



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Record Keeping Guide

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1. Introduction

This guide is designed to provide practical guidelines for effective management of records and information at university. The guide will outline:

- What is a record
- Benefits of good records management,
- University recordkeeping policy,
- Record keeping responsibilities and,
- Legislation relating to records and information management and
- Disposal of records.

2. What is a Record?

The State Records Act 1998 defines a record as:

"Record" means any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means.

Records:

- provide evidence of business activities of an individual staff member, faculty or unit, or of the University as a whole;
- record decisions, decision-making processes, advice and/or direction; support the corporate memory of an individual area, a faculty or unit, and/or the University as a whole.

University records are one of its major assets that have value beyond the local or immediate. They represent the tangible product of the work of staff. To recreate them in the event of a total loss would cost millions of dollars. The loss of University's records, or even a part of them, could destroy the evidence of students' achievements, staff entitlements and jeopardise the University's rights and interests. Therefore it is vital that records are managed appropriately from creation to archive.

3. Why is good recordkeeping important?

Proper recordkeeping practices promote efficiency and economy within the University. Having comprehensive and timely access to the information contained in University records assists everyone in carrying out their duties.

Knowledge of proper procedure, access to correct policy information and awareness of precedent all ensure the smooth and economical operation of the University. Another significant driving force behind the need for good records management is the increasing amount of University business being conducted by electronic means.

The speed of communication and the volume of electronic documents created by information technologies make it imperative that proper procedures are in place to capture, preserve and make available those records of corporate value. The nature of electronic documents is such that they must be captured into a system at the point of creation if they are to be of any value to the University as evidence of its functions and activities.

Good Recordkeeping:

- Contributes to the smooth operation of the University by making information readily available when it is needed for decision-making and operational activities;

- Provides precedent and background information and analytical material for staff or colleagues working on similar projects;
- creates a complete record of actions that will remain with the University for future use and may later be transferred to the University Archives as a historical record;
- ensures accountability;
- ensures integrity of information;
- ensures that records are available to all authorized personnel; and
- protects records from inappropriate and unauthorised access.

4. Failure to create records

Without records the quality of University's decision making could be impaired. It can also impact on the University's ability to sufficiently protect its rights and those of its students and staff, and of organisations and people affected by its actions and decisions.

Failure to create and maintain proper records is therefore a risk management concern and a University governance issue, which can lead to increased exposure of the University to liability and penalties. Furthermore, an inability to provide records that substantiate the University's activities may be seen as a major failure in organisational accountability.

The University is required to meet stringent governance standards expected by the Auditor General and Parliament and be able to respond effectively to requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (which has replaced the Freedom of Information Act), and any internal or external investigative inquiry such as by the Ombudsman or ICAC. A failure to create records is a breach of the State Records Act 1998 and a formal investigation by the State Records can attract unwanted adverse publicity to the University.

Poor recordkeeping practices contribute to inefficiencies and poor or ill-informed decision-making. It may also result in crucial evidence being destroyed, or the records being inadequate to meet accountability requirements.

5. Recordkeeping responsibilities

The University operates in an environment which demands high levels of accountability and records provide a basis for this accountability.

The NSW State Records Act 1998 requires public offices, which includes Universities, ***to 'make and keep full and accurate records' of their activities and to 'establish and maintain a records management program' in conformity with standards and codes of best practice.***

- Vice Chancellor:** The Vice chancellor is ultimately responsible for the management of information and records within the University.
- Senior management** are responsible for the visible support of, and adherence to, this policy by promoting a culture of compliant records and information management within the University.
- Records Management Office** is responsible for overseeing the management of records and information at the University consistent with the requirements described in the policy.
- Chief Information Officer:** the CIO is responsible for maintaining the technology for the University's business records and information systems in accordance with State Records legislation and this policy.
- Managers and supervisors:** Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff including contract staff, are aware of, and are supported to follow the records and information management practices defined in State Records legislation and this policy.
- Business/System Owners:** As part of the development and implementation of new systems business/system owners must ensure that records and information management

requirements are identified and managed, as part of the development of new systems, prior to any preservation/implementation in accordance with State Record legislation and this policy.

