NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
GUIDELINES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION
OF ALUMNI AND SUPPORTER DATA

1. Purpose

These guidelines define the principles, responsibilities, mechanisms and time periods for the University’s management and retention of alumni and supporter personal information.

2. Definition of alumni and supporter personal data

In the context of these guidelines, ‘alumni’ and the associated records held by the University are defined as any individual who is a former student of Newcastle University; retired members of staff of Newcastle University and honorary graduates of Newcastle University. The definition of a ‘supporter’ is any individual who has pledged or fulfilled a donation of money or ‘in-kind’ services and/or property.

Student data is added to the alumni and supporter record system 3 months prior to the completion of their academic programme. Alumni contact details are held and maintained in the alumni record system to ensure a single instance of accurate information, and to capture any individual preferences regarding contact from the University.

These guidelines cover all alumni and supporter data, information, records and content relating to University business which has been created by University staff or updated directly by an individual alumni, and is kept in any medium or format (eg electronic, paper, microfiche, image).

Generally alumni and supporter records will relate to the management of the relationship between the University and its alumni and supporters, for example:

- Transcript records documenting degree details and awards
- Records documenting individual preferences and opt outs
- Individual contact records e.g. update of details, queries, correspondence relating to donations

3. Compliance with legislative and regulatory guidance

The Data Protection Act requires that alumni records be retained for as long as is necessary. As alumni records hold transcript information, this is considered a lifelong requirement.

The Data Protection Act also requires that personal data should be accurate and up-to-date. Alumni are provided with regular opportunities to update their details and the Advancement office maintains a regular programme of data “cleaning”.

Additional alumni information may include personal details provided directly to the University such as personal interests, employment and family details. Information in the public domain may also be noted where it is relevant (e.g. media interviews, career activities, awards received).

The Etherington Review (2015) makes recommendations relating to the use of data with regards to fundraising and the Advancement office complies with these.
4. Principles for the management and retention of personal data

The timeframe for retaining personal data must be in line with legislative and regulatory requirements, and must meet business requirements. The retention timeframe should be kept to a minimum.

1. Long term records: indefinite retention
   Alumni are requested to update their details annually and the University maintains a record of contact with alumni. In order for the University to carry out the business function of keeping alumni up to date with University activities, news and opportunities, it requires alumni contact details and contact history to be held indefinitely. Deceased alumni are also marked accordingly on the records system so no mailings / further contact are made.

2. Legal, contractual and regulatory requirements: 6 years
   There is a legal requirement to keep records and data relating to payment for services e.g. event tickets, for 6 years after the transaction has been completed.

The University will not share personal data with third parties unless the third party is acting as an agent for the University on the instruction of the University (e.g. third party mailing house) and the University remains the data controller. Any third party engaged by the University will be required to adhere to the University’s data retention and security policies as well as the Data Protection Act, and a legal agreement will be in place. On completion of any third party contract, the third party is required to destroy the data immediately after project completion.

All alumni and supporter data and records require a robust business reason for them to be kept. The case for retaining data should consider the frequency with which data is referred to, and any risk of not being able to refer to the data. If a business reason for the retention of data cannot be articulated, then it should be destroyed.

It is good information management practice to destroy information when it becomes redundant. This ensures that retrieving current information is more efficient, and that redundant information is not retrieved in error because it still exists. Data retention periods should be set taken taking recommendations of good practice from the Information Security (Compliance) Officer in account, as well as legal and regulatory requirements.

The retention and review periods for alumni and supporter data and records are incorporated in the University Data Retention Schedule.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The University Registrar is the Information Owner for the University.

The Director of NU Advancement is the responsible officer for alumni data and records within the University.

The Information Security (Compliance) Officer provides guidance and advice to ensure that the University records are maintained according to legislation and best practice.

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