



# Personnel Records Policy 1.20

## Office of Human Resources

Applies to: Faculty, staff and student employees

### POLICY

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Issued: 10/01/1980  
Revised: 06/05/2002  
Edited: 01/23/2006  
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The University recognizes the expectations of employees that information about them stored in University personnel files is accurate, relevant, and safe from improper disclosure. Federal and state laws require that certain information be gathered and maintained in personnel files. Additionally, sound personnel decisions require that the University collect and retain information concerning employment history and performance. Because The Ohio State University is a public institution, many personnel records are available to the public upon request.

### POLICY GUIDELINES

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#### I. Definitions

The following descriptions of certain terms used in this policy are intended to provide guidance in understanding the policy, but are not comprehensive or definitive. These terms are subject to legislative revision and judicial interpretation.

Education records - any records, other than directory information (e.g., name and address), directly related to a student, including employment records for student employees.

Medical records - any documents pertaining to the medical history, diagnosis, prognosis, or medical condition of a patient that is generated and maintained in the process of medical treatment.

Investigatory records - applies primarily to the records of a police department, but also includes some records of administrative investigation.

Intellectual property records - most research-related information, other than financial or administrative data, that has not previously been publicly released, published, or patented.

#### II. Personnel File Maintenance

An employee's personnel file contains necessary job-related and personal information and is maintained by the home department. Each employee should have only one personnel file. When an employee transfers from one department to another, the personnel file should be forwarded to the hiring department. The current department may retain a copy of the personnel file if desired. In certain instances where the current department is required to retain original documents, a copy of the personnel file should be forwarded to the hiring department.

#### III. Personnel File Contents

A. Only job-related information will be contained in the personnel record. Contents of each personnel file should include basic identifying information (e.g., name, address, and job title), employment applications or other hiring-related documents, position descriptions, compensation records, information on benefit enrollment, attendance records, performance evaluations and information about other employment-related actions (e.g., promotions, training, or corrective action), and other job-related information. Information placed in the personnel file should be shared with the employee. Unsolicited and anonymous materials will not be included in the personnel file unless there has been a finding of fact through an existing university investigatory process.



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- B. The following documents should be maintained in separate files: education records, medical records, confidential investigatory records, intellectual property records, promotion and tenure records, and attorney-client communications.
- C. Records contained in the Human Resources Information System are considered part of the personnel file.

#### IV. Record Retention

Personnel files should be retained for six years from the date of separation. Records of sick leave balances and workers' compensation records should be maintained for at least 10 years from the date of separation.

#### V. Notification

The University has the right to verify information (e.g., employment status and job title) without notifying the individual involved, and to cooperate with law enforcement investigators, public safety, or medical officials.

### PROCEDURE

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#### I. Requesting Copy of Personnel File

In accordance with and to the extent permitted by the [Ohio Public Records Act](#), current and former employees may request to inspect and obtain a copy of their personnel files. The University will respond to such requests within a reasonable period of time.

#### II. Access to Personnel Files

Internal access to personnel files is limited to supervisory personnel who are considering the employee for promotion, transfer, accommodations, or other personnel action, and to other officials who have a legitimate need to know. All other internal requests will be treated as requests for public records.

#### III. Disputing Information

Employees who question the accuracy or completeness of information in their files should discuss their concerns with the appropriate departmental manager. The manager will consider the objections and remove erroneous information. Should the disputed information be retained in the file, the employee may submit a brief written statement identifying the alleged errors or inaccuracies. The statement will remain in the file as long as the disputed information is retained.

#### IV. Public Records Requests for Personnel Records

- A. Records maintained in a personnel file are generally considered public records under Ohio law. However, some documents contained in personnel files or otherwise maintained by the University are not public, including medical or educational records, intellectual property records, certain investigatory files, and any other record made confidential by law or not considered a public record.



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- B. Social security numbers are not public records. An individual's social security number should be removed from any record inspected or released in response to a public record request.
- C. For guidance concerning public records request for personnel records, including how to process and respond to such requests, contact your unit's human resources professional or the Office of Human Resources, [Organization and Human Resource Consulting \(OHRC\)](#).
- D. When a public records request is made to examine an employee's personnel file, that employee will, when practical, be notified, in advance of the release of the record if possible, that the record has been requested, and informed of the name of the person making the request, if available.

## RESOURCES

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### For consultation:

- Office of Human Resources, [Organization and Human Resource Consulting \(OHRC\)](#)  
(614) 292-2800, [ohrc@hr.osu.edu](mailto:ohrc@hr.osu.edu)
- Office of [Legal Affairs](#) 614-292-0611

### For more information:

- OSU Record Retention Policy [library.osu.edu/sites/archives/retention/schedules.php](http://library.osu.edu/sites/archives/retention/schedules.php)
- Ohio Public Records Act [codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.43](http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.43)