

Records Management Policy

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0.1	September 2023	Creation of Policy by Records Management Officer
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1. Introduction

Lancaster University recognises that effective management of its records is necessary to complete its core functions, to provide evidence of its actions and transactions and to comply with its legal and regulatory requirements. These records, and the information they contain, represent an important asset to the University.

This policy sets out the objectives the University seeks to achieve to fulfil its records management obligations. This includes meeting its legal obligations, not limited to: the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). This is in addition to the University’s own regulations and policies, including the [Information Security Policy](#), the [Data Protection Policy](#) and the [Special Collections and Archives policies](#).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the Records Management Policy for Lancaster University and to ensure the University’s compliance with its legal obligations whilst still serving the institutional business requirements. It seeks to ensure that records are managed as valuable assets to the University for completing and evidencing its functions.

The University is committed to ensuring good records management practice and compliance with relevant laws and will:

- implement processes and policies to ensure the University has the records needed to enable the completion of its functions and to meet its legislated requirements;
- ensure University records are demonstrably accurate, authentic, reliable and have integrity to be used as evidence of the University’s functions and transactions;
- ensure that where personal information is held, it is complete, accurate and up-to-date and that processes are in place to ensure records containing this information are managed in line with relevant data protection legislation;
- support staff in the creation and maintenance of these records for as long as they remain of value to the University;
- ensure records remain accessible to staff for as long as they remain of value to the University;
- have appropriately secured storage areas for University records;

- have processes in place to ensure records are appropriately destroyed or archived when they are no longer of functional or evidential value to the University, and;
- store records in the University Archive to enable historical research and ensure there is a lasting record of the University's business.

3. Scope

This policy:

- applies to all University records, from the point they are created or transferred into the University and whilst they are required to be maintained according to the retention schedule, available on the [Records Management webpage](#);
- applies to all University records across all formats, including electronic documents, emails, texts and social media channels, as well as paper documents;
- applies to University records which are stored, managed or hosted elsewhere.
- applies to all members of staff, including temporary, casual and agency staff, honorary staff and volunteers and Governors and the records they create or maintain to complete their functions.

4. Definitions

4.1 Record

BS ISO 15489 (Information and Documentation) defines a record as "Information created, received or maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business".

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Lancaster University

Lancaster University has a corporate responsibility to maintain records of its processes and its records management system in accordance with the regulatory environment.

Lancaster University owns all records created by its employees carrying out University related functions and activities, unless stated otherwise in contract or Regulations.

5.2 Records Management Officer

The Records Management Officer is responsible for developing and enhancing the University's records management culture and practice. This will be done by:

- producing and promoting effective records management policies, procedures and guidance;
- ensuring that the University's Retention Schedule is regularly updated;

- creating, maintaining and delivering records management training to University staff,
- advising staff on any records management issues which may arise at the University;
- promoting best practice for digital and physical records management;
- carrying out Department/Division/Faculty records management audits and providing audit outcomes recommendations; and
- maintaining the Records Management Policy to ensure the University is compliant with relevant legislation and its own requirements.

5.3 Information Governance Manager

The Information Governance Manager will line manage the Records Management Officer and provide operational support and guidance. They will also promote the appropriate management of records containing personal data.

5.4 Heads of Faculties

Heads of Faculties are responsible for ensuring their areas comply with this policy and that records are stored in policy compliant systems.

5.5 Directors of Divisions/Heads of Departments

Directors of Divisions/Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring their areas comply with this policy and that records are stored in policy compliant systems.

5.6 All University Staff, Volunteers & Governors

All University staff, including temporary, casual and agency staff and, volunteers and Governors have a responsibility for compliance with this policy. All staff are responsible for the management of the records they create, including:

- The creation of accurate records that document the functions they are responsible for;
- the maintenance of these records in line with the standards outlined in this document;
- the safe and secure storage of these records;
- appropriate handling of these records after their retention expires, including destroying these records or handing them to the University Archives;
- the creation and maintenance of appropriate metadata and documentation for their records;
- completing the mandatory training on Data Protection and Information Security.

5.7 University Archive

The University Archive is responsible for obtaining, preserving and managing agreed record categories of historical relevance to the University, both physical and digital, and for appropriate access to them.

5.8 Research Data Manager

The Research Data Manager is responsible for supporting staff in managing Long-Term Research Archived Data.

6. Records Management Policy

6.1 Records Management Principles

Lancaster University recognises that in order to complete its functions, its records should conform to the following principles:

1. The record is accurate – The record contains any information needed to evidence the completion of the University's functions and any transactions which have taken place.
2. The record can be trusted – The record is what it claims to be, and its authenticity and integrity can be demonstrated.
3. The record can be accessed – The record can be easily located by appropriate members of staff, and the format is reasonably accessible.
4. The record can remain accessible – The records integrity can be maintained for as long as the record is needed for the University's functions and the record will remain accessible for this length of time.
5. The record can be interpreted – The context of the record can be established: Who created the document? When? To support which business function? How does the record relate to other records?
6. The record is valued – The record is understood to be an information asset and staff work towards ensuring the above principles are maintained for all University records to preserve and make use of these assets.
7. The record's risks are managed in recognition that the loss, damage or unauthorised access to records can represent a serious financial, legal and reputational risk to the University and such risks therefore need to be actively managed.

6.2 Retention of Records

All University staff have a responsibility to manage their records in line with the University Retention Schedule. This applies to all University records, regardless of format (digital and paper) or content (personal data and non-personal information). These records may have been created by University staff or transferred into the University after creation. Applying the retention schedule ensures records are kept for as long as they are needed, but that we are also not keeping an excessive number of records. Where personal data is involved, this also ensures compliance with the UK GDPR and associated data protection legislation.

6.3 Capture and control of Digital Records

Digital records created or received while completing University functions must be maintained within approved University information systems. Guidance is available for deciding which information system is most appropriate for your records [here](#). When considering new information systems, this should be done with the 'Records Management Principles' in mind. Records management can advise on the suitability of systems by contacting records-management@lancaster.ac.uk.

6.4 Handling records at the end of their retention

Records which have exceeded their retention period should be disposed in a controlled and appropriate manner. Some records past their retention period will need to be reviewed for archival value, and if selected, should be transferred to the University Archive. All copies of an expired record should be destroyed. To dispose of electronic media on alternative hardware/storage (CD's, Magnetic tapes, VHS, etc), please contact the ISS Service Desk and log a ticket to request disposal.

6.5 Management of records containing personal data

In addition to the Records Management Principles (6.1), records containing personal data should be handled in line with the [University Data Protection Policy](#), giving particular importance to the Principles concerning storage limitation, security, accuracy and data minimisation.

6.6 Security of records

University records are an important information asset to the University. Many of these records hold personal data. It is important that University records are stored in appropriately secure storage systems. Necessary precautions should be taken to prevent unauthorised access to both physical and digital records, and to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the record. Agreements to ensure good records management must be in place with third parties. For more information on the security of digital records, please see the [Information Security Policy](#).

6.7 Classification of records

University records should be classified upon creation or when they are transferred into the University. Records should be handled appropriately according to their classification. For more information on these classifications, please [see here](#).