondence, relevant date	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Entrance examination reports/test/scores (e.g., ACT, SAT, LSAT, MCAT, GRE)	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Letters of recommendation	Until admitted (see note 2)
Medical records	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Military documents	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Placement tests records/scores	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Recruitment materials	May dispose of materials after enrollment
Residency classification forms	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Student waivers for rights of access to see letters of recommendation for admission	Until terminated (see note 2)
Other test scores	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance
Transcripts other colleges	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance (see note 6)
Transcripts high school	5 years after graduation or date of last attendance (see note 6)
International Student Documents: Copy of Employment Authorization (work permit), if granted Copy of Alien Registration Receipt Card (evidence of admissibility as a permanent resident) I-20 (certificate of eligibility for F-1 visa status) Copy of I-94 Card (document issued to non-immigrants; also known as Arrival-Departure Record) IAP 66 (certificate of eligibility for J-1 visa status) Passport number Statement of Educational Costs (shows estimate of total school year costs) Statement of Financial Responsibility (shows evidence of adequate financial resources)	No upper limit for international students on student visas. For exchange visitor visas, 3 years after graduation or date of last attendance.

#### Notes:

- The retention periods recommended above are based on the following:
  - The forms are maintained in individual student folders and are retained no longer than five years after graduation or date, term, or semester and year of last attendance.
  - Uniform retention periods allow for the destruction of the entire folder which will save considerable sorting. Essential data will be recorded on academic records which are retained permanently (see AACRAO's *Academic Record and Transcript Guide, 1996*.)
- FERPA states that letters of recommendation not accompanied by waivers and retained beyond their intended use may be viewed by the student. As a consequence, it is recommended that these letters be destroyed after admission of the student. Waivers of rights of access filed with letters of recommendation should be retained as long as the file is retained.

© 2000 American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher. Printed in the United States of America.

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 520  
Washington, DC 20026-1135  
Tel: (202) 293-9161 • fax: (202) 872-8857 • [www.aacrao.com](http://www.aacrao.com)

Students who revoke their waivers of rights of access may not see letters of recommendations submitted during the time the waivers were in force.

3. VA regulations state that the following student records must be retained for at least three years after termination of enrollment:
  - Previous education or training (transcripts from other colleges and source documents for other nontraditional credit.)
  - Evidence of formal admission (acceptance letters). The regulations state that longer retention will not be required unless a written request is received from the General Accounting Office or the VA no later than 30 days prior to the end of the three-year-period.
4. Educational institutions which participate in federal, state, and private programs of low-interest loans to students must retain student records of admission and placement for five years after graduation or withdrawal. In the event of an open audit, records must be retained until all questions are resolved.
5. Records managers should be cognizant of the Educational Amendments of 1976, Student Consumer Information and the legal implications for records retention.
6. Some documents from institutions in other countries may be originals and therefore difficult or impossible for the applicant to replace. The records custodian may want to return these documents to the applicant rather than destroy them.