

Introduction

This Risk Assessment Tool is designed to:

- Provide business units with a quick reference to identify obvious risks to their records and recordkeeping systems
- Assess additional risks within the business unit based on local knowledge and previous experiences of disasters affecting the area.

This tool covers some aspects of records management included in the Records Management Program audit and self-assessment processes. Areas responsible for centralised recordkeeping should consider undertaking a more comprehensive risk assessment of their record practises and storage areas. The Records Management Office can provide assistance in such cases.

For further information contact the RMO: records@newcastle.edu.au

Note: external risk factors (e.g. earthquakes, fire, terrorism, etc) are not included in this assessment tool.

Instructions

1. Complete the questionnaire

The Risk Assessment Tool provides a series of questions:

- **Yes / No** – select YES or NO to answer whether you believe the identified risk may apply to your area
- **Likelihood** – select LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH to determine the likelihood of that risk; is this situation likely to continue or be an issue in the future?

E.g. in Section 2.10, the question is: Have records been lost or never returned when borrowed by other staff?

If staff who have borrowed records have lost them, answer YES. If you have not created processes to prevent this from re-occurring (e.g. not lending records out, tracking files, requesting files to be returned within a reasonable timeframe etc.), the likelihood may be HIGH. If you have put in place processes to prevent this from re-occurring, the likelihood may be LOW.

2. Refer to remedial actions

Where you have indicated a risk through selecting YES, in particular where it is associated with a MEDIUM or HIGH level risk, refer to the proposed remedial actions and develop an action plan.

3. Undertake remedial actions

4. File documentation

File the checklist and any associated action plans as evidence of activities undertaken.

Area Details

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| Date: | |
| Area Name: | |
| Faculty or sub unit (if applicable): | |
| Name of Staff member completing Risk Assessment Tool: | Ext: |
| Signature: | Date: |

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| No | Risk | YES / NO | Likelihood | Comments | Possible Remedial Action |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1 Environmental Conditions | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Are your records stored in areas subjected to high and/or fluctuating temperatures/humidity levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | High fluctuations in temperature and humidity can deteriorate records. Standards Specify: records retained for up to 30 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ paper: 15-27°C and 30-60% RH ○ photo, magnetic and optical: 19-21°C and 47.5-52.5% RH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Store records in air-conditioned areas. ➤ Move records of long term retention to more suitable areas if temperature and humidity varies greatly beyond the standards. ➤ Transfer permanent records to RMO for storage until such time that they are sent to State Archives. |
| 1.2 | Are your records stored in areas subjected to excessive dust levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Over time dust can damage records. Excessive dust levels, caused through building works and poor storage areas etc. should be avoided, particularly for records kept for a longer period of time. See also 4.1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move records from storage areas that are identified as excessively dusty, or store the records in boxes to reduce the direct affect of dust. ➤ Implement a regular cleaning regime in dust prone areas. |
| 1.3 | Are your records stored in direct sunlight? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Records can deteriorate if exposed to too much light, in particular sunlight. Records should be stored away from direct sunlight. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move records away from direct sunlight. |
| 1.4 | Is there evidence of infestation in your records storage areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Pests and insects (e.g. silverfish) can damage records over time and infest other areas when records are moved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check records storage areas for infestation on a regular basis. ➤ Where your records are infested, contact the Records Management Office for further advice. DO NOT move infested records to a new location until advised. |

