Title: Good documentation practice

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1. Scope

1.1 This SOP applies to documentation associated with any ISO/IEC 17025:2017 compliant testing performed within University of Aberdeen (UoA) Institute of Medical Science (IMS).

1.2 The purpose of this SOP is to define acceptable practices for completion of quality records, applicable to the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Quality Management Systems (QMS) within IMS.

2. Responsibilities

Staff involved in any activity within the scope of accreditation Adhere to this SOP.

3. Procedure

3.1⚠️ All records must be attributable, legible and completed at the time of the event (contemporaneously). Records must also be original, accurate and complete. Recording in advance or retrospectively (unless written on reflection of an event, or summary of an interview/focus group) is not permitted.

3.2⚠️ Data shall be checked to ensure it is correct and that transcription errors have not occurred. Where errors do occur in records or calculations, the original entry must be crossed out with a single line and not obliterated, made illegible or deleted. The correct value must be inserted alongside, and initialled and dated. All alterations to records must be dated, signed or initialled by the person making them and countersigned by the supervisor required to check them (where appropriate).

3.3⚠️ Correction fluid, or equivalent, is not permitted for use in any quality records.

3.4⚠️ Hand written amendments to controlled documents (eg SOPs) are not permitted.

3.5⚠️ Ensure that records are not affected by water, light or chemicals resulting in illegibility.

3.6⚠️ Explanations in quality records (eg Deviation etc) must be explicit and attributable.

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Key to symbols 💩 = Important point to note ⚠️ = Warning
3.7 ![ ] Attachments such as printouts from instrumentation, must clearly show traceability and be annotated with date, signature and, where appropriate, a key.

3.8 Where check initials are used, rather than a signature, a record shall exist to demonstrate who the initials belong to (e.g. a delegation log). Check initials may be used to confirm that:
- All prompts are complete with correct information (e.g. times, IDs, weights etc).
- Calculations have been carried out correctly and checked.
- That any step checked with initials has been observed and carried out.

3.9 ![ ] Records must be completed in permanent ink (if the colour of the ink is used as a colour code then this shall be documented), pencil or ‘erasable’ ink must not be used.

3.10 ![ ] All sections of form/checklists must be completed, or an explanation provided as to the reason why a section was not completed. Any prompts that are not applicable shall have ‘N/A’ recorded.

3.11 For consistency and to improve readability, all controlled documents shall be written in ‘Calibri’ font 11. All controlled documents shall be written in ‘plain English’ and block capitals shall not be used; where a section requires emphasis bold lettering may be used. Important points may be emphasised with ![ ], Warnings may be emphasised with ![ ]. Abbreviations may only be used if the full definition is listed on first use within the document.

3.12 ![ ] All controlled documents shall be paginated (i.e. detail ‘page x of y’ in the footer).

3.13 All controlled documentation shall be version controlled. Draft versions may be listed as ‘draft version 1’, ‘draft version 2’ etc. Version numbering shall start with ‘V 1’ and proceed through ‘V 2’, ‘V 3’, ‘V 4’ etc. Version numbering shall never use decimals (e.g. V 1.1, V 2.3 etc) as this does not permit an adequate audit trail.

3.14 ![ ] Where a copy is used to replace an original document, the copy shall be an exact copy and have all the same attributes and information as the original (an electronic document must retain any associated metadata). Consideration must be given to colour copying if the original document was colour coded in any way and all copying processes must be validated. The copy must be verified by a dated signature.

4. Abbreviations and definitions

QMS Quality Management System

5. Related documentation and references

SOP-IMS-28 Management of SOPs
- University of Aberdeen Style Guide V1 (7/19/2010)

Further details and free guides on plain English are available on www.plainenglish.co.uk

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