

Information and Records Management: A guide to managing University records for academics

Purpose: The purpose of this guide is to outline your responsibilities for creating and managing University records. All University staff must manage information and records in accordance with New Zealand law and University policies – doing so supports processes and procedures and enables the University to be accountable and transparent in its decision making.

What is a University record? University records document any interaction, transaction or decision relating to the University administration (e.g. student advising, committee work, research administration, or program, department, or school administration). Records can be in any format (Word documents, emails, text messages, databases, social media posts etc.)

Where University records are captured into a system, e.g. HR systems for leave applications or Banner, you do not need to do anything else. Note that Blackboard is not a record keeping system, and interim assessment grades need to be managed elsewhere. Where the record is not captured into a system – e.g. a Word document your School Administrators will be able to provide advice on where these should be stored within the M: drive.

Any printout from databases – including Banner - are subject to change and the printed copies may not be accurate. Treat all printouts of student records as confidential.

What is not a University record: University records do not include research and teaching and learning material that is created by an academic unless it becomes part of the record of the institution¹. However University policies may assign rights to information and records. Individual schools and faculties may have guidelines about how and where they want you to store teaching and learning material – check with your Head of School or School Manager about school protocols.

The [Assessment Handbook](#) includes information on managing student records e.g. destruction of assessments and examinations, processes for releasing assessment grades etc.

Official Information Act, the Privacy Act and University records: All University records can be requested under the Official Information Act (OIA) or the Privacy Act- including email. If a student asks for information about themselves, we are obliged to release it.

Use of H: or OneDrive for Business: The H: drive (or OneDrive for Business) has been provided for you to use for personal information. University records must **not** be kept on the H: drive or OneDrive for Business.

Email: You must use your University email account to conduct all University business. This includes interactions with students.

Security and privacy: Any record that contains personal or sensitive information (e.g. student records) are confidential and must be kept secure and protected from unauthorised access. Contact ITS for information on how to secure information if you are unsure. To safeguard information:

- Password protect all laptops and devices (mobile phones, tablets) that connect to the University network;
- Be careful when working on a shared computer that files containing confidential information are protected – including downloads;
- Lock your computer to prevent unauthorised access when away from your desk;
- Store paper records in locked cabinets when not in use.

Social media: If you use a social media platform as part of communicating to a group of students you need to be comply with the University policies and guidelines.

For further guidance see: <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/recordservices/>, or contact Information and Records Management at IRM@vuw.ac.nz

¹ Definition of a Public Record (c ii), Public Records Act 2005

Retention periods for common Faculty records

For clarification or further information please send any queries to Information and Records Management (IRM) – IRM@vuw.ac.nz

Note: The record retention period applies to **original** records only.

Record Type	GDA Reference	Minimum Retention Period from date of last action	Record Destruction Form
Copies, Duplicates of Records and their Reproductions	1.2.2	Destroy when no longer administratively required	No
EFTPOS Receipts	4.5.4	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Faculty Budget – If summarised elsewhere	4.3.1	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Faculty Board + Committees at Faculty level Agendas, Minutes + Papers	5.2.1	Archive: Do Not Destroy	N/A
Student Files	14.1.2	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Change of Course, Add / Drop Forms	1.2.12	Destroy 2 years from date of last action	No
Student Files – Maintenance of student record	14.10.1	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Student Files – Transcript requests	14.13.2	Destroy when no longer administratively required	No
Grade Reconsideration Applications	10.1.4	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Aegrotats	10.6.1	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Examination management	10.1.2	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Examination papers	N/A	Transfer to Library after exam	N/A
Academic Misconduct – Student breach investigated, found to be supported	14.2.2	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Academic Misconduct – Student breach investigated, found to be not supported	14.2.3	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Staff files	If duplicates, delete, otherwise send to HR Payroll when the staff member leaves.		

Record Disposal requirements:

- Records that require approval to dispose must be recorded on a Record Destruction Form and the form signed by a certifying office for approval prior to disposal being carried out.
- Staff must not destroy any records older than 25 years old without the approval of the Manager, Information and Records Management.
- Staff must not destroy records identified as Archive.
- Staff must store university records in a secure environment that prevents the risk of unauthorised access or damage.
- The review or destroy date of records must be easily identifiable. For example, clearly marked on the outside of file sleeves or storage boxes or recorded on a record location control such as a file list.
- For guidance on the retention of records not covered here, refer to the General Disposal Authority
<https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/staff/services-resources/record-management/destroying-and-archiving-records>

Retention periods for common records created by Schools

For clarification or further information please send any queries to Information and Records Management (IRM) – IRM@vuw.ac.nz

Note: The record retention period applies to **original** records only.

