

University of Birmingham

University Records Management Policy

Purpose

1. The University acknowledges its obligations under various Acts of Parliament and related Regulations that necessitate responsible and efficient practice in the area of record creation and record management. Such practice is also important to the effective administration and governance of the University. The purpose of this Policy is to provide staff and managers in the University with a general framework through which to consider the efficient management of their records whilst observing general legal obligations, including those arising under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
2. This Policy may be considered in conjunction with the related but separate University Archive Collection Policy.

Definitions

3. Records are all those documents which facilitate University business and which are kept for a defined period in order to provide evidence of its activities. Records may be created, received, maintained or archived in physical or electronic format. For clarity, records about research are included within the scope of this Policy even though some of these records, such as those concerning clinical trials, may be subject in the first instance to other Universities policies and codes of practice or to specific legal and ethical guidelines.
4. Records management is concerned with the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records. It includes processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of, and information about, business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Recommended practice

5. Good records management necessitates the use of acceptable and legally or statutorily observant procedures and processes, so that records are organised on a systematic and recognised basis. Good records are characterised by being available; in good order in terms of quality of content and their organisation; interpretable; authoritative; and in an accessible format.
6. Acceptable procedures and processes practised under good records management should be concerned with:
 - Record creation and capture to ensure integrity and accessibility;
 - Records surveys and audits to relate record series to categories of records;
 - Records analysis to support routine review of the need for their retention, whether or not retention is legally or statutorily required;

- Records storage and retrieval, whether in physical or electronic format, to support legal or statutory, efficient and effective records management whether, where this is relevant, on or off-site;
- Records protection and security, including legally and statutorily observant protocols for access, back-up and disaster recovery;
- Records disposal, involving the routine use of recommended retention and disposal schedules which guide on legal, secure and confidential disposal, and which guide on when to recommend records for appraisal under the University Archive Collection Policy through which they might be permanently preserved within the University Archive.

Recommended Retention and Disposal Schedule

7. In support of this Policy, the University will provide a recommended Retention and Disposal Schedule for general use by staff and managers in the fulfilment of good records management. It will be published alongside this Policy but kept up-to-date in line with recommended principles and best practice for records management.

Responsibility for Records Management

8. Overall responsibility on behalf of the University for the proposed University Records Management Policy resides with the Registrar and Secretary, with practical responsibilities delegated to relevant officers within the context of this Policy. All staff and their heads of budget centre will continue to carry a general responsibility for satisfactory records management within the context of this Policy.

Version 1.0

Date: 21 January 2007

Approved and Adopted by Council on 4 April 2007

Due to be reviewed in 2012

Associated supporting document: University Recommended Retention and Disposal Schedule