



Records Management Policy

Date of Most Recent Review: August 2010
Date of Next Review: August 2013
Responsibility: Assistant Principal
Approved by: Finance and General Purposes Committee

Please ask if you, or someone you know, would like this document in a different format or language.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary, to support its core functions, to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited.
- 1.2 Records management is defined as a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including process for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.
- 1.3 Relevant internal and external references are listed at Appendix 1.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff of the College in the course of carrying out their corporate functions. Records and documentation created in the course of research, whether internally or externally-funded, are also subject to contractual record-keeping requirements.
- 2.2 Records are defined as all those documents, which facilitate the business carried out by the College and which are thereafter retained for a set period to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all information recorded, regardless of medium, which is created, collated, processed, used and retained (for a set period) in the course of College activities. This includes, but is not limited to, paper, electronic, digital and audio-visual records.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Assistant Principal: Student Services is responsible for reviewing this policy and the associated Records Management Procedure and Schedules.
- 3.2 The Procedure and Schedules details the line manager responsible for retaining and managing the various records. Records must not be retained by any other section for a period longer than the times stated by the responsible line manager.
- 3.3 All employees of the College are responsible for ensuring that all records created in the course of their work are accurate and fit for purpose.

- 3.4 The College has a detailed Business Recovery Plan in place that details the key steps to be taken when business is disrupted. This includes a section relating to the loss of essential records and the steps to be taken to retrieve those records.

4. Records Management

- 4.1 Each section of the College must have in place adequate arrangements for documenting its activities, taking into account the legal and regulatory environment specific to that area of work and the nature of the activities. Those arrangements will include:

4.2 Records Creation

- Appropriate records created, arranged and indexed in such a way that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently
- Procedures and guidelines for referencing, titling, indexing, version control and security marking, including cross referencing of electronic and paper records.
- Procedures for keeping the system updated.
- Documentation of the system and guidelines on how to use it, to be maintained by the relevant Director/Line Manager
- Retention periods determined for all records.

4.3 Records Maintenance

- Provision of appropriate storage accommodation for current records which allows maximum accessibility to the information commensurate with its frequency of use but which is secure and complies with statutory requirements.
- Storage areas must be kept clean and tidy with, ideally a single responsible person being identified.
- Identifying records vital to the continued functioning of the College and applying appropriate protection.

4.4 Records Closure/Disposal

Records should be closed as soon as they have ceased to be of active use other than for reference purposes. As a general rule, files should be closed after no more than four years, and, if action continues a further file should be opened.

Records selected for permanent preservation and not in regular use should be clearly marked as such and transferred to a secure storage area.

Non-current records should be transferred in a controlled manner to a designated storage facility rather than stored in offices, in accordance with the retention periods established.

Records not selected for permanent preservation and which have reached the end of their agreed retention period should be appraised by the relevant manager who will recommend whether they merit a further retention period or

are to be destroyed. The following criteria should be observed when recommending destruction:

- No record should go into storage without an agreed retention period.
- No record should be automatically destroyed; lists of records for destruction need to be approved by the relevant manager.
- No record should be destroyed until it is established whether it is the subject of a request for access under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. If this is the case, destruction must be delayed until disclosure has taken place or, if the College has decided not to disclose the information, until the review and appeal provisions of the Act have been exhausted.
- A record of those records destroyed must be maintained and preserved.
- All records authorised for destruction must be destroyed in as secure manner as is necessary for the level of confidentiality or security they warrant.

4.5 A small percentage of the College 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.

4.6 The process for complying with this policy is outlined in the associated Procedure and Schedules.

5 Retention Periods

5.1 The College will retain for permanent preservation records which are essential to the College and which document the College's policies, structures and processes. These will include evidence of the following:-

- Legal status and remit of the College, and any major changes to these.
- Principal administrative process of the College.
- Top level decision making and policy formation within the College.
- Important or high profile aspects of the interactions between the College and individuals, business, civic institutions and the environment.

5.2 Realistic retention periods for all other records should be decided as they are created, please refer to Record Management procedures for further detail. In determining retention periods, consideration should be given to the following:

- Is the record required for the day to day running of the College?
- Is it required for legal purposes, e.g. invoices, major contracts?
- Does any legislation or official regulation govern how long it must be kept, e.g. European grant funding records?
- Is it likely to be of ongoing or recurrent public interest?
- Is there current guidance on record retention within the area relating to the record?

- 5.3 At the end of the retention period, an appraisal process should be undertaken by the relevant manager to decide permanent preservation, further retention period or destruction.
- 5.4 A schedule should be kept of records created and retained in each section; The schedule should indicate the date of disposal and authorisation for final disposition.

Appendix 1

Internal

Records Management Policy.
Student Confidentiality Policy
Freedom of Information Procedures
Business Recovery Plan

External

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
Data Protection Act 1998
Computer Misuse Act 1990
Copyright (Computer Programme) Regulations Act 1992
Lawful Business Practice Regulations
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.