

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

(October 2003)

### **I Introduction**

The University recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to support its core functions, to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution and to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. It believes that the organisational benefits will include:

- improved control of valuable information resources
- improved management and availability of information
- better use of physical and server space
- better use of staff time
- compliance with legislation and standards
- reduced costs.

This document provides the policy framework through which effective Records Management can be audited. It will be relevant to all the University's Schools and Units and to most of the staff within them. The document covers:

- scope of the Policy
- responsibilities
- relationship with existing policies
- available guidance for implementation of the Policy
- contact details.

### **II Scope of the Policy**

1. This Policy applies to all records created, received, used and maintained by staff of the University in the course of their work.
2. The essential characteristic of a record is that it provides evidence of some specific activity. Records can occur in all types of media but will often be either paper or electronic.
3. Records Management is a means of systematically managing the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records.
4. A percentage of the University's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the University's archives, for historical research and as an enduring record of the conduct of business.

### **III Responsibilities**

1. The University has a responsibility to maintain its records and record-keeping systems in accordance with current legislation. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Policy lies with the Vice-Principal (Information).
2. The University's Information Management Co-ordinator has day to day responsibilities for co-ordinating the University's Records Management function. These responsibilities include drawing up guidance for good Records Management practice and promoting compliance with this Policy.
3. Individual employees who create, receive and use records have Records Management responsibilities. They must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the University's Records Management Guidelines.

### **IV Relationship with existing policies**

1. This Policy has been formulated within the context of the following University documents:
  - Information Strategy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Freedom of Information Policy

all of which are available from the University's Website.

2. Compliance with this Policy will facilitate compliance with information-related legislation, specifically the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **V Guidance**

1. Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this Policy is available on the University's Website. This guidance includes:
  - records capture (i.e. creation and receipt)
  - filing scheme classification
  - record appraisal (for existing records)
  - retention periods for records
  - storage of records
  - disposition of records
  - selection of records for archive
  - external codes of practice and relevant legislation.

### **VI Contact details**

The University's Information Management Co-ordinator:  
Mr Mark Robinson    Tel: 01334 461780    E-mail: foi

In his absence, staff should contact the University's Data Protection Co-ordinator:  
Mrs Alison Aiton      Tel: 01334 463528    E-mail: foi

## **Definition of Records Management and related terms**

### **Classification**

The process of devising and applying schemes is based on the activities which generate records, whereby they are categorised in systematic and consistent ways to facilitate their capture, retrieval, maintenance and disposal.

### **Information**

Information is a corporate asset. The University's records are important sources of administrative, evidential and historical information. They are vital to the University in its current and future operations (including meeting the requirements of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002), for the purposes of accountability, and for an awareness and understanding of its history and procedures. They form part of the "corporate memory" of the organisation.

### **Records**

Records are defined as all those sets of information, which facilitate the business carried out by the University and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received, or maintained in all types of recording media including hard copy and electronically.

### **The Records' Life Cycle**

All records have a life cycle from creation/receipt, through a period of active use, into semi-currency (which describes closed files that are still referred to occasionally) and finally either disposal or preservation in an archive. In the digital order it is important to introduce conscious management at the earliest possible stage as this will determine the ultimate extent of control over electronic material.

### **Records Management**

Records Management is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records (ISO 15489-1:2001).

The key components of Records Management are:

#### **Records creation and capture**

The term capture refers to the actions that are taken to secure a record into an effective records management system where the record can be maintained and made accessible for as long as it is needed.

#### **Records Surveys/Audits/Business Functions Analysis**

A record survey should establish what records exist, as well as where and in what form. It should also identify who is responsible for maintaining them. At the same time it will establish what their relationship is to the organization's activities and functions.

### **Records Analysis/Retention Schedules**

These processes apply various “appraisal criteria” such as legal, operational, administrative and historical requirements, to determine how long a particular series need to be retained.

### **Storage and Retrieval**

Storage may either be on paper or electronic. To avoid storing paper records in expensive office space or holding electronic material on-line, records can be transferred to much less expensive off-site storage or off-line facilities where they can still be accessed when required.

### **Records Disposal**

Implementing the retention schedule recommendations ensures that records in all formats that are no longer current or semi-current are either disposed of confidentially, reviewed after formally agreed periods of time, or permanently preserved as the archival record.

### **Records Protection and Security**

This relates to measures taken to ensure that the vital records of the organisation are securely held in terms of physical and on-line access permissions and procedures and permissions and that back up procedures are in place in the event of a disaster.