

Report from Executive Board to Council 19 October 2015

Records Management Policy

The University's previous Records Management Policy was approved by Council in October 2004, so a review was required to reflect changes in internal responsibilities and procedures. The previous policy was used as a basis for the new policy, but a significant re-write has taken place. Some extraneous detail has been removed, the language has been simplified where appropriate and the structure has been altered to be consistent with the Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies.

The two most significant amendments in terms of content reflect recent project work that has been undertaken looking at data retention and archiving.

The Data Retention Steering Group has proposed a general position that University records are not to be retained for any longer than seven years, unless there is a legal or external obligation to retain them for longer, or if they have archival value. Section 6 reflects this position, and sets out responsibilities for data owners to assign retention periods to their datasets. Guidance will be given to data owners to help them to achieve this.

Sections 5 and 7 set out the responsibilities of the University Librarian for the management and preservation of archival materials.

John Hogan, Registrar
Peter Dinsdale, Information Security Officer (Compliance)

10 September 2015

Records Management Policy

1. Introduction

We are dependent on our records to carry out our functions and responsibilities effectively, and for informed decision-making. Our records are therefore recognised as an important resource that requires appropriate management.

This policy sets out a framework for the management of records to make sure we create and retain only those records that we need and to ensure that they are managed efficiently, effectively, and in line with legal requirements.

Aside from legal compliance, there are a number of benefits of effective records management, such as:

- Improved control of recorded information
- Better management of staff and student records
- Reduced costs
- Improved use of staff time
- Reductions in storage space – physical and electronic
- Improved protection of records
- Improved location and tracking of records
- Preservation of and access to records of permanent historical value (archives)

2. Definitions

Records

A record is the output or final statement that records the business and administrative transaction of the University and details about its students, members of staff and all external contacts. It forms the 'memory' of the organisation, that needs to be available beyond the working life or memory of any single member of staff.

Put more simply, a record is recorded evidence of business activity that could be held in electronic or paper form.

Records Life Cycle

All records have a life cycle. The cycle begins with the record's creation and ends with its ultimate disposal (destruction or archiving). There are three stages after creation or receipt of a record:

- Active stage – this is when it is being used or referred to regularly in the course of business
- Inactive stage - when it is referred to infrequently but must still be kept for legal, financial or administrative reasons
- Disposition stage – when it has outlived its retention period and is no longer required for business. At this point, dependent upon the value assigned to it, the record may be destroyed or retained permanently within an archive as a historical record. Guidance will be produced to help staff to determine the appropriate option.

Records Management

Records management is the practice of maintaining the records of an organisation throughout their life cycle from the time they are created up to their eventual disposal. This may include classification, storage, security, and destruction (or in some cases, archival preservation) of records.

3. Policy Objectives

This policy and associated guidance are designed to help the University to meet the following objectives:

- Establish recordkeeping as a basic business activity and give policy support to activities that aim to improve recordkeeping practice
- Improve the speed and efficiency with which information is retrieved and develop retrieval systems that both facilitate access to specific records and identify any relationship they have with other records
- Ensure that records which are vital to the overall operation of the University are identified and preserved
- Ensure that the security of records is consistent with their value and sensitivity
- Ensure that records are kept for as long as they are needed and no longer
- Meet the requirements of the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act
- Establish policies and procedures to identify records of permanent archival value and deposit within a centralised system via the University Library
- Ensure records are accurate, up to date and accessible
- Ensure records are not retained, distributed or copied unnecessarily
- Ensure a consistent approach to indexing, storage, retrieval, archiving and disposal

To meet these objectives, schools and other business areas will implement procedures for records management to ensure that records are stored effectively and that best practice is followed.

4. Training

The University will provide appropriate training for all relevant staff and will include awareness training at induction.

5. Archives

The University is committed to establishing a University archive and to preserving those institutional records that are adjudged to possess enduring evidential and informational value to support learning and teaching, research, innovation and engagement.

Responsibility for the management and preservation of the University Archive will rest with the University Librarian. Responsibility for the development, administration, and promotion of the University Archive will rest with the Information Security Team and the University Archivist.

In respect of legacy materials, retrospective appraisal will apply.

6. Retention and Disposal

The University's position is that records should not be kept for longer than seven years, unless there is a legal or other external obligation to retain them for a longer period, or they are assessed to have archival value and are to be retained in the University Archive. Data owners are responsible for assigning retention periods to their datasets and other records. Guidance will be produced and maintained to assist data owners with this. This guidance will also give advice on maintenance of the 'golden copy' of records, whereby only one formal copy of certain records is required to be retained.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

University Registrar

The University Registrar has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the University's legal obligations are met and has responsibility for internal and external governance and corporate accountability. The University Registrar has been designated as the officer with overall responsibility for policy compliance.

University Librarian

The University Librarian has an overall responsibility for ensuring resources are in place to manage and preserve types of records identified as being of enduring archival value where they are deposited with the library.

Information Security Officer (Compliance)

- Advise on policy and best practice
- Develop and maintain guidance material in line with best practice
- Promote policy compliance

University Archivist

- Advise on policy and best practice
- Preserve and make archives accessible to internal and external stakeholders
- Promote the history of the university through its archives to inform current business functions

Senior Managers

All senior managers have a responsibility for ensuring that records within their areas are managed in a way that meets the provisions of this policy.

All Staff

Anyone who creates, receives or uses University records, will have some level of records management responsibility. Staff with responsibility for maintaining records, are required to:

- Maintain records securely and accurately
- Ensure that electronic records are protected during migration to new technology
- Ensure that access controls are in place throughout the life of the record to meet both legislative and University policy requirements
- Comply with standards and guidance as they are developed and disseminated
- Ensure appropriate disposition of records in line with guidance

This policy will apply to homeworkers, contractors and visitors. A breach of this policy could result in disciplinary proceedings.

8. Relationship with Existing Policies

Related policies and guidance documents are as follows:

- Freedom of Information Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Email Retention and Usage Policy
- Managing Emails as Records Guidance
- Newcastle University Library Special Collections Development Policy

9. Authority and Review

Policy Owner: John Hogan

Approved by: Executive Board, 15/09/2015

Review date: Periodically, as required