- vii. **Contract staff:** Contract staff should create and manage records and information in accordance with this policy to the extent specified in the contract.

Members of the public, staff and students have rights of access University records. Access to personal information may be sought under **the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, Privacy and Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002**. University records may also be accessed by external agencies, and so should reflect the highest standards of professional behaviour by all staff.

6. Records and Information Management Policy

This policy seeks to ensure compliance with standards for record keeping and record management set down in State legislation and Australian Standards. Relevant New South Wales legislation includes, but is not limited to:

- State Records Act 1998
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Electronic Transactions Act 2000
- Evidence Act 1995
- Limitations Act 1969
- Public Finance and Audit Act 1983.
- The relevant Australian Standard is: AS ISO15489

The Records and Information Management Policy identifies the principles which will govern the University's management of records and information. Those principles will ensure that records are created, protected and disposed of appropriately.

The policy applies to any record in any format, created, received or maintained by University staff or anyone performing work on behalf of the University (including contractors and consultants), in the course of carrying out a University function or activity.

7. TRIM (HP Records Manager) - Electronic Document and Record Management System

The University of Newcastle utilises a records management system called TRIM (HPE Records Manager) to support both its corporate record keeping obligations and protects the UON intellectual property.

The key objectives of TRIM is to;

- Ensure records that are full and accurate are authentic, reliable, accessible, useable and are secure against unauthorised alteration and destruction.
- Provide access to the “un-structured” (email, documents) data required to enable evidence based decisions.
- Support workflow systems that provide robust back-end records management functionality to support University business.
- Provide a central repository for documents that need to be displayed on the University Web site via the Squiz technology including policies, forms, handbooks etc.
- Meet statutory and reporting obligations.

- Capture, manage, and secure all University business records, electronic and physical, in a consistent structure that best meets the needs of the institute and State Records Act.
- Manage evidence of University activities and decisions in context with the business.
- Enable the authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability of University records and information.
- Delivers compliance with policy and State regulations.
- Improve productivity by simplifying information discovery, enabling secure remote and mobile access
- Reduce the cost of legal discovery, investigation and audit
- Reduce storage and operational cost through retention and disposal policies
- Provide document management, collaboration, revision and version control

8. Examples of University Records

The University has a wide and diverse range of functions. Below is a list of some examples of University records that are an asset and as such must be managed appropriately;

Please note that this not an exhaustive list.

- Strategic management records
- Contracts and contract variations
- Finance records
- Establishment records
- Policies and Procedures
- Exams, course and course outlines
- Student records and student administration records
- Personnel records and personnel administration records
- Research and research administration records
- Legal matters
- Community relations records
- Committee record
- Intellectual property
- Titles, deeds, shares and lease agreements
- Building plans, maintenance and conservation records
- Awards, prizes and scholarships records
- Asset register
- Software licenses

9. How to determine if you have records that need to be maintained in TRIM

Consider the following criteria when determining whether a record needs to be managed in the record keeping system TRIM;

- Originality of the records - Determine whether or not the records are elsewhere. If it is already captured as an official record, then your copy is not required.
- Responsibility - Determine who is responsible for keeping the official record. Are you responsible, or is your supervisor responsible? If you are responsible then the records should be managed in the record keeping system.
- Evidence - Determine whether the records are evidence of transactions that the University, your area or you could be accountable for. If so, they must be managed in the record keeping system.

