

Records Management - Disposal of Records Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Under the Public Records Act 1973, Victoria University is considered a public agency and must follow the standards set by the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV). The PROV Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDAs) provide legal authorisation for Victoria University to dispose of records once the minimum retention periods have been met.

(2) PROV RDAs specify whether records are considered temporary (can be destroyed after their minimum retention period is met) or permanent (of ongoing value to the University or to the State, to be housed in the University Archives when no longer required for use). For temporary records, the RDAs also list the minimum time frame the records need to be kept. Temporary records cannot be housed in the University Archives.

(3) The VU Business Classification Scheme (BCS) incorporates the minimum retention periods from the RDAs, and can be used to work out how long records need to be kept. This procedure explains how to use the BCS to determine whether records can be disposed of, and the process to follow in doing so.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(4) This procedure applies to:

- a. all University staff and contractors, council members, honorary, adjunct or visiting academics, and volunteers; and
- b. all University records (both physical and electronic) created or held by VU, or created or held by contractors on VU's behalf.

Section 3 - Definitions

(5) Nil

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(6) See [Records Management Policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedures

Roles/Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibility
(7) Manager	a. Authorising the destruction of records in their organisational area. b. Ensuring regular and systematic disposal of records in accordance with these procedures. c. Responsible for monitoring compliance with records management legislation, policies and procedures within their organisational areas.
(8) Records & Archives Services	a. Providing advice on the disposal of records, particularly how long records should be kept. b. Ensuring retention periods in the BCS reflect legal and business requirements. c. Responsible for monitoring overall (University wide) compliance with records management legislation, policies and procedures.
(9) University Archivist	a. Determining whether records should be transferred to the University Archives, based on the BCS and the PROV RDAs.

Retention