

FAQs

Below are some commonly asked questions and our responses:

- How can I contact the Office of General Counsel:
The Office of General Counsel is located in Bibb Graves Hall, room 22. We can be reached by phone at 256-765-4487.
- May I hire an outside attorney for University business?
No. Only the General Counsel may retain outside counsel for matters related to the University.
- Can the Office of General Counsel recommend a personal attorney?
The Office of General Counsel does not refer employees to private attorneys.
- Who does the Office of General Counsel represent?
The Office of General Counsel provides legal advice and representation to the University of North Alabama. The University and all of its colleges and departments are one legal entity. In that capacity, the Office of General Counsel advises Administration, Faculty and Staff, all in their official capacities, on various issues impacting the University to reach decisions that are in the best interest of the University.
- Can the Office of General Counsel represent or give legal advice to individual faculty members, students or staff on non-University matters?
No. The Office of General Counsel represents the University and works only on University-related matters.
- What should I do if I receive a subpoena, summons, or court order or if I am contacted by an attorney in connection with University business?
If you receive a subpoena directed to the University of North Alabama, or related to your work at UNA, you should not accept it. You should direct the person attempting to serve the subpoena to the Office of General Counsel, Bibb Graves, room 22, 256-765-4487.

If you receive a summons or court order, or are contacted by an attorney in connection with University business, you should immediately direct them to or contact the Office of General Counsel, 256-765-4487.

Our office will coordinate the appropriate response to such legal inquiries. Under no circumstances should any information be disclosed or University documents be released without prior notification and approval from the Office of General Counsel.

- What should I do if I need a contract reviewed, approved and signed?
Faculty and staff regularly receive proposed contracts from various educational institutions, outside agencies, vendors, and other third parties. Most contracts to which the University (or any college or department of the University) is a party, should be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and signed by a University officer – the President or Vice President for Business

and Financial Affairs or appropriate Vice President (please check with the vice president in your area regarding signatory authority, as most vice presidents have authority up to a certain limit). Signing contracts without the appropriate authority is most likely not within the scope of employment and could, under some circumstances, lead to the person who signed the contract being held personally liable for the contractual obligations.

For questions regarding review and/or signature, please call the Office of General Counsel's main number, 256-765-4487.

➤ How long do I have to keep university records?

It depends on the type of record. Under Alabama law, many University records fall under the retention and disposal guidelines established by the Alabama State Records Commission. The guidelines are called the Records Disposition Authority (RDA) and can be found [here](#).

The retention and disposal guidelines apply to University records in all formats. The RDA governs the disposition of all records, regardless of format, created by the University to dissolution. Please contact the staff of the Alabama Department of Archives and History before destroying any records created prior to 1940.

The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for some University records, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept.

For more information on records retention and approved methods for destruction, please contact the Office of General Counsel, 256-765-4487.

➤ Where do I get permission to use the University's trademarks?

Commercial use of the university's name, logos, nicknames, or other trademarks requires advance permission from the university's trademark licensing director. University departments are permitted to use the trademarks and service marks for official university business purposes without prior approval. For more information, please visit the University Communications and Marketing [webpage](#).

Commented [FAM1]: Will need to check with Karen on this.

➤ Are communications with the Office of General Counsel confidential?

When the purpose of a communication between University employees and the General Counsel is to request and provide legal advice, those communications are confidential or "privileged." This attorney/client privilege is critical for ensuring that clients speak freely with their attorneys, and allows attorneys to provide candid advice. However, the privilege is the University's; communications between individual employees and University employees may be disclosed to other administrators or to outside counsel retained to represent or advise the University on a "need to know" basis.

For the privilege to apply, you should never discuss your communications with the General Counsel with anyone outside of the University. Even within the University, you should take care only to discuss the communications with others who have responsibility for the issue at hand.

Disclosure of those communications risks waiving the privilege, which means the communications would no longer be confidential. Keep in mind that forwarding an email with legal advice could waive that privilege.

- What should I do if I receive a request for public records?
Please contact the Office of General Counsel, 256-765-4487

