

# Records Management Policy

## Document data:

Document type:	Policy
Administering Entity:	Records Management Office
TRIM Reference:	D03/1600
Date Vice-Chancellor approval:	23 January 2008
Indicative time for review:	July 2010
Responsibility for review:	Records Manager
Related policies or other documents:	Records Management Plan

## 1. Rationale and Scope

The University of New England (UNE) is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) and to implementing best practice in its records management practices and systems. All practices and procedures concerning records management within UNE are to be in accordance with this policy. University Records are defined in Section 4.2 of this Policy.

UNE has developed this policy and the supporting Records Management Plan to ensure that:

- Statutory obligations are met for the creation, collection and maintenance of records under the University's control for operational, evidential and historical purposes by establishing a framework and accountabilities for records management.
- University requirements are met for access to all information needed to perform its business operations.
- Responsibilities are defined for creation of procedures and standards relating to the management of University Records.

This policy and the Records Management Plan are supported through the continued implementation of the TRIM records management system throughout the University. The Records Management Plan will be developed in consultation with the University community and approved by University Council, and will be binding on the University and its employees.

The policy applies to all organisational units within the University and to all University Records, including email, generated or received by staff in the course of University business. All University Records are the property of the University, not the member of staff who created or received them. As such, they are subject to the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

This policy also applies to organisations that are either fully or partially owned entities of the University including controlled entities.

## 2. Policy

### 2.1 Records will be managed in compliance with State legislation

The University will manage records in its control in accordance with the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) and any policies, standards, codes of best practice and other requirements issued by the State Records Authority of New South Wales (State Records NSW) under the Act.

All University Records, regardless of format, are subject to the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW), the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* (NSW) and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW).

Other legislation relevant to the recordkeeping functions of UNE include:

- *Electronic Transaction Act 2000* (NSW)
- *Evidence Act 1995* (NSW)
- *Limitations Act 1969* (NSW)
- *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (NSW)
- *University of New England Act 1993* (NSW)

## **2.2 Management procedures**

Detailed management procedures will be outlined in the UNE Records Management Plan, consistent with the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) and this Policy.

## **2.3 Assistance provided by the Records Management Office in meeting record keeping obligations**

The University has a devolved model of records management whereby organisational units have responsibility for the management of their records with the assistance of the Records Management Office (RMO). RMO staff will assist organisational units through the provision of advice, access to infrastructure and training in records management procedures.

## **2.4 Destruction of records**

The destruction of University Records will be managed centrally through the RMO.

## **2.5 State Archives**

The University will keep those records identified as permanent State Archives within the University Archives at the Heritage Centre by entering into a Distributed Management Agreement with State Records NSW. Archives are records that have been identified as having continuing value in records retention and disposal authorities issued by State Records NSW and are kept permanently as part of the University Archives Collection.

# **3. Key Accountabilities**

## **3.1 Vice-Chancellor**

Under Section 10 of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) the Vice-Chancellor, as the “Chief Executive” of the University, has a duty to ensure that “the [University] complies with the requirements of [the] Act and the regulations and that the requirements of [the] Act and the regulations with respect to [University Records] that the [University] is responsible for are complied with”.

## **3.2 Chief Operating Officer**

The Chief Operating Officer, who is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, is the senior executive responsible for the records management program and functions as the University’s “Nominated Senior Officer” for the purposes of compliance with the State Records NSW Standard on Records Management Programs.

## **3.3 Records Manager**

The Records Manager reports to the Chief Operating Officer. Formal responsibilities have been delegated to the Records Manager and include:

- establishing and maintaining a consistent and effective records management regime across the University;
- monitoring and ensuring compliance with s.12(3) of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) including any relevant standards, codes of practice and other requirements as may be issued by State Records NSW under the Act;
- the development of a standardised records management system for implementation across the University;
- developing University policies, standards and guidelines for records management; and

- providing advice or relevant authorisations consistent with these delegations and this policy and not inconsistent with the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

### 3.4 Organisational Units

Organisational units within the University will nominate a position (or positions) that will have responsibility for 'day-to-day' records management within that unit. This position is to address the record keeping responsibilities of the unit as an entity, and includes the responsibilities in the following list. (Note: individual responsibilities are described in section 3.5)

Each organisational unit is responsible for:

- compliance with relevant University standards, guidelines and policies on records management;
- ensuring that full and accurate records are made and kept of all activities carried out by the organisational unit;
- the safe custody and preservation of the State records of which it has control;
- managing the records of the unit;
- maintenance of physical files and the creation of electronic files;
- determining appropriate access restrictions in consultation with RMO;
- identifying vital records; and
- maintaining security for records stored in office areas (particularly sensitive records).

### 3.5 All Staff

Each member of staff within the University is responsible for University Records creation and management and must:

- take responsibility for creating records of all incoming and outgoing correspondence that transacts the business of the University, or ensure that the records are created by a responsible officer;
- make and keep full and accurate records of all University activities for which he or she is responsible;
- create records that document all substantive or formal decisions taken by him or her in the service of the University;
- create records that summarise important conversations, whether face-to-face, by telephone or other electronic means;
- capture all University Records into TRIM;
- handle paper records with care and return them safely to RMO when no longer required as active records;
- protect records from accidental damage or loss;
- protect sensitive records in their custody from unauthorised access; and
- not destroy records without authorisation from the Records Manager.

All staff who create records in the course of their employment must be familiar with the Records Management Procedures to ensure that they understand what is required of them to comply with UNE Records Management Program<sup>1</sup>. A statement to this effect will be included in the position description of staff under 'duties'. Where training is required it is the responsibility of staff and their supervisors to participate in training offered by RMO via the UNE Organisational Development Unit.

### 3.6 Committees, Working Parties and Project Teams

Secretaries and/or chairs of all committees, working parties and project teams must:

- be responsible for the management of committee records;
- comply with relevant University standards, guidelines and policies on records management in regards to records of the committee, working party or project team;
- create and keep full and accurate records of all committee, working party or project team meetings; and

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<sup>1</sup> The RM Program is required under Section 13 of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) – Standards issued by State Records – Standard No 8 Issued April 2004, Standard on Managing a RM Program.

- register all meeting papers on TRIM (including all agendas, agenda papers, minutes, reports and records of decisions).

#### 4. Standard Procedures

Details for achieving University compliance with this policy will be outlined in the Records Management Plan. Records Management Procedures for particular processes will be made by the Records Manager in consultation with operational units and published under the authority of this Policy with the approval of the Manager, Records Management Unit or the Chief Operating Officer.

##### 4.1 Ownership of records

Part One, Section Three of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW), defines a **State Record** as *any record made and kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in a public office, or for any purpose of a public office, or for the use of a public office.* A **Record** is defined as *any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means.*

All records obtained through the course of University operations are State Records and are controlled by the University of New England as University Records.

##### 4.2 University Records

University Records are any records (regardless of format) made and kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in the University, or for any purpose of the University, or for the use of the University [Part 1, *State Records Act 1998* (NSW)].

This includes records in any format such as paper, electronic (email, spreadsheets, word processing documents, images etc), audio or video cassettes, film, photographs, publications and microfilm/fiche.

University Records can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- records of formal decisions taken by staff that are documented in memoranda, letters, fax or email messages, etc;
- incoming communications from external persons and bodies;
- outwards communications to external persons and bodies;
- meeting papers of formally established University boards and committees (including agendas, agenda papers, minutes, reports and decision pages);
- meeting papers of ad hoc committees and working parties (including agendas, agenda papers, minutes, reports and decision pages);
- financial transactions held electronically or in hard copy format;
- personnel transactions (i.e. letters of appointment, reports on performance and other dealings between staff and the University);
- course and unit outlines issued to students and the public;
- approved course and unit proposals and course accreditation documentation;
- research grant applications and records of application outcomes.

Particular record types are listed in the Records Management Plan.

All University Records, whether electronic or paper, must be registered in TRIM at the point of creation or receipt and attached to / enclosed within, an official UNE file container.

##### 4.3 Vital Records

Vital records are those records that are essential for the ongoing business of the University, and without which the University could not continue to function effectively. The identification and protection of such records is a primary object of records management, risk management

and disaster management planning. Each organisational unit is responsible for identifying and managing vital records in consultation with RMO.

#### **4.4 Contracts & Legal Documents**

All original contracts or legal documents must, as soon as practicable after signing, be sent to the Records Management Office where:

- the document is scanned;
- the image is to be placed in TRIM; and
- the original document to be placed on the relevant TRIM File container and stored in RMO.

#### **4.5 Document Management Rules**

The University uses the TRIM records management system for the management of all records and documents (including electronic documents).

All staff are to use TRIM to record all substantive official business. Staff are not to maintain individual or separate files or recordkeeping systems or unmanaged electronic repositories for University Records except as otherwise authorised by the Corporate Records Manager and registered with RMO.

All formal documents generated within the University, including outwards correspondence, should bear either a file number or document number (as allocated by TRIM on creation of a file/document) on the bottom right hand corner of the first or cover page.

The location of every file must be accurate and up to date in TRIM at all times. Staff are responsible for recording location changes when passing a physical file to another staff member, either by recording it in TRIM or by notifying the appropriate Records Officer.

Refer to the Records Management Plan for further information.

### **Approval signature**

Vice-Chancellor: Professor Alan Pettigrew

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008

**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:**

Records Management Plan  
Records Management Standard Operating Procedures