

University Records Management

About records management

Records management is a systematic process for the control and management of all types of recorded information, for as long as the information is needed.

Creating and using records is a vital part of our everyday activities.

The importance and value of managing records lies in their role **as evidence** of what has taken place.

Records provide an accurate, authentic and complete account of the University's actions, transactions, decisions and commitments.

We need records to work efficiently and demonstrate how we meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

Some records may not be current, however they may still retain value over a long period of time.

Our historical records document the history of the University and present an accurate picture of what we have done and why.

What does Records Management cover?

Any piece of information which is recorded constitutes "a record".

A record comes in many paper and digital formats: reports, memos, emails, instant messages, invoices, lists, spreadsheets, databases, images, audio and word files.

It is the content and the context that is significant, not the format.

What does Records Management involve?

To manage records effectively, we use a systematic "life cycle" approach. This means

- Creating/capturing good quality records

- Organising records so they are easy to find, share and re-use
- Storing records securely to protect vital business and keep personal data safe
- Securely destroying records which are no longer needed
- Archiving records which have lasting or permanent value.

Governance

The **University Records Management Policy** and **Records Retention Schedules** govern the way we manage records across the whole University

- promoting efficiencies and good practice as a natural part of our everyday business activities
- reducing risks around data security or data loss
- ensuring compliance with our obligations under Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and data protection legislation.
- The policy and schedules are available in the [Policy Zone](#).

How long records should be kept?

The **Records Retention Schedules** list the key types of records held within the University, specifies why we keep them and for how long.

Schedules also indicate which records should be destroyed or kept permanently.

Some records need to be kept for specified periods, according to the law. Others need to be kept for a recommended period, for our own business requirements.

We have an obligation to preserve a record of our actions for public scrutiny.

We also have a duty to process personal data fairly and securely and remove people's personal information from our records when it is no longer accurate or needed.

Creating, naming and storing of records

The names we give to our files are important to ensure that they can be easily identified, found, retrieved and shared.

File names need to be systematic, concise and objective, avoiding the use of abbreviations, jargon or personal names to prevent confusion, duplication, or loss of information.

The use of **File Naming Conventions** helps to organise personal and shared files, in a systematic and logical way, saving time and effort for all.

Paper records should be organised in a clear, systematic way and housed safely in a suitable storage environment.

Records held electronically should be stored securely. It is expected that staff and PGR students use a centrally managed, University approved storage solution for all data relating to teaching, research and administration. By storing your data in the most appropriate location, you benefit from data protection, security and a suitable backup schedule. To find the best storage solution for your data see the [Data Storage](#) information page

Security measures such as [multi-factor authentication](#) safeguard records that contain sensitive or personal data. Additional measures, such as encryption, may be required when sending sensitive or personal data externally.

Email & Social Media

Emails and social media are tools for communicating information quickly and easily, however they are not designed for long term storage of records.

Social media has become an integral part of the working environment. Staff should use University-approved social media tools and ensure they abide by all University policies and procedures when using any social media.

Work related emails, tweets, Teams chats, or posts are also business records and should be treated accordingly. These types of communications are subject to FOISA or DPA legislation in the same way as a more formal record.

Archiving & Preservation of Records

Some records created within the University need to be kept for many years, or permanently because of their historical, cultural or business value.

The University is obliged to ensure that appropriate technical and organisational preservation measures are taken to prevent loss of access, damage or destruction of key records.

Specific advice should be sought from the Information Governance Team or University Archivist regarding the appropriate management of these records to address long term access, storage and preservation requirements.

Further Assistance

Guidance on **Records Management policy and practice** is available at

www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/university-records-management-280

or contact the **Information Governance Team**

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