Record Type	GDA Reference	Minimum Retention Period from date of last action	Record Destruction Form
Copies, Duplicates of Records and their Reproductions	1.2.2	Destroy when no longer administratively required	No
Change of Grade Forms	10.1.4	Destroy: 7 years	Yes
Change of Personal Detail Forms	1.2.12	Retain until the production of the completed version or record	No
Course Outlines	Archive: One copy to Information and Records Management. Applies to Course Outlines not created via the Course Outline Editor.		
Contract for service	7.6.1	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
CUAP Proposals	10.3.2	Destroy 10 years from date of last action	Yes
EFTPOS Receipts	4.5.4	Destroy: 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Examination management	10.1.2	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Examination scripts Student work (assignments etc.)	Destroy – in accordance with Academic Handbook Guidelines http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf		
Grade Reconsideration Applications	10.1.4	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Grade-Sheets i.e. grading / marking of individual assessment component	10.1.3	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
Post graduate student records, Master's Progress Reports	14.10.1	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes
School Budget	4.3.1	Destroy: 7 years from date of last action	Yes
School Level Committees Agendas. Minutes + Papers	5.2.1	Archive: Do Not Destroy. Transfer to University Archive when no longer administratively required.	N/A
Sub Committees that report to School Committees e.g. School Research Committee, Staff-Student Liaison meetings	5.2.2	Destroy when no longer administratively required	No
Staff files	If duplicates, delete, otherwise send to HR Payroll when the staff member leaves.		
Staff files – Academic PDCPs	7.15.6	Destroy 7 years from date of last action	Yes

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Human Resources / Information and Records Management

Managers Guide to Staff Records

Purpose:

The purpose of this guide is to outline managers' responsibilities for the management and maintenance of staff records. This guidance applies to electronic and paper staff records.

General information:

The retention and disposal of staff records is mandated by Victoria's obligations under the Public Records Act 2005 and also governed by the Privacy Act 1993. Please note that:

- All records (including duplicates) that contain personal information **must** be held in a secure Victoria environment or ITS approved system – i.e. they must not be held in an unauthorised cloud service provider (e.g. Dropbox, Google Docs).
- Duplicates kept for administrative purposes must be destroyed when no longer required.
- Any paper staff record (original or duplicate) being destroyed must be destroyed confidentially through either shredding or use of a locked bin.
- If an original document may be relevant to any legal proceedings involving the staff member to which the document relates please seek advice from your Human Resources contact before taking any action.
- Retention periods only apply to original documents and are set out in the New Zealand Universities General Disposal Authority¹ (GDA).
- Before destroying original records (either paper or electronic) a Record Destruction form² must be completed and signed by the person authorised to approve their destruction for your Unit (refer to the Delegations Authority).

Scanning files to Payroll

Please scan files to HR Payroll for inclusion on a staff file. You must follow the following process as soon as an original document has come into existence (e.g. when a signed employment agreement is returned to you):

- Scan and email each document separately (i.e. do not scan 6 employment agreements as one pdf and email to Payroll)
- Put the name of the staff member in the email subject line followed by the type of document e.g. "Smith, John, Employment agreement".
- Check that the scan of the document is a complete copy of the original before emailing it to HR Payroll – it must be complete (a common issue is where only every other page of a double-sided original is scanned), legible and straight.
- If you have emailed a document to HR Payroll do not send the hard copy document as well.

Hold onto the hard copy document for a minimum of 2 weeks, but no longer than 4 weeks in case there is a problem with the scanned file. After that minimum period has passed, if you have not received any advice from Human Resources to the contrary, you should destroy the hard copy document.

Staff files:

The master copy of staff files, including letters of offer and employment agreements of fixed term, casual or permanent staff, are held by Human Resources.

The master staff file for an employee is comprised of the signed letter of offer and employment agreement (and any associated documentation e.g. role description), and records relating to salary changes, outcomes

¹ To access the NZ Universities General Disposal Authority: <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/staff/services-resources/record-management/documents/general-disposal-authority.pdf>

² For a copy of the Disposal form: <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/staff/services-resources/record-services/destroying-and-archiving-records>

communicated to the employee from processes relating to misconduct, grievances, or other complaints (for as long as those outcomes remain “live” – e.g. a written warning), letters of recognition etc. For professional staff performance development and career plans (PDCPs) are also held on the staff file – but the PDCPs of academic staff are not (see below).

All documentation on a staff member must be sent (electronically) to HR Payroll. When a staff member leaves securely destroy all copies of documentation you hold. If the document has not been sent to HR Payroll scan and email it within 6 weeks of the staff member leaving.

In general, staff files are destroyed 7 years after the individual leaves Victoria. Staff files for staff who are members of the Senior Leadership Team or have received significant honours, achieved high distinction (e.g. Order of NZ, Order of Merit, Honorary Doctorates, academic medals, literary prizes etc.) while employed at Victoria are retained permanently.

