

Destruction of paper documents after scanning at Stockholm University

Type of document	Administrative procedure
Decided by	President, Stockholm University
Decision date	2021-09-09
Ref. no.	SU FV-3095-21
Period of validity	Until further notice
Replaces document	-
Responsible administrative department	Stockholm University Library, Archives and Registrar Office, arkivet@su.se
Responsible administrator	Mia Wahlberg

This document provides guidance on when archive documents that have been received or drawn up may be destroyed after they have been scanned. The guidance may be applied to documents drawn up and received after 1 January 2010, provided that the documents were scanned when they were received or drawn up, and that the checks and requirements of the procedures are met.

Introduction

The handling of public documents at universities and other higher education institutions is governed by law and regulations, with the Swedish National Archives playing a special role as supervisory authority. The Swedish National Archives publishes regulations (RA-FS) in which national rules define how universities and other higher education institutions should interpret concepts such as preservation and destruction, as well as how universities and other higher education institutions should handle various documents and bodies of information in various contexts.

In order to facilitate the administration and handling of paper documents, the Swedish National Archives has formulated rules for when and how paper documents can be destroyed after scanning in its regulations and general advice on the destruction of paper documents after scanning (RA-FS 2021:1). Stockholm University intends to apply these rules in activities that handle public documents. Thus, the purpose of this administrative procedure is to clarify the procedure for the destruction of paper documents after scanning within the University's activities and the contexts in which the application applies.

Application and scope

The following excerpt from the Swedish National Archives' regulations states the following:

- The regulations apply unless there are different rules on preservation or destruction in a law or regulation, or in regulations or decisions based on a law or regulation.
- The regulations apply to paper documents that have been scanned so that electronic copies have been created. They do not apply to scanning where data is only transferred to different fields in a database.
- The regulations apply to paper documents that have been scanned at the time they were received or drawn up. The regulations do not apply to paper documents which:
 1. were scanned at a later stage to make them available on a website, to facilitate disclosure of a public document, or to make them available for further use,
 2. were scanned at a later stage for the purpose of replacing them with electronic documents in the archives of the authority, or
 3. have been taken over from another authority and are part of the archives of that authority.
- The regulations do not apply to the scanning of documents in a medium other than paper.
- The paper documents may be destroyed only on condition that there is no infringement of the public's right of access and the paper originals are deemed to be of no value for the purposes of justice, administration or research.
- The regulations may be applied retroactively to documents received or drawn up after 31 December 2009, provided that the documents were scanned when they were received or drawn up, and that the checks and requirements laid down in the document are otherwise met.

Swedish National Archives' definitions

Authenticity	An authentic document or information can be verified: a) drawn up or received with the content and in the form stated by the authority, b) drawn up or received at the time point specified, c) created or sent by the actor – another authority, organisation or individual – who is said to have created or sent it, d) created and sent at the time point indicated by the actor, and e) used by the authority in the course of its processing or actual action with the content and in the form indicated by the authority.
Electronic document	Recorded for automated processing in accordance with Chapter 2, § 3 of the Freedom of the Press Act (1949:105).
Electronic copy	Electronic document that reproduces a paper original without loss of information – with the same content and appearance, apart from the difference in medium – where the content can consist of text, images and other graphic information.
Destroy/destruction	Destroying public documents or information contained in public documents, or taking other measures with the documents that result in – loss of meaningful data, – loss of possible compilations. – loss of search possibilities, or – loss of possibilities to assess the authenticity of the documents. The transfer of information to a data carrier within another medium, such as from paper to electronic documents, always counts as destruction.
Medium	Means and methods of producing, transmitting and storing documents.
Paper original	Paper document that can serve as a basis for creating an electronic copy.
Scanning	Image capture using a paper original to create an electronic copy.

Guidance on the handling of specific documents for Stockholm University

The document management plan for Stockholm University (su.se/arkivet), drawn up by the central Archives and Registrar Office, sets out what applies specifically to each type of document and any specifications regarding the retention period, as well as specific rationale if any type of document deviates from the general principles. The document management plan indicates which types of documents may be destroyed after being scanned. In case of questions regarding specific documents, please refer to the document management plan or contact the Archives Office.

Paper documents received by the Registrar may be scanned and then destroyed

According to the regulations of the Swedish National Archives, paper documents received by the Registrar for registration and filing may be scanned and stored in the central repository. A prerequisite for the destruction of paper documents after scanning is that the University's document management plan allows for the handling of the specific document type. According to the regulations of the Swedish National Archives, documents are exempted from destruction after scanning under certain circumstances, such as when the original paper document has a specific significance (see below) or when there is a requirement from the University that a document type have a handwritten signature. Scanning and destruction of paper documents should, however, be considered a prioritised working method, and deviations should be considered exceptions given the above conditions.

Documents that do not require a signature can be destroyed after scanning

Documents that are received or drawn up and do not require a signature (either handwritten or digital) according to the guidelines established by the Legal Secretariat in a memorandum on electronic signatures may be destroyed immediately after scanning and once the digital document has been preserved a manner that secures the information.

In cases when an "unnecessary" handwritten signature is found on a document, this document may be destroyed after scanning, despite being signed.

Example: Hand-signed minutes can be destroyed immediately after scanning and digital archiving since there is no formal requirement from the University for meeting minutes to be signed. For this reason, the analogue signed minutes (original document) do not need to be kept for any set retention period.

Paper documents preserved in analogue form even after scanning

For certain document types, the paper document must be preserved as an original, permanently or for a set period of time, even after scanning through which a digitised copy has been created in accordance with Chapter 3, § 3 RA-FS 2021:1. Examples of such documents are hand-signed contracts, authorisations and certain agreements or documents that have great value for national cultural heritage.

- Documents related to payroll and human resource administration and documents related to accounting information may have specific rules depending on document type.
- Paper originals of importance to Sweden's international commitments are preserved.
- Paper originals of importance to national cultural heritage are preserved.
- Paper originals that form the basis of audits of activities funded by the European Union are preserved for as long as the requirement for supporting audit documentation exists.
- For hand-signed contracts and similar documents, the original document is preserved.

See the document management plan for Stockholm University for further guidance.

Full procedures for scanning, quality assurance and preservation can be found in the document "*Rutin för inskanning av handlingar vid Stockholms universitet*" [Procedure for scanning documents at Stockholm University] (Ref. no. SU FV-1672-21).