Records that do not need to be maintained in TRIM include;

- **Duplicates** - records already held elsewhere in the record keeping system or records that do not have any role in providing an explanation of functions or activities carried out by you or by the University
- **Working files** - background notes and reference materials used to prepare other documents.
- **Facilitative** - records of little value and of a routine instructional nature. The exception to this is if they are required as evidence to support information in the official document.
- **General reference material** - The exception may be if a decision was made in relation to the document, and reproduction of the document would be difficult in the future.
- **Personal emails** – not related to your work.
- **Draft documents** – except where they are legal or policy document and evidence is required to show how decisions were made

10. Legal Disposal of Records

The University of Newcastle is subject to the NSW State Records Act 1998. The records created by all business units must be managed as State Records in accordance with the Act irrespective of format (including digital records).

Under section 21(1) of the Act it is an offence to destroy, damage or transfer ownership of State records without authority.

Section 21(2) of the Act established a number of mechanisms for the lawful destruction of State Records. The two most relevant to the University are:

(a) the disposal of records in accordance with documents known as Disposal Authorities. These are issued by State Records with the approval of the State Records Authority Board; and

(b) the destruction of records in accordance with what the Act terms Normal Administrative Practice (NAP).

10.1 General Disposal Authorities

The disposal of records is regulated through the General Disposal Authorities (GDA's) issued by State Records. There are a number of GDA's covering broad functional areas of administration relevant to the University, and one specific GDA for university records. The relevant GDA's current at the time of writing are:

GDA23 - University Records
GA28 - Administrative Records
GDA4 - Records of Short Term Value That Have Been Imaged
GDA5 - Public Health Services: Patient/Client Records
GDA6 - Year 2000 Project Records (Y2K)
GDA7 - Financial and Accounting Records
GDA8 - Video/Visual Surveillance Records
GDA11 - Audio Visual Programs and Recordings

The GDA's identifies disposal actions related to the different functions, activities and types of records associated with each function. In this context, disposal does **not** equate with destruction. Disposal actions range from permanent retention as an archive, to stipulating a minimum period of retention prior to destruction.

10.2 Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)

It is possible to destroy records if it is in accordance with Normal Administrative Practice in the University. This does not mean that almost anything can be destroyed and then claimed to be normal administrative practice. State Records sets out some stringent guidelines as to what is and is not acceptable as NAP. In addition, State Records has the power to declare particular conduct or procedures to be unacceptable.

The legal destruction of records under NAP does not include actions which are corrupt, fraudulent, or for the purpose of concealing evidence of wrongdoing or for any other improper purpose. In general, the basis for destruction of records under **NAP is that they have no ongoing value to the University, that they do not provide evidence of actions or decisions** that must be retained, and/or that the content of the record is recorded or retained elsewhere in the record keeping systems.

Under the Regulation, 'NAP' records are defined below:

(a) **Ephemeral records** means records of little value that only need to be kept for a limited or short period of time. Ephemeral records have no continuing value to the organisation and, generally, are only needed for a few hours or a few days.

(b) **Facilitative records** means records of little value and of a routine instructional nature that are used to further some activity. Most facilitative records have no continuing value to the organisation and, generally, are only needed for a few hours or a few days.

In order to seek clearance to destroy records (this includes records contained in information systems) a Record Destruction Authorisation Form (appendix 1) must be completed and forwarded to the Records Management Office.

Destruction of records should be carried out in a manner that is confidential and environmentally friendly. The most appropriate mechanism for the destruction of paper-based records is shredding and recycling or use the University's Confidential Waste Disposal bins.

11. Emails

An electronic message (email) can be a form of business communication. Sending an email that constitutes a business transaction is therefore a record and is governed by the State Records Act 1998.

Email messages can be accessed through Government Information Privacy Access (GIPA) requests and to legal processes such as discovery and subpoenas. Royal Commissions, the Courts, auditors and other entities, may also require your records. As such, you should ensure that you do not use your work email for personal communications.

Email messages have three components:

- Message envelope (addressee, sender, date/time)
- Message body (text of the message)
- Header information (transmission details such as date and time of sending)

The integrity of email records depends on these three components being maintained as a whole. Incomplete messages will fail to act as reliable evidence of the business activities which they document.