Academic Staff PDCP's

PDCP records of academic staff must be retained in the school or faculty where the person was employed and destroyed 7 years after the staff member has left Victoria (GDA reference 7.14.1)³.

Interested parties (adjuncts, visiting scholars)

The records of Adjuncts and Visiting Scholars must be kept in accordance with the Human Resources policy⁴ – i.e. these records are kept by the HR Faculty Manager.

Recruitment and Interview notes:

For information about documentation that must be provided to Human Resources after the offer of employment has been accepted refer to <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/staff/human-resources/recruitment/make-offer/information>.

During the selection process notes will generally be made about candidates – including those made by the interview panel. The recruiting manager should collect all the notes made by members of the interview panel destroy them after 3 months⁵. You do not need to complete a Records Destruction form for these records.

Pre-employment checks:

In most cases, new staff undergo a Ministry of Justice criminal check. Where a staff member meets the definition of a Children’s Worker under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, a New Zealand Police vet must be undertaken. (Further advice about this can be sought from your HR contact.)

Ministry of Justice checks must be sent to Human Resources for filing on the staff file (an electronic copy, following the process above, is accepted).

NZ Police vets must be destroyed 7 years after they were requested. Police vets must be stored securely (in a folder restricted to the police vet agent(s) if on a shared drive or in a locked, secure room if paper). They must **not** be sent to HR Payroll for filing.

Contractor’s records:

The records relating to contractors are not maintained by Human Resources, they are to be retained, managed and destroyed by the school / faculty / CSU the person was contracted to. The file should contain the signed contract for services (and any associated documentation e.g. description of services/activities), and any other documentation relating to the contract (e.g. extensions or variations).

Finally – **all** information (including emails) created at VUW is potentially disclosable to others under the Privacy Act and the Official Information Act – it is good practice to destroy personal information in accordance with the minimum retention periods set out in the General Disposal Authority.

For records management guidance see: <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/services-resources/record-management>, or contact Information and Records Management at IRM@vuw.ac.nz

³ Faculty Human Resource advisors may also hold copies of academics PDCP’s for administrative purposes.

⁴ <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/staff/human-resources/agreements/temporary-appointments-unpaid/adjunct-and-visiting-staff-policy.pdf>

⁵ See <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/staff/human-resources/recruitment/make-offer/information>

Managing Email

Many people struggle to manage the sheer quantity of email sent and received. Below are some of the tips Record Services have collected – if there are others you would like to suggest, please contact us.

Sending email:

Before sending an email consider:

Do you need to send it?

Would it be quicker to phone or have a face-to-face conversation? It may be useful to follow these conversations with a summary email.

When sending an email use the following email conventions:

To:	Use To: when you need a response.
Cc:	Cc: is “For information only” - use when you are not expecting a response. You don't need a name in the To: field to send a Cc: email.
Bcc:	Use Bcc: (blind carbon copy) when sending out a bulk emails to protect the privacy of recipients. Each recipient cannot see other recipients email address.
Reply All	Limit the use of reply all – does everyone need to read your response?
Delay Send	Delaying sending emails means that if you forget the attachment, add the wrong address etc., there is a window of opportunity to open the email and make a change as required. In Outlook select File, Rules – Manage Rules and Alerts, and create a new rule that applies to “Messages I send” - 1 or 2 minutes should be enough.
Drafts	Write drafts and review them after a period of time – to avoid sending by accident remove the email address. This is particularly useful when responding to an email that has annoyed or upset you.
Font	Fonts with extraordinarily thin strokes or unusual features and characteristics that reduce the familiarity of their letter forms are harder to read, especially for users who may have impairments. The closest fonts to the Victoria's official fonts are Georgia and Arial.

Managing incoming email (or controlling inbox madness)

Try to sort your inbox on a daily basis.

- Deal with each email once – either by replying to it, deleting it, or turn it into a task.
- Delete unnecessary messages (without reading them!)

Read from newest to oldest	Read emails received from newest to oldest – this means you do not spend time on a query has been answered by someone else, or the issue has resolved itself. This is particularly useful if you have been on holiday / travelling and not checking email for a number of days.
Rules	Use rules to automatically move emails out of the inbox (into different folders) – and then read them when you have time. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ email you are cc'd into a “For information Only” folder. ▪ email from List-Servs, blogs, groups you belong to etc. into their own folders.
Subject lines	Make the subject line meaningful to others, and change it if the subject evolves. Use the subject line for the message e.g. ‘Can you send me the latest report on student success’ - this way the recipient does not need to open the email to see what you want. For clarity some use EOM (end of message) at the end.

