



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Student Records

TRIM - Record Keeping Guide

Student Records

1. General rules regarding Student Records

A student record will be created (via a TRIM-NUSTAR Integration) for every enrolled student.

All documents, including emails, recording actions which affect a student's candidature that have historically been retained as hard copies, in Outlook or saved on share drives should be filed on the student's record in TRIM.

Use your judgement about what is a record and what needs to be kept as a record. For example, is it evidence or approval of a key decision or advice to a student? If yes, it should now be filed into the student record in TRIM.

Information relating to case management, disability support, Dean of Students advice and student misconduct are stored on separate files within TRIM. This is to restrict access to personal information which may be distressing or embarrassing to only those University staff that has a need to know.

Students are entitled to access their own student files and these may also be accessed by external agencies. All documents should reflect the highest standards of professional behaviour and on the understanding that students may read what is being written about her or him.

Student files are retained until 7 years either after the year of last action, or close of the appeal period, after which they are disposed (records relating to placements and workplace health and safety are retained for a longer period).

Consider using PDF fillable forms to reduce the need to print, sign, scan and send forms and utilise TRIM to track approvals and save approval emails by utilising the TRIM Action Tracking functionality.

2. General responsibilities

Student files should only be accessed by authorised staff dealing with matters relating to a particular student.

Student files should contain **only documents relating to that student**. Do not attach documents relating to other students, or any other person, to the file.

For example:

- Do not place tax file numbers of thesis examiners on the student's file;
- Do not place documents such as minutes of academic committee meetings which refer to other students as well as to the relevant student, on file. They should be copied and names of other people removed or otherwise hidden.

If you have documents that deal with multiple students, e.g. the Admissions to Degree document or thesis outcomes made under delegated authority, store these in an **administrative TRIM file** and make reference to that file on the student record either as a note in the TRIM Notes field or on an administrative processing sheet.

Information about a student is available in a number of corporate student systems so it is not necessary to replicate information that exists in these student systems such as NUSTAR, CATS, Blackboard or Adverse Circumstances.

3. Student Central Recordkeeping Responsibility

In general, it is the responsibility of the person who processes a final outcome for a student (e.g. for a RAD) to file all related information into TRIM, including email correspondence (which should minimise the pressures on those in the approval chain or cc'd).

Whilst there are many emails between Student Central and academics about students, these will only be filed into TRIM by Student Central staff if it is classed as business critical information about the student.

4. Academic/College Recordkeeping Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Colleges, to ensure that an adequate record of the teaching, assessment and academic integrity of students is made and kept for the mandated retention period. This is necessary to be able understand what decisions and actions have occurred and the reasons for those decisions and actions.

Key interactions that result in an action with a student must be documented, including:

- programs
- courses
- difficulties the student encounters
- applications for assistance/adverse circumstances
- assignments and assessment information (reasons for change etc.)
- complaints or appeals
- placements

Key consultations and other meetings between supervisors and postgraduate research students must be documented and the records attached to the student's file in TRIM.

5. Emails

An email can be a form of business communication and is therefore classed as a record. Emails sent and received in the course of official duties are to be treated as official records.

Email messages, like other records, are subject to legislation and can be accessed through Government Information Privacy Access (GIPA) requests and to legal processes such as discovery and subpoenas. Emails may also be required by Royal Commissions, the Courts, auditors and other entities.

Emails between staff and students should be filed into TRIM if they are deemed as business critical information about the student e.g. emails where advice or a decision about a student's candidature, or emails that provide evidence on decisions made must be filed in TRIM. If you send an important email to a student, you are responsible for filing it in TRIM.

It is not necessary to store emails that do not contain critical information or that contain very general or widely available information.

In some instances, initial advice to a student may not be significant but with further developments it may become important. In this instance, it's never too late to TRIM the relevant correspondence. Once emails have been filed in TRIM we recommend that the outlook email is deleted.

If there is any confusion in relation to specific examples on when to file information into TRIM, please contact your nominated TRIM Champion or the relevant Senior Manager in Student Central or the Records Governance Services.

NB: If you try to save an email that has already been saved in TRIM you will see a warning message advising that an email already exists with the same title. If the emails are not identical consider renaming the email to make it unique.

6. Saving Emails that have attachments

It is recommended that email attachments are saved separately in TRIM. If an attachment is not saved as a separate record it will be difficult to retrieve this information at a later date. If an attachment is saved separate to the email, the email and the attachment should be related to each other in TRIM.

7. Titling Emails

The senders and recipients name should appear in the title followed by the meaningful subject matter (see below).

For example

(Sender) to (recipient) - subject matter

Smith to Brown - Confirmation of naming convention for Student Record Project

8. Meetings and Committees

All academic committees which deal with individual students' progress, particularly unsatisfactory progress, must keep records of their proceedings. It is the responsibility of the committee secretary to file these into TRIM. Where appropriate sections of the committee records that relate specifically to a student may be filed onto the student records otherwise the committee records must be filed into a TRIM Administrative folder.

9. What documents go on the TRIM student file and where?

The 'Document Naming Convention for TRIM - Student Records' provides a guide on the type of records and the respective TRIM sub-folders a record should be filed into as well as outlining how to name a document. The document also lists the acceptable abbreviations used at the UoN. This document can be found at the below link

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/trim/excel-document?docid=D15/61944>

For further assistance on any matters outlined in this guide, please contact Records@newcastle.edu.au.