11.1 Email Tips

- Save important email records in the records in TRIM
- Give emails a meaningful subject line to accurately description of the contents of the email
- Meaningful subject lines for emails ensures emails are retrieved more efficiently
- Emails need to be captured at the completion of the correspondence
- Email attachments should be 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.

12. Naming Convention

The name or title of a record should describe its purpose or “business” and assist in identifying and retrieving information at a later date.

While lengthy, wordy titles should be avoided, record titles must contain sufficient information and be meaningful enough to explain their content without the user having to physically open the record.

Document titles must contain the following detail in the title:

- Type of document;
- The subject of the document;
- Date (optional);
- Student surname, given names and number (if applicable)
- Staff surname, given names and number (if applicable)

For example:

- File Note re ACME contract 12 May 2009
- Minutes of focus Group 24 November 2003
- Letter – Academic Appeal Decision – FLAG Mickey 555555
- Letter - VC nomination privacy officer 28 June 2007
- Minutes – Records Management Office (RMO) 5 September 2015
- Invoice – Laptop for Training Records Management Office

Before capturing records in a system you must undertake a thorough search to ascertain if the record has been captured previously.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

- An acronym and abbreviation may mean something to us now, but for future users it may be meaningless. Entering the information in full as well as the acronym will ensure that records with acronyms can be retrieved and accessed for many years to come.
- When entering an accepted acronym or abbreviation also enter the description of the acronym/abbreviation in full. The only exceptions to this rule are University of Newcastle–UoN and States – NSW, Vic, Qld, WA, ACT, NT, Tas
- **Good Example:** Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) Funding Agreements
 - **Not:** DEST funding agreements

Dates in titles

- Enter the month and year in full i.e. 12 May 2004
- **Good Example:** UON Records Management Policy as at 30 September 2004

Not: UON Records Management Policy as at 30/9/04

Punctuation in titles

- Punctuation in record titling should not be used (except for Document Profiles)
- DO NOT USE – commas, apostrophes, ampersands, inverted commas etc.
- Brackets should only be used for acronyms/abbreviations.
- **Hyphens** may be used to separate words and to break up long titles - but **MUST always have a space before and after**. The only exception to this is hyphenated words which must have the hyphen for example co-operation.
- Names of people/companies/organisations/committees are exempt from these rules and should be copied exactly. See Names
- **Good Example:** UON – Callaghan or UON – Callaghan
 - **Not** UON-Callaghan

Names in titles

Personal Names

- When entering a personal name in a record title, the name must be copied exactly including any punctuation such as hyphens or apostrophes.
- **Good Example:** O'GRADY Henry
- **Not:** Henry O Grady or Henry Ogrady
- **Good Example:** BLACK-SMITH Jean
- **Not** Jean Black Smith or Jean Blacksmith
- Example: McQUEEN Steven
- **Not** Steven Mcqueen or Steven MacQueen or Steven Mc Queen

Student and Personnel Records

- The record title must contain the surname in capital letters followed by the given names and the student/staff number
- **Good Example:**
 - SMITH John James 000000

Organisation / Company Names

- Organisation and Company names should be entered the way they are originally presented.

13. Versions and Revisions

Revisions are amendments to existing documents. All revisions occur under the same Record Number and are evidence of the evolution of a document until it is made final.

Versions are new copies of an electronic document that use the latest revision of that document. You can create multiple versions of an electronic document and each will be registered as a separate record.

Many documents require version control, such as; contracts, standard operating procedures, policies, externally visible documents, procedures, frequently asked questions, etc. Version control provides the ability to have a version that is current for general dissemination - current version - but

you will still be able to have revisions and version control for a document not yet ready for general dissemination against the same record number version.

14. Scanning Records

Records that require scanning must be scanned as a readable format document (see table below).

