

Office of Research
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Responding to Public Records Requests

SOP date: 5.18.22

1.0 Purpose

This document sets forth the SOPs for public records requests to UW under the Washington State Public Records Act that are referred to the Office of Research by the UW Office of Public Records and Open Public Meetings. These SOPs are intended to support compliance with the Washington State Public Records Act (Ch 42.52 RCW).

2.0 Revision History

This SOP document will be approved by the Sr. Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration and Integrity. Revisions will be logged in a table within this document.

EXAMPLE

Revision #	Date	Change	Reference Section	Contact

3.0 Persons Affected and OR Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Office of Public Records: The Office of Public Records and Open Public Meetings oversees the University’s compliance with the Public Records Act.
- 3.2 Office of Research persons affected by these SOPs.
- 3.3 Office of Research staff overseeing the OR Record Request process.
- 3.4 Office of Research staff responsible for responding to Record Requests.
- 3.5 Roles and Responsibilities within the Office of Research:
 - 3.5.1 Office of Research oversight Vice Provost for Research: Responsible for the fulfillment of record requests. Has delegated oversight to the OR Record Request Oversight role.
 - 3.5.2 OR Record Request Oversight (RO): Sr Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration and Integrity. This role will review and disseminate all records requests coming from the Office of Public Records and is the Office of Research point person responsible on behalf of the Vice Provost for Research, for working with the Office of Public Records to oversee compliance with the Washington State Public Records Act.
 - 3.5.3 OR Record Request Liaison (RL): Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication. This role will be copied on all incoming records requests, set up all files and folders, communicate questions from the record request responders to the Office of Public

Records, request extensions if needed, and handle the close out of a record request per these SOPs.

- 3.5.4 OR Record Request Staff Responder (RSR): OR unit-specific staff. This role will review records requests, assemble responses, and submit via OneDrive, per these SOPs.

4.0 Office of Research Record Request Acronyms (used throughout this document)

- 4.1 OPR: Office of Public Records and Open Public Meetings
- 4.2 OR: Office of Research
- 4.3 RL: OR Record Request Liaison (currently Linda Gamman)
- 4.4 RO: OR Record Request Oversight (currently Joe Giffels)
- 4.5 RR: Record Request
- 4.6 RSR: OR Record Request Staff Responder

5.0 Relevant Statutes and Policies

- 5.1 University of Washington Staff are required to comply with the Washington State Public Records Act (Ch 42.56 RCW): [Washington State Legislature Public Records Act](#), and [Administrative Policy Statement \(APS\) 57.9, "Departmental Guidelines for the Release of University Records."](#)

6.0 Record Request Processes and Procedures

- 6.1 Receipt, assignment, and request for initial review of new record requests

- 6.1.1 OPR forwards new RRs to RO, copying RL.
- 6.1.2 RO identifies and emails the RSR(s), asking for the review of the RR. The RL is copied. The text is as follows:

Dear [Name of RSR]:

Please review the attached public records request and identify and prepare responsive records for submission to a shared folder for which [RL] will provide the location in a follow-up email.

Let us know if you have any questions and/or if you'll need an extension to the [mo./day] deadline to submit the records and we'll make the request to OPR.

Please cite the public records request number in all communications relating to this request.

Thank you,
[First name, Last name]

- 6.1.3 Upon receipt of the RR via email from the RO all RSR(s) will review the RR form in its entirety and note the RR deadline.

- 6.2 Record request log-in and setup

- 6.2.1 RL creates a folder by year for each RR and will save in: O:/Linda/LK Files/OR Operations/Record Requests. The folder is named with the OPR assigned name of the RR. In this folder, the RR form, and the file of the original email from OPR will be saved. All substantive emails or documents (those that fall within the requirement for

a record request and/or are important for completion of this request) will be saved in this folder. No responsive records will be submitted and saved to the "O" drive but will be saved in the RR OneDrive folder (see 6.2.2).

6.2.2 RL creates a subfolder named by the RR number (PR_202x_xxxxxxx Name) for each RR in the "Record Request" folder in the RL's OneDrive account. RL will upload the original RR form to this folder. All responsive records will be submitted by the RSRs to the associated OneDrive folder.

6.2.3 RL gives access to the OneDrive RR subfolder to all RSRs that the RO has identified for this request. The text is as follows:

Dear [Name of RSR]:

You have been given access to the OneDrive folder for Record Request [add RR number]. When you have completed your search, please place your responses in this folder and inform [name of RL] via email that your records are in the OneDrive folder, noting if there will be additional records submitted, or if the search is complete. Confirm via email to [name of RL] when the request is complete, or you have no records for this request.

Please cite the public records request number in all communications relating to this request.

Thank you,
[First name, Last name]

6.2.4 RL adds new RRs to the "Log for Outstanding Requests" in One Drive. Log includes RR number and name, date sent to OR from OPR, date due, OR contact(s), OPR contact, original completion date, and pertinent notes (questions to OPR and their responses will be logged on this spreadsheet). All RSRs can access the log, but only the RL may update or edit the log.