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| 1.5 | Is there evidence of mice and/or other vermin in your records storage areas? For example, chewed boxes or files, droppings etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Mice and other vermin can damage records. Record areas should be vermin free. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check records storage areas for infestation on a regular basis. ➤ Where your records storage area is infested, lodge a Maintenance Request. ➤ Where your records are infested, contact the Records Management Office for further advice. Quarantine the records in a safe location until the records and your storage area are free of the infestation. |
| 1.6 | If your storage area also stores electronic records, is the area subjected to magnetic fields? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Electronic records on computer disks and tapes can be affected by magnetic fields. Magnetic fields may exist in laboratories and workshops. Metal storage cabinets may also be magnetised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relocate computers disks and tapes from areas considered at risk from magnetic fields. ➤ Ensure storage cabinets are not magnetised. |
| 1.7 | Are your record storage areas damp or mouldy or subject to flooding? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <p>Mould will usually affect areas where records are stored below ground level or within internal offices without air circulation. Mould is a health risk for staff and can damage records. Flooding can affect any areas as a result of broken pipes, overflowing sinks or toilets etc.</p> <p>Storing records well above floor level will reduce the affects of localised flooding. Standards for records storage recommend a height off the floor of 85-150mm.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where mould is identified in your storage area, move unaffected records to a new location. You should contact EH&S in this case. ➤ If records are already affected by mould, contact your Records Advisor for further advice. DO NOT move them to a new location until advised. ➤ Move records from areas prone to flooding. ➤ Move records off the ground by at least 85mm or into filing cabinets, compactus or shelving of some form. |

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| No | Risk | YES / NO | Likelihood | Comments | Possible Remedial Action |
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| 2 Human Error, Procedures and Policy | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Our area does not have a formal records management system in place. Note: tick yes if this statement is true. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Records held by areas without a formal records management program are at a greater risk from loss, damage, theft etc, as records are not identified or managed. | ➤ Contact the Records Management Office to discuss a possible implementation of a formal records management program. |
| 2.2 | Are there staff within your area who do not use your formal record management program that should be using it? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | A records management failure can occur if an existing records management program lapses. A lapse increases the risk of loss, damage, theft etc. as records are not identified or managed. | ➤ Delegate responsibility to staff within the business unit and organise training through the Records Management Office. ➤ Make all staff aware of their records management responsibilities. |
| 2.3 | Are official records stored in electronic or technology dependent formats, without being captured on official files? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | The UoN Records Management policy requires official documents and emails to be printed and filed in the absence of an approved electronic document management system. | ➤ Contact the Records Management Office to discuss a possibility of implementing HP RECORDS MANAGER (Electronic Document and Record Management System). |
| 2.4 | Does your area keep original contracts or agreements locally instead of sending them to the Records Management Office? Note: this does not include staff contracts. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | The UoN Vital Records guide is designed to mitigate against the risks associated with the loss of contracts, agreements and other vital records. Business Units are required to send the original contracts to RMO for storage, with a copy retained for local use. | ➤ Send any outstanding original contracts and agreements to the Records Management Office. ➤ Comply on an ongoing basis with this procedure for dealing with contracts and agreements. |
| 2.5 | Is there evidence that | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> High | Although against UoN policy, some | ➤ Enforce no-smoking policies. |

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| | people have been smoking in or near your records storage areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | people do smoke on-campus. This may pose a problem if it occurs near records storage areas as it increases the risk of fire. | |
| 2.6 | Have official records within your area been accidentally destroyed or deleted through human error? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Proper procedures and controls should ensure that records are not destroyed or deleted by accident. For electronic records, appropriate access controls should be placed on directories and systems to ensure only authorised staff have deletion rights. Printing official records for file will also ensure they are captured officially. For paper records, awareness of destruction procedures for the appropriate storage and management of official files should reduce the risk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All staff to be made aware of their responsibility to capture official records within the formal records management system. ➤ All staff to be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to destroying official records. ➤ Consult the IT Security Policy for advice on proper management of electronic systems. |
| 2.7 | Have official records within your area been deliberately destroyed or deleted through human error? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Records may be at risk of deliberate damage, unauthorised destruction or deletion. Records may also be at risk from deliberate deletion or destruction from a staff member who are not aware of correct procedures etc. (see also section 2.6). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All staff to be made aware of their responsibility to capture official records within the formal records management system. ➤ All staff to be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to destroying official records using a Records Destruction Authorisation Form. ➤ Remove access to the records where a threat is identified. |
| 2.8 | Have records been lost when taken off-site? For example, taken | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | Records can be lost when taken home or on business trips. It is preferable that records are not taken off-site. If this | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Institute a local policy that requires copies only to be taken off-site (if necessary). ➤ Institute a local policy of checking records back in |

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| | home, sent to a solicitor etc. | | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | unavoidable, or copies will not suffice, a protocol should be developed to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities for managing records off-site, such as security, timeframes for return, ensuring file locations are recorded etc. | <p>within 24 hours if originals are taken off-site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact the UoN Legal Office for further advice in cases where records are subpoenaed. |
| 2.9 | Have records been lost during office moves or staff relocations? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | When moving office, special care should be taken to ensure official files are not accidentally thrown out and that boxes do not go missing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep a record of which boxes contain official files and check immediately upon relocation that boxes have not been lost. ➤ Update file location details before and after a move. ➤ Supervise movements of large numbers of files where possible. |
| 2.10 | Have records been lost or never returned by staff that have left UoN's employ? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Records can be lost or moved to other users without adequate file tracking in place. Locations of files must be recorded to ensure they can be located when required. A system should also be put in place to follow up on files that have not been returned within a reasonable timeframe (e.g. one month). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update file location details when files are moved between staff. ➤ Check up with staff that have borrowed files and not returned them within an agreed timeframe. ➤ Check on location of files on a yearly basis to ensure locations are up to date. ➤ Mark any file that can't be located as "Missing from X location, <i>date</i>". |

3. Security

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| 3.1 | Are your current records accessible by unauthorised persons? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Unauthorised access refers to access by unauthorised staff, students and the public. Records should not be kept in areas that are accessible to unauthorised persons. However, this is not always practical. If records are stored in accessible areas, they must be locked away at all times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move records to secure locations, or, ensure they are under lock and key and not accessible to unauthorised persons. ➤ Move confidential files to areas which are secure from unauthorised persons where possible. |
| 3.2 | Are your "Archived" records accessible by unauthorised persons? Note: this refers to local storage rooms, not UoN Archives. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Unauthorised access refers to access by unauthorised staff, students and the public. Records should not be kept in areas that are accessible by unauthorised persons. If storing records in a local storeroom, consider who has access to the room. Shared storage may not be an issue. However, for confidential records, lockable storage units may be required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify who has access to your storage areas. ➤ Limit access to storerooms to authorised staff only, or, if not possible, keep records in lockable cabinets. |
| 3.3 | Can your records database (including HP RECORDS MANAGER) be accessed / altered by non-authorised staff? Note: for HP RECORDS MANAGER users, this includes leaving your computer unattended without locking your workstation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | The Records database is the key recordkeeping system for the control of your area's records over time. As most areas manage their own database, areas need to ensure that only authorised staff can make changes by making it secure. If areas are creating files of a confidential nature and include confidential details in the Records database, view access should also be limited. For HP RECORDS MANAGER users, security is managed by the RMO. However, individuals are responsible to ensure other staff do not access their account. This can be done through locking their computers when they are not at their desk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Add security to your area's records' database to ensure only authorised staff can change data, and only authorised staff can view the template. ➤ HP RECORDS MANAGER users should be required to lock their workstations when not at their desks (essential if working in an open office or publicly accessible area). |

4. Storage

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| 4.1 | Are your records stored in close proximity to building works? Note: close proximity includes next to or within storage areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Building works directly affecting your area can cause several risks to records, including reduced security levels, dust, increased risk of fire or water damage, possible loss through staff movement etc. Building works indirectly affecting your areas may also cause risk to records, however, an individual area may be less likely to mitigate against the risks or be aware of them. See also 2.9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workmen working directly within records storage areas must be made aware to report any incidents that may affect records immediately. ➤ Areas must be aware of building works in locations adjacent to record storage areas and monitor any affects on records during the works. ➤ Move records directly affected by building works to a temporary location. |
| 4.2 | Are your records stored in close proximity to a kitchen or toilet facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Water damage can be difficult and costly to recover from. Fire damage can be impossible to recover from. It is preferable that records are not stored in proximity to kitchens or toilets. Where this is so, strategies should be put in place to ensure the records are protected through appropriate storage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relocate records to areas not directly adjacent to kitchens or toilets, or, if not practical, ensure records are stored in suitable cabinets to minimise any damage if a disaster occurs. |
| 4.3 | Are your records stored in close proximity to laboratories or workshops? Note: close proximity includes next to or within storage areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Laboratories and workshops can experience overflowing sinks, fires and chemical spills. To minimise risks associated with possible damage to records, they should not be stored in or adjacent to laboratories or workshops. If storage in these areas is necessary, appropriate strategies should be in place to ensure records are protected through storing them in appropriate storage cabinets (e.g. if there is the possibility of fire within a laboratory, more so | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relocate records to areas not directly within or adjacent to laboratories and workshops where there is an identified risk of fire, flooding or chemical spills, or, if not practical, ensure records are stored in suitable cabinets to minimise any damage if a disaster occurs. |