Original paper documents/record must be maintained until it has been established that:

- The scanned copy is authentic, complete and accessible;
- The requirements for keeping originals have been assessed and fulfilled.

Before an original paper record can be destroyed determine whether the electronic record will be required under the Disposal and Retention Schedule as a State Archive. If the record is deemed as being required by State Archives then the original paper record can NOT be destroyed.

The following table outlines the required resolution, bit depth, file format and compression when scanning records.

Document Type	Resolution	Bit Depth	File Formats	Compression
Text only, black and white	Minimum 300ppi	1 bit (bi-tonal)	- TIFF - PDF, or - PDF/A [6]	Lossless compression
Documents with watermarks, grey shading, grey graphics	Minimum 600 ppi	8 bit greyscale	- TIFF - PDF - JPEG, or - PDF/A	Lossless compression
Documents with discrete colour used in text or diagrams	Minimum 600 ppi	Minimum: 8 bit colour	- TIFF - JPEG - PDF, or - PDF/A	Lossless compression
Black and white photographs	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	8 bit greyscale	- TIFF - JPEG - PDF, or - PDF/A	Lossless compression
Colour photographs	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	24 bit colour	- TIFF - JPEG - PDF, or - PDF/A	Lossless compression
Black and white negatives	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	8 bit greyscale or 24 bit colour	- TIFF - JPEG - PDF, or - PDF/A	Lossless compression
Colour negatives and transparencies	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	24 bit colour	- TIFF - JPEG - PDF or - PDF/A	Lossless compression

[Appendix 1](#)



Record Destruction Authorisation Form

When requesting authorisation to destroy records they must have met minimum retention requirements under the General Retention and Disposal Authorities issued under the State Records Act 1998 (NSW); and be no longer required for legal, administrative, financial or audit requirements. **ALL** records must be destroyed confidentially.

Instruction:

- Complete section 1 - 3 and email the completed form to records@newcastle.edu.au the Records Management Office for authorisation.
- Please refer to the State Records of NSW General Disposal Authority Schedules (GDA'S) to complete section 3, (see page 3 for the link to the GDA's).
- RMO will retain the original of the Request Authorisation Form and will return a copy to the Business Unit/School for further action
- Upon return of the Authorisation Form the Business Unit/School can dispose of the records

1. Person Making Request	
Name	
Faculty/ Unit	
Telephone	
Signature	

2. Authorisation	
Faculty/Unit Level Authorisation	
This section is to be signed by the Business Unit Manager/Head of School	
Are the records still required by your area, your Faculty/Unit, or the University, for any of these functions? If YES has been ticked for any of these functions, these records must be retained	Legal requirements (eg does legislation require the records to be retained, or are they required for, or related to, a current or expected legal case, etc.) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Administrative need (eg are the records still required to support the business activities of the University or has a student appealed against their final grade) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Audit / financial requirements (eg do the records relate to an activity which is being audited, or about to be audited?) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name	Position
Signature	Date

Please do not use abbreviations or acronyms

3. Records Destruction Details			
Record/Document Type <i>(Specify the title and description of the record contents or insert the record number if the records has been registered in RM)</i>	Medium (eg Paper)	Date Range <i>(From and To)</i>	Disposal Authority and Section No. authorising disposal (e.g GDA23, GDA12). If you are unsure please contact the RMO Office.
Total Number of Records to be destroyed			

4. Retention Requirements - RMO Use	
Have the records satisfied minimum retention requirements? If NO, these records must be retained.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Signature, Information Services Manager	
Date	

5. Record Disposal (once fully approved)	
Destruction of records completed by	
Name	
Date	
Method of Destruction	

Please attach a destruction certificate from the contractor designated to destroy these records

General Disposal Authorities GDA's:

GDA23 General Retention and Disposal Authority - University Records: https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/university-records-gda23 GA28 General Retention and Disposal authority: Administrative Records: https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/rules/gdas/ga28
