Retention of Unclaimed and Electronic Student Assignments

Despite the best efforts of faculty and instructors, some student assignments remain unclaimed at the end of term. Also, as more and more assignments are submitted and returned electronically, guidance for how long to retain electronic copies of student coursework materials is also required. In order to ensure that all faculty and students are aware of the proper processes to follow when dealing with these materials, the following recommendations have been developed.

Recommendations

- All students should be made aware at the beginning of the term that all unclaimed assignments become the property of the faculty and will become subject to destruction. This notification should be included on the course outline or reading list, and could be included in the course requirements sections of the University Catalogue for the faculty or school.

- At the end of the exam period for the term, all remaining paper copies of unclaimed assignments should be managed centrally in the faculty’s main office for students to claim during office hours, rather than coordinating with individual instructors.

- Unclaimed assignments are to be kept separate from any copies of coursework that is pending an appeal of a grade. Any student work that is pending an appeal should be retained by the faculty’s main office on behalf of the instructor for 2 years following the appeal decision.

- Retention periods for unclaimed assignments should be established for the Faculty, School or Program, and should be uniformly applied. The recommended minimum retention is End of Term + 3 months, and the maximum retention is End of Term + 6 months.

- To claim assignments from the main office, students should be required to present some form of photo identification, such as their student ID or driver’s licence. A Manitoba Health card or Social Insurance Number card cannot be used as identification.

- Instructors should follow their Faculty/School/Program’s established retention period to manage any electronic copies of student coursework they may maintain in the email or on their own personal storage media. If you’re unsure if your area has established retention periods in place, contact the Records Manager in the Access and Privacy Office.

- All unclaimed assignments should be destroyed securely via confidential shredding. Procedures for document disposal can be found on our website.

Additional Points to Consider

- Students maintain copyright for all of their work, despite notification that the version/copy of the assignment left with their instructors becomes the physical property of the department.

- If for any reason an instructor wishes to retain a copy of student coursework, they should obtain the written permission of the student to do so.

For Further Information:

- University of Manitoba’s Records Management Program
- Requisition to Destroy Records (RDR)
- Practical Steps to Protecting Students’ Personal Information
- Contact the Access and Privacy Office, 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, 204.474.9462, fippa@umanitoba.ca
- More details on copyright can be found at http://umanitoba.ca/copyright

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