



DCU Records Management Policy

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1. Purpose

1.1 To provide a statement of intent declaring records management standards for the administration of University records.

1.2 To produce records management procedures and to create retention/disposal schedules for University records.

1.3 To ensure preservation of records of permanent value and to establish archival criteria to maintain and assure continued access to appropriate historical records.

1.4 To support both protection of privacy and freedom of information services throughout the University.

1.5 To propose the development of guidelines to accompany this policy document including retention and disposal schedules for general records common to all University departments.

1.6 Guidelines for electronic media.



2. Scope

2.1 All information created or received by University officers or employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the University, preserved in the form of records, are covered by this policy. Records can be in a variety of physical forms including: paper documents - both written and printed matter, electronic records (i.e.. word processing files, data base, spreadsheet files, emails, electronic data on any media etc.) books, drawings, photographs, or anything on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic or mechanical means, or copies thereof, received by any academic or administrative office of the University in connection with the transaction of University business and retained by such office as evidence of the activities of the University or because of the information contained therein. It is emphasised here that this policy is equally applicable to records created and preserved in electronic format as it is to paper records.

2.2 This policy is applicable to all areas and locations of the University and includes all departments, offices, units, research centres and areas of work which form part of the University structure.

3. Ownership of records

3.1 All records, irrespective of format, (i.e. both textual and electronic, including emails) created or received by University officers or employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the University, are the property of the University and subject to its overall control. **Employees leaving DCU or changing positions within DCU are to leave all records for their successors.**

4. Management of University Records

4.1 All records created by University officers or employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the University are retained for as long as they are required to meet the legal, administrative, financial and operational requirements of the University, after which time they are either destroyed or transferred to the University Archives. The final disposition (either destruction or transfer to the Archives) of records is carried out according to approved schedules as outlined in the accompanying Guidelines.

4.2 While the records schedules prescribe the minimum period that University records must be retained, offices may, at their discretion, keep the records for a longer period of time if it is deemed necessary.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of the individual offices to ensure that the appropriate security measures are observed for maintaining records containing personal or other confidential



information when scheduled for destruction this material must be shredded, pulped, burned or otherwise disposed of to ensure that such information is not disclosed.

5.2 Operational responsibility rests with each Head/Director in central administration, each Head of School, and each Dean and Faculty Administrator in Faculty offices.

6. Procedures

6.1 The creating department/office/unit drafts records retention schedules for University records that define the length of time that specified types of records (records series) are to be retained in their active and semi-active phases, as well as their final disposition once they become inactive. (For definitions of these terms, records retention schedules, records series, active and semi-active see Section 9: Definitions).

6.2 After the draft schedules have been reviewed and approved by the creating office, they are forwarded for final approval to the Records Management Working Group (see section 8).

6.3 Following final approval by the RM Working Group, the schedules are returned to the relevant creating office, which then apply the schedules to its records.

6.4 After the records have been retained by the creating offices (in situ or off-site storage) for the requisite time as stipulated in the records schedules, they are either destroyed or stored in the local University Archive or other approved storage, for permanent retention.

6.5 It should be noted that the Guidelines in the appendices contain schedules which give a generic outline of recommended retention and disposition periods for records series. This is designed to facilitate departments/centres/units etc. in the development of retention and disposal schedules for records. These schedules are based on a determination of the following: legal retention requirements as defined in relevant statutes and regulations; administrative and operational requirements and general best practice. The potential historical value of records is also a consideration.

7. Electronic Records

7.1 The same records management principles and policies applied to paper records must also govern the management of electronic records. However, the technological nature of electronic records requires that special consideration be given to matters such as authenticity, accessibility, version control, preservation and disposal.

7.2 Effective electronic records management is only possible through the use of electronic records management software in the context of an overall records management programme defining classification schemes, retention schedules, metadata standards, access rights, etc. In other words, electronic documents must be managed from creation to final disposition and destruction.



7.3 In the absence of any electronic records management systems staff should be encouraged to employ good housekeeping practices in the management of electronic documents i.e. employ a naming convention, have a backup schedule, delete regularly (especially emails), use passwords, produce paper copies if required to maintain the integrity of manual files, etc.

7.4 Electronic records should take on the same retention schedule as their paper counterparts.

7.5 In the case of electronic records stored in file servers or data stored in relational databases where the computer equipment is maintained by the Information Systems & Services, the department which created or maintains these records must formally agree backup and recovery procedures with the Information Systems & Services. This is to ensure that there is no ambiguity as to which department is responsible for records in the event of hardware failure or accidental deletion of records.

7.6 Further analysis and investigation of the issues relating to electronic records management is required before more detailed guidelines or procedures can be formulated.

8. Establishment of a Records Management Working Group

A University Records Working Group will be established to:

- Review policy for the creation, management and disposition of university records;
- Approve recommendations as contained in retention and disposal schedules forwarded by relevant offices;
- Arbitrate on issues relating to the retention or disposition of University records;
- Provide advice on specialist areas.

The Records Management Working Group will comprise:

- Representative from the Office of the President
- Representative from the Secretary's Office
- Representative from the Registry
- Representative from the Library
- Representative from Information Systems & Services
- Representative from Human Resources
- Representative from Communications & Marketing
- Representative from the Finance Office



- Freedom of Information Officer
- Representative from the Faculty Administrators Peer Group

The Working Group will produce an annual report for Executive.

9. DEFINITIONS

University Records

Records created or received by University officers or employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the University, can be in a variety of physical forms including: paper documents including both written and printed matter, books, drawings, electronic data on any media, photographs, or anything on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic or mechanical means, or copies thereof received by an academic or administrative office of the University in connection with the transaction of University business and retained by such office as evidence of the activities of the University or because of the information contained therein.

Active Records

Active records are records, which are required and referred to constantly for current use, and which need to be retained and maintained in office space and equipment close to users.

Semi-active Records

Semi- Active records are records, which are referred to infrequently and are not required constantly for current use. Semi-active records are removed from office space to lower cost off-site storage until they are no longer needed.

Inactive records

Inactive records are records for which the active and semi-active retention periods have lapsed and which are no longer required to carry out the functions for which they were created.

Permanently valuable records - archives

Permanently valuable records include those with legal, operational, administrative, historical, scientific cultural and social significance.

Records Retention Schedule

A Records Retention Schedule is a control document that describes the University's corporate records at a series level and indicates the length of time each series shall be retained as active before transfer to the semi-active storage; the length of time each series should be retained as semi-active prior to final disposition; and the final disposition of each series. This document serves as the legal authorisation for the disposal of records.



Disposition


Disposition is the action taken in regard to the disposal of active records, which can involve physical destruction by means of security shredding or recycling; transfer to archival storage for selective or full retention; or special disposition through a formal act of alienation from the custody of the University.

Record Series

Groups of related records, which are created and used with a common purpose, for example, financial records; personnel records; examination results, committee minutes etc.

Permanent

To be retained permanently by the office. Alternatively if the records are considered inactive, arrangements may be made to have them transferred to an external storage facility.

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