6.3 Reviewing and assembling responses to a new record request

6.3.1 RSR will review the record request in its entirety and plan the search for responsive records to be completed by the deadline given by OPR. RSRs are responsible for searching and gathering responsive records that explicitly and directly relate to the request. RSRs are not required to provide OPR with advice for where possibly records may exist outside of OR.

6.3.2 RSR is required to preserve and send responsive records in the native format only. Definition: "Native format is the file structure of an electronic document as defined by the application that created that electronic document." So, for example, if a spreadsheet was created using Microsoft Excel, then that document's native format is its original Excel format (.xls). If records are emails, follow the process for [copying items in a new data file in Outlook](#).

6.3.3 RSR may post responsive records in batches to the associated OneDrive folder. Inform RL who will provide access to OPR as requested by the RSR.

6.3.4 RSR will send any questions or concerns or requested redactions to the RL (copy RO) and is not allowed to send these directly to OPR. Please cite the public records request number in all communications relating to this request. The RL will always

handle questions and responses between OR and OPR, except for matters that require the RO to interact with OPR. Meetings may be requested based on the complexity of the questions. RL will log all questions and replies from OPR on the “Log for Outstanding Requests.”

6.3.5 RSRs are not allowed to redact any documentation or records. That work is only done by OPR after a review of the responsive records.

6.3.6 RSRs will log time spent on each RR and will log the following information: When did you look for responsive records (time frame)? Where did you look for responsive records? How long did it take you to look for and prepare responsive records? These numbers can be approximations.

6.4 Submission of responsive records, or confirmation that no records exist

6.4.1 Role of the RSR if there are responsive records

1. RSR submits responsive records by the due date in the native format in the associated OneDrive folder with the link provided by the RL when the request was opened.
2. RSR emails RL (copying RO) to inform that responsive records have been submitted to the associated OneDrive folder and that the RR is complete. The text is as follows:

Dear [Name of RL]:

All responsive records have been submitted and placed in the OneDrive folder for [RR #]. This will complete this record request for [name of person/unit].

Thank you,
[First name, Last name]

3. If unable to send by the due date, RSR emails RL to request an extension (see Section 6.6).

6.4.2 Role of the RSR if there are no responsive records

1. RSR emails RL by the due date provided by OPR that there are no responsive records. Please cite the public records request number in all communications relating to this request.

6.5 Close-out of a public record request

6.5.1 When all responsive records are placed in the associated OneDrive, and the RSR has confirmed this with the RL, the role of the RSR is complete.

6.5.2 RL will provide access to OPR for all files in the associated OneDrive folder for the specific record request and OPR will receive an auto link to access the pertinent folder. When providing access an email dialogue box opens for notification and RL will send this text:

Good [morning/afternoon]:

This link will provide you with responsive records for [RR #]. [State if the request is completed or if more records will be coming.]

Thank you.
[First name, Last name]

- 6.5.3 RL will respond to OPR's original email request indicating the RR is complete. A confirmation email from OPR will be provided to the RL. RL will send this email (copying all contacts) to closeout a RR:

Good [morning/afternoon]:

I have provided access to all responsive records for [RR#]. This closes out this request for the Office of Research.

Thank you.
[First name, Last name]

- 6.5.4 RL updates the "Log for Outstanding Requests" noting the completion date.
- 6.5.5 RL moves the RR detail/row on the "Log for Outstanding Requests" to the "Closed RR Log."
- 6.5.6 RL removes due date from Outlook calendar/tickler.

6.6 Requesting an extension

- 6.6.1 If the designated RSRs are unable to complete the RR by the due date given by OPR, an extension can be requested (the RL is solely responsible for requesting extensions on behalf of RSRs).
- 6.6.2 RL and RSR are responsible for tracking RR due dates. If the RL has not heard from the RSR regarding the completion of a RR, the RL will email the RSR to either confirm completion of the request on that date or identify the need for an extension.

Good [morning/afternoon]:

The extension period for this request [RR#] is over today [add date]. Please let me know if you will be providing responsive records or if you would like me to request a two-week extension to [add date].

Thank you,
[First name, Last name]

- 6.6.3 If an extension is requested/required, the RL will request an extension from OPR. Typically, a two-week extension is requested, unless the scope and size of the request require a longer extension period. RL sends email to OPR, copying all contacts:

Good [morning/afternoon]:

This records request [RR#] is due [add due date]. I am writing to request a two-week extension to [add date].

Thank you for your consideration of this request.
[First name, Last name]

- 6.6.4 RL will update the due date on the "Log for Outstanding Requests." It is not typical to receive a confirmation of the extension request from OPR."
- 6.6.5 Additional extensions may be requested (process steps 6.6.1 through 6.6.4.)

7.0 Content Creator

7.1 Linda Gamman, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication, Office of Research

8.0 Content Review and Approver

8.1 Joe Giffels, Sr. Associate Vice Provost for Research Administration and Integrity

9.0 Effective Date

9.1 TBD