	Use the subject line to convey what you need the recipient to do – e.g. FYI xxx or Action required: xxx).
Diary	If your job allows, diary a regular time to read emails – if appropriate include this information in your email signature e.g. “I check email at 10.00 and 3.00 daily – if you need an urgent reply please ring me on extension xxx. I read emails I am cc’d into on Friday.”
Content	To create less confusion – and stop issues being overlooked limit emails to one topic, or number the topics for clarity.
Email settings	Change the default email settings and views to suit.
Notifications	You can remove / alter email notifications and other settings so that you are not distracted by new emails being received. In Outlook select File - Options - Mail. Under Message Arrival you can select – or deselect – the options to be notified of new emails arriving.
View	Change the default view to Calendar or Tasks. In Outlook Select File - Options - Mail - Advanced to change the default view.

Holidays

There is little more demoralising than returning from holiday to an overflowing Inbox. Before you leave consider creating a rule that moves all received emails into a separate folder. When you return you will only have new emails in your inbox to deal with.

Include in your out of office message when you expect to have cleared email by, and suggest that if the email is urgent that it be resent when you return, or forwarded to a co-worker during your absence.

Records Management and Email

Some emails are official record as evidence of decision making.

If appropriate save emails into your M:\ drive to enable others in your team to identify information around decisions made. This applies to emails both received and sent.

Phishing emails

Periodically the University is hit by spam emails. If in doubt about the validity of an email check with the ITS Help Desk before opening it. Note that ITS will **never** send an email containing a link and ask you to verify your details. If you think you have been spammed contact the ITS Help Desk immediately

Finally – **all** email sent and received from your VUW email account is discoverable under the Privacy Act and the Official Information Act – keep the tone polite and courteous (some suggest that if you would not say it to a person’s face, or write it in a letter, don’t say it in an email).

For records management guidance see: <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/recordservices/>, or contact Record Services at Record-Services@vuw.ac.nz



Guidance on the storage of electronic information

Information Technology Services (ITS) / Information and Records Management (IRM)

There has been a proliferation of places to store information and records - the following guidelines are for the storage of University information and records.

All University information and records **MUST** be stored on ITS-provided systems and hardware. This includes cloud services. If the cloud service is not provided by ITS you must not store university information and records in it.

University information and records are defined as information created, regardless of format that informs the management and operation of the University and its subsidiaries. In practice this means all information created as a part of day to day activities of all professional staff. The information and records of academic staff that relate to the development of teaching and learning material and research are not considered to be University information and records. However academics may wish to take these guidelines into consideration to ensure that their research and teaching and learning materials are suitably and appropriately protected.

The following will help you keep university information in the right place, so that it is accessible, usable and reusable. If you have any questions or are in doubt please contact the ITS Help Desk (x5050) or the Manager, Information and Records Management. (x5985)

Your M:\ network drive or SharePoint

For professional staff all information created when carrying out their job is university information and must be saved in the M:\ drive or in their units SharePoint site. If staff are concerned that draft documents could be used inappropriately they should be using the appropriate naming conventions or structuring the M:\ drive in such a way that drafts are clearly identified.

For academics, all work related information created and modified in your day to day activities in the conduct of the functions of the university e.g. Students interim marks (from individual assignments).

H:\ drive or OneDrive

The H:\ drive is provided by the University for the storage of personal information. In general it should not be used for University information.

There are occasions where managers may wish to save information into the H:\ drive as they do not want others to see it. Saving to the H:\ drive should only be used when the information is confidential (e.g. units change proposal) or human resource records that either the manager has not

transferred to HR or are duplicates retained for business reasons. All university records should be transferred to the M:\ drive as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Examples of what to store in the M:\ (SharePoint) or H:\ (OneDrive) drive:

	H:\ (OneDrive)	M:\ (SharePoint)
Professional staff	PDCP Staff members PDCP's HR material that is a duplicate (e.g. contracts of staff members) Personal information (e.g. CV)	All work related information
Academic staff	As for professional staff Research data / outputs	Students interim marks (from individual assignments)

C:\, D:\ and Desktop

Do not save documents to your C:\, D:\ drive or your desktop – they are not backed up, and in the event of a failure of your PC ITS cannot retrieve them for you. Documents saved to your desktop are not available remotely either.

Office 365 Groups:

Office 365 Groups are a way of facilitating cross-university collaboration and / or collaboration with external parties. A 'group' consists of a number of collaboration tools, including a calendar, file storage (for word, excel documents etc.), and a Notebook.

The advantages of Office 365 Groups include that the group admin can control who is a member of the group, including external parties, and that it is easily accessible 24/7 via the web.

All members of an Office 365 Group can see all the information created in the group - i.e. access cannot be restricted from any member. (However only members can see and find a group.)

To request an Office 365 Group contact ITS Help Desk (x5050).

Reminder: Exit Interviews:

The exit interview guidelines include a requirement that staff move university information out of their H:\ drive and email accounts into the M:\ drive, or where personal information either to another persons H:\ drive or a secured M:\ drive folder before leaving the University.

The following flow chart may help you when deciding where to store information:

