Records Management - Discovery Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government legislation requires that all members of the University community are responsible for proper records management and must contribute to the 'corporate memory' through compliance with University records management policies, procedures and guidelines.

(2) The discovery of University records refers to the practice of being able to locate records promptly and being able to read and readily produce them when required for as long as the records need to be retained.

Section 2 - Compliance

(3) This is a compliance requirement under the Information Act 2002.

Section 3 - Intent

(4) This document applies to all members of the University community. It is intended to identify what issues must be considered and applied, to ensure that records can be discovered easily when they are required.

Section 4 - Relevant Definitions

(5) In the context of this document:

a. Corporate Memory means the accumulated body of data, information, and knowledge created throughout the existence of the University;
b. Metadata means key information identified about a record and used to discover and identify records;
c. Record means:
    i. recorded information in any form (including data in a computer system) that is required to be kept by a public sector organisation as evidence of the activities or operations of the organisation, and includes part of a record and a copy of a record; and/or
    ii. information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.
d. Register means Register of Systems Approved for the Management of University Records;
e. Short-Term Record means records that are only relevant for short-term use and do not have any bearing on long-term matters. This may include office messages, meeting requests, draft documents with no significant impact upon the final version and personal notes; and
f. University Community means officials and individuals carrying out University business. This includes, but is not limited to, all staff members, researchers, peer reviewers, students, volunteers, consultants, agents and contractors.

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Section 5 - Procedures

(6) Once a record has been captured (refer to the Records Management - Capturing Procedure) it must be able to be easily discovered (located) from the time it is captured up until it is legally destroyed (refer to the Records Management - Retention and Disposal Procedure).

(7) To ensure this is possible, records must be captured in approved systems and managed consistently and systematically to ensure that records are easily discoverable and accessible for the life of the record (even in the event that the software originally utilised to capture the record may no longer exist).

Approved Systems for the Discovery of University Records

(8) All University systems approved and listed on the Register of Systems Approved for the Management of University Records (the Register) must have workflow processes in place around them to ensure that records remain discoverable. These include, and are not limited to:

a. adequate back-up that ensures records are safe from corruption and/or accidental deletion; and
b. any system or program required to read records must be available to utilise in a timely manner (same day) or if this is not possible, the records must be converted to a long-term archiving format or other suitable format that is readable into the future. For example, a Word document may be converted into a PDF archiving format, or data saved in XML format.

Hard-Copy Records

(9) Hard-copy records must be stored in conditions that will optimise the quality of the records and ensure that they remain discoverable for their required retention periods. Consideration must be given to the following matters:

a. Built Environment
    i. Potential External Hazards (fire/flood/explosion/cyclone).
    ii. Location (floodplain, earthquake prone zone, flight path).
    iii. Dedicated area for records storage.
b. Internal Environment
    i. Temperature/humidity stability.
    ii. Lighting.
    iii. Fire Protection (sprinkler system/smoke detectors/fire-proof doors).
    iv. Pest/Vermin control.
    v. Continuous power supply.
    vi. Minimal natural light.
    vii. Work Health and Safety Considerations.
c. Shelving
    i. Appropriate to house the format of the record (files/maps/plans/microfilm etc.).
d. Containers
    i. Designed to fit the records; and
    ii. strong enough to withstand handling, pressure and weight of the records they contain.

(10) The University maintains a majority of hard-copy records offsite and considers other matters outlined in the AS/NZS 1015:2011 Australian/New Zealand Standard Records Management - Physical Storage when choosing a storage provider. If the conditions outlined above cannot be met within the University, a request to send the records

to an external storage provider should be pursued through the Records and Archives.

Records and Archives

(11) The Records and Archives is responsible for ensuring that the processes and tools in place are appropriate and suitable to ensure that University records can be discovered, read and readily produced when required for as long as the records need to be retained.

(12) The Records and Archives of the University is responsible for:

a. managing the University's Electronic Document and Records Management System and the administration of that system;
b. assessing systems and work processes for managing University records;
c. maintenance of the Register of Systems Approved for the Management of University Records;
d. conducting regular auditing on records management processes across the University;
e. managing the storage of archived hard-copy University records;
f. developing and reviewing University Records Disposal Schedules;
g. managing the application of retention and disposal of University records; and
h. providing advice on how to implement new processes that involve the management of University records.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	15th January 2022
Review Date	14th January 2023
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	20th December 2021
Expiry Date	20th April 2022
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