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| | | | | than in any other areas, a fireproof cabinet should be used). See also 1.7. | |
| 4.4 | Are there known cases of leaks (water or other) that may, or have already, affected records stored within your area? Note: includes leaks from pipes above or within walls. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Water damage can be difficult and costly to recover from. Leaks in pipes, sprinkler systems etc., above or close to records' storage areas need to be identified and fixed. If known to reoccur, records should be relocated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check records storage areas for leaks on a regular basis. ➤ Relocate records from areas prone or currently affected by leaks. ➤ Where leaks are identified, lodge a Maintenance Request. |
| 4.5 | Are there known cases of faulty wiring or damaged equipment within your records storage area? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Apart from safety issues within faulty equipment, fire damage to records can be impossible to recover from. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discard suspect/damaged equipment. |
| 4.6 | Are your records stored in unstable storage units? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Rusty or damaged storage cabinets can result in damage to records and may also be a safety issue for staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discard unsafe storage cabinets/units. |
| 4.7 | Do you store records on the floor? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Storing records or boxes of records on the floor puts them at risk of flooding or water build up. It is also a safety issue for staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transfer records from floor areas to suitable storage cabinets or shelving units. |
| 4.8 | Are your records' storage areas considered a "dumping ground" for all types of | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Dumping records or other items into the records' storage area without proper management and appropriate disposal (i.e. archiving or destruction) practices in place can | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement a regular records' disposal program. ➤ Delegate the management of record |

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| | material and equipment? | | | lead to other risk factors, such as infestation and vermin, and may increase the effect of water or fire-based disasters. It is also good practice NOT to retain records beyond retention timeframes without good reason (note Destruction Authorisation Form requirements). See also 3.2. | storage to Records Contact and where possible limit access and the use of storage areas as “dumping grounds”. ➤ Box, and/or list all records held within records’ storage areas. |
| 4.9 | Does your area store unstable record formats such as combustible nitrate film? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | Nitrate film and other multimedia formats can be unstable. In extreme cases, they may combust. | ➤ Discuss storage requirements with RMO |
| 5. Implementation of Disaster Planning | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Our area does NOT have a Vital Record Recovery Priority List. Note: Tick yes if this statement is true. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | It is important for areas to know in advance where records are, and more importantly, which records are vital and prioritised for recovery in the case of a disaster. It is preferable that all records are recovered, but where this is not possible, a risk approach is required. A Records Recovery Priority List will: - make recovery operations more effective and reduce the risk of further damage or loss of more important records held by an area. - ensure resources are not wasted on recovering records of low or no importance over records of high importance, where priority decisions are required. | ➤ Assess all records within your area and develop a list of vital records for your area’s business and that of the University. |
| 5.2 | Our area does NOT have a copy of its business | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High | In the case of a disaster you will need to access your business continuity plan. If it is your office | ➤ Place a copy of your area’s business continuity plans, at a separate location to |

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| | continuity plan. Note: tick yes if this statement is true. | | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | area you may not be able to enter and as such will need to store this information in a separate area. | your office (ensure these are kept securely). |
| 5.3 | Our area does NOT have a business continuity plan. Note: tick yes if this statement is true. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | If your area is affected, are you able to continue your business from another location? The Business Continuity Plan will assist in identifying what resources you require for this. | ➤ Develop a Business Continuity Plan for your area. |