Objective: To determine if employees in the department/unit are aware of the Open Records Act (ORA), as well as to determine if periodic communications are provided to employees regarding the ORA and requests made governing information pursuant to the Act.

Risk Level/Potential Impact: High; Results in violations of institutional and/or BOR policies as well as state laws and negative publicity for the institution if a records request is not handled appropriately.

Criteria: Institutional and BOR policies and procedures; Office of Attorney General of Georgia’s policies; Best business practices.

Frequently Observed Weaknesses/Deficiencies:
- Failure to periodically communicate information on the ORA.
- Lack of employee awareness regarding the ORA.

Helpful Tools:
- HR Training and Education Courses

GRU Contact Office and Information Resource(s): GRU’s Office of Legal Affairs (706) 721-4018.

**Best Business Practices:**
1. Management should periodically communicate information regarding requests for information and the ORA to all employees.
2. Employees who receive Open Records Act requests directly should promptly notify department management and the Office of Legal Affairs. Georgia law allows State agencies to designate one official point of contact for Open Records Act requests. GRU and the Medical Center have designated their General Counsel to receive and respond to ORA requests. E-mail address for University requests is [openrecords-academic@gru.edu](mailto:openrecords-academic@gru.edu) and for Medical Center requests is [openrecords-healthcare@gru.edu](mailto:openrecords-healthcare@gru.edu). (Note: Timeliness of handling the request is very important since GRU is required to respond within three days.)
3. Ensure employees are aware of the three day response time required by the Act.
4. No records/information should be released without appropriate authorization from the Office of Legal Affairs. They will review the request to ensure GRU is authorized to release the requested information.
5. Collect materials for the request on a timely basis as directed by management and GRU’s Office of Legal Affairs.
6. Contact GRU’s Office of Legal Affairs for guidance with any questions and/or concerns.
7. Ensure employees are aware that an authorization for the release of information under the Act does not waive its confidentiality for other purposes.
8. All requests for information under the Act must be submitted in writing. Persons making verbal requests should be asked to submit their requests in writing.
9. Retain copies of all written requests for information, as well as the response, for at least two years.
## Self-Assessment of Internal Controls for the Open Records Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are employees familiar with institutional and BOR policies and procedures regarding the ORA and information requests?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does management periodically communicate information regarding responding to requests for information and the ORA to all employees?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do employees know to direct requests for information/records to department management and GRU’s Office of Legal Affairs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are records released only through the approval and direction of GRU’s Office of Legal Affairs?</td>
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<td>Are employees aware of the time limitation on providing a response?</td>
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<td>Are employees aware that verbal requests are unacceptable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the department/unit retain copies of all written requests for information as well as the response for the appropriate time period as prescribed by institutional and BOR policies?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Records Management-http://www.usg.edu/usgweb/busserv/