

Once they are transferred to the archives, anyone will be able to access my confidential files!

Access to archival repositories is restricted to **archivists** who are bound by **professional secret and the obligation to respect the confidentiality** of people and material. Once transferred, you will of course be able to **access the documents you have created** but laws prevent third parties from accessing them freely.

**Note**

Access to archival material is governed by the content of documents and the type of data they contain. For example, staff files can be accessed after 50 years, laboratory notebooks after 25 years and statistical surveys between 25 and 75 years. Under specific conditions and with the agreement of the material's creator, a third party might obtain an exemption to access closed files, but this would need to be approved by the interdepartmental service of the Archives de France. > Reference: Code du patrimoine, L. 213-2 et 3

You still maintain your intellectual property rights, even if you transfer your records and data to the archival services.

**Entrust your archives to us!**

By entrusting your documents and data to the professional archive staff at your institute, you are facilitating and encouraging the preservation and the conservation of the heritage of science and technology. By doing this, you are supporting the progress of science!

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I don't have any archives!  
Seven (misguided!) beliefs about scientific records and archives



Archives?  
I don't have any  
and nor does my lab!

And yet, scientific records and archives come in many different forms, such as:

- **files and data created by a person or a research lab** that stores results or disseminates them,
- documents **relating to the management and the functioning of the lab**

Archives are not just old papers! They can be **hand-written notes, printed or digital documents**, blueprints, maps, displays, pictures, videos, databases, samples, emails...

#### Note

According to French law, all data and documents are considered to be scientific records from the moment of their creation, regardless of whether they are destined to be archived permanently or destroyed.

> Reference: Code du patrimoine, art. L. 211-1

I do what I want with  
my records and archives!  
I can burn them all!

When you are working for a publicly-funded institute, all documents and data that you create or receive within the context of your work are **public records**.

It means you are **responsible** for them, although you don't own them.

Remember: **when you are about to leave your job, you should list and transfer your records to your institute's archivist.**

#### Note

Public records and archives should not be transferred or destroyed without the approval of the lab that created them and the institute's archival service (this will be documented with a transfer or destruction form).

> Reference: Code du patrimoine, art. L. 214-2 to 4

Only publications matter!  
Drafts and other papers are  
worthless!

#### Many more complementary documents are indispensable!

Archives are a valuable source of knowledge because of their unique and original nature.

Archives can take many forms and keeping drafts can be vital because they contain much original content.

Archives and records are essential and helpful to:

- manage **current affairs**
- prove and defend your lab and its members **intellectual rights**
- **validate results of scientific research** using **raw data**
- prove the **authenticity of research and originality of inventions**
- **preserve your lab's history and document changes**
- conform to regulations pertaining to public records and archives

I digitise everything so  
I can throw all paperwork!

**Digitization** sometimes makes your day-to-day work easier, but it does not mean you can destroy original documents.

Furthermore, **digitization requires more complex management**. Files still need to be organised: a database cannot help make sense of disorder!

#### Note

The destruction of records and archives, even if digitized copies of the original documents exist, requires appropriate authorization from the producer and your institute's archival service.

> Reference: Vademecum from the interdepartmental services of the Archives de France, from March 2014

> Reference: French standard NF Z 42-026 "Définition et spécifications des prestations de numérisation fidèle de documents sur support papier et contrôle de ces prestations"

All my data are on the  
server: I don't need to  
archive anything anymore!

#### Saving and backing up documents and data does not mean you have adequately archived them.

The storage of data on a server is not enough to guarantee their long-term preservation. Backing-up a file is a short-term solution which only enables retrieval of data, not preservation and long-term accessibility.

#### Note

Born-digital documents are subject to the same regulations and retention schedules as paper documents.

However, ensuring the long-term access to digital files requires specific work to keep them readable more than 5 or 10 years. To preserve born-digital and digital records and archives, ask for advice from your archival and IT services.

There's room in the  
basement to store  
archives!

#### The appraisal (selection for long-term preservation) of records and archives is done with the help of retention schedules and other tools.

Contact your archival service and archivists will be able to help you to identify what needs to be kept and what can be destroyed.

**To store and preserve records properly**, use only paper folders and archival boxes.

Metal (paper clips and staples) and plastic folders are not suitable for long-term preservation.

After appraisal, records can either be kept in your lab or transferred to the archive repository.

#### Do you work in a mixed unit?

Your records will preferably be managed by the department which hosts your lab.

> Reference : Instruction DAF/DPACI/2007/02

In the long term, if your documents are to be preserved forever, they can be transferred to the National Archives or the most relevant local authority.