Retention and Disposal of Student Exams or Assignments

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This policy is intended to ensure that student exams and assignments are managed in a way that ensures compliance with the privacy rules in BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSBC 1996, c. 468);

1.2 To ensure that student exams or assignments used to make decisions directly affecting the rights of the student, when retained by the University, are kept for at least one year after final use; and

1.3 To ensure that the privacy of students is protected through the secure disposal of their exams and assignments.

2.0 Policy

2.1 Retention

2.1.1 Student exams and assignments are records of the University when retained by faculty and fall under the definition of personal information in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. They document decisions made by University faculty that directly affect the student.

2.1.2 Graded examination papers or course assignments are returned to students or retained by the course instructor at his/her discretion. The exception is final examinations which are retained by the University.

2.1.3 When exams or assignments are not returned to the student, the University must retain that information for at least one year after using it so that the student has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to it. This means faculty would retain these records for one year from the semester in which they were written and graded before disposing of the information unless there is an appeal (see point 2.1.5 below).

2.1.4 Students should be informed to retain exams and assignments that are returned in case they wish to appeal a grade.

2.1.5 If an exam or assignment is used as evidence in a grade appeal or some other dispute resolution procedure, it must be kept for one year from the date on which a grade appeal is finally decided or other dispute resolved.

2.1.6 A Records Retention Schedule and Disposal Authority (RRSDA) has been prepared by the Archives Department and approved by the University Registrar and Vice-President Academic for common use by all University faculties and departments. The RRSDA provides administrative and legal authority for the retention and disposal of student exams or assignments after one year from date of final use.
2.2 Disposal

2.2.1 University records must be disposed of in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of the information.

2.2.2 Student exams or assignments contain sensitive personal information and are to be disposed of by physical destruction in such a way that they cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. Departments disposing of these records would contact Facilities Management, Recycling Services to arrange for confidential shredding.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all departments that administer student exams or assignments.

3.2 This policy applies only to graded examination papers or course assignments retained by University faculty. Students are responsible for the retention of exams and/or assignments that have been returned to them.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The University officials designated by the Board of Governors in the FOI/POP Schedule of Authorized Officers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy (see Policy I10.02, Schedule A).

5.0 Authority

5.1 The legal authority for this policy arises from the following provincial statutes:

- The University Act (RSBC 1996, c. 468)
- The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSBC 1996, c. 165)

6.0 Definitions

“Final use” means the exam or assignment has been graded and all grade appeals or other disputes regarding the exam or assignment have been decided or resolved.

Appendix I

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following University policies:

T20.01 Grading and the Reconsideration of Grades