Records Management Policy

1　Introduction

The University recognises the importance of efficient and effective records management to support its functions. Records management is defined as the efficient and systematic control of the creation, version control, maintenance, use, distribution, filing, retention storage and disposal of records in a way that is administratively and legally sound and which meets the needs of the University and preserves an adequate historical record. The purpose of this policy is to address issues of roles, responsibility and accountability in relation to records management as well as providing a framework through which effective records management can be achieved.

2　Records management policy: five key points

The aims of the University College's records management policy are that:

1. the **record is present**: the University has the information that is needed to form a reconstruction of activities or transactions that have taken place.
2. the **record can be accessed**: information can be located and accessed, and displayed in a way consistent with initial use and current version is identified where multiple versions exist.
3. the **record can be interpreted**: the context of the record can be established: who created the document and when, and how the record is related to other records.
4. the **record can be trusted**: the record reliably represents the information that was actually used in or created, and its integrity and authenticity can be demonstrated.
5. the **record can be maintained through time**: the qualities of accessibility, interpretation and trustworthiness can be maintained for as long as the record is needed, perhaps permanently, despite changes of formats.

3　Scope of the Policy

The Policy applies to all records created, received and maintained by staff of the University as a result of their employment by the University. A record is recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems and encompasses administrative, financial, teaching and research records.

For the purposes of this Policy, records are defined as documentation which facilitate and support the work of the University and which are retained for a defined period to provide evidence of University transactions or activities. These records may exist in printed or digital form.

A small percentage of the University College's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the institution's archives, for historical research and as an enduring record of the conduct of business. This will be the subject of an archives policy.

4   Objectives of records management

Records contain information that is a valuable resource and important operational asset. A systematic approach to the management of the University records is essential to protect and preserve records as evidence of actions.

Records management is necessary to:

- ensure that the University conducts itself in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner;
- deliver services to staff and stakeholders in a consistent and equitable manner;
- support and document policy formation and managerial decision making;
- facilitate the effective performance of activities through the University;
- provide continuity in the event of a disaster;
- meet legislative and regulatory requirements;
- provide protection and support in litigation including the management of risks associated with the existence or lack of evidence of organisational activity;
- protect the interests of the organisation and the rights of employees, clients and present and future stakeholders;
- establish a business and cultural identity and maintain a corporate memory.

5   Relevant Legislation and University Policies

The University will seek to ensure that its records management systems and procedures facilitate compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations.
Specific functions and activities within the University may also be subject to specific legislation or to professional best practice or relevant ethical guidelines. For example Finance activities are governed *inter alia* by the Finance Acts, the Taxes Acts, the Pension Act 1995, and by ethical guidelines issued by professional bodies. Human Resources activities are regulated by Employment Law.

6   Records retention schedule

The University will establish and maintain retention schedules through which schools and services may keep a register of records and ensure that they are accessible. This will include classification of the data according to whether it is defined as personal data, sensitive personal data or records that are commercially confidential or otherwise exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. This will be necessary for the University to facilitate current and meet future legal requirements, including those under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information legislation.

The Schedule will be developed in accordance with best practice and maintained by the appropriate unit.

7   Historical Records

The University will preserve records which have a permanent legal, historical, administrative or research value. It will ensure that such records are held in an appropriate manner subject to the archives policy.

8   Integrity of Records

Staff responsible for maintaining records in the University will:

- Record appropriate descriptive and contextual information throughout the records life cycle;
- Maintain records securely;
- Ensure that electronic records are protected during technological change e.g. during migration to new software or hardware platforms;
- Ensure that appropriate access and version controls are applied throughout records life cycles, reflecting both legislative requirements (e.g. from the Data Protection Act) and University policies.

9   Responsibilities for implementing the policy

9.1   Senior Staff

The University has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record-keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The member of the University College's Senior Staff with overall responsibility for the policy is Vice Principal responsible for the Information and Communication Strategy.

Senior Staff shall ensure guidance on good records management practice and promoting compliance with this policy in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information.

9.2   Heads of School and Service

Heads of School and Service are responsible for ensuring that the records in their area of responsibility are maintained and disposed of according to the records management policy and the retention and disposal schedules.

9.3   Staff responsible for holding main copies

Staff who are responsible for holding the main copy of any documentation will ensure that it is maintained appropriately, that the versions are controlled, it is accessible and that, where appropriate, it is available on the portal and the external website.

9.4   Individual responsibility

Individual employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are complete and accurate records of their activities, which are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the University College's records management policy.

9.5   Relationship with other policies

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following University documents:

- The Information and Communication Strategy
- Data Protection Policy
- Guidelines for Data Protection and the handling of personal data
- Your Guide to Requesting Information from the University
- Archives Policy
- General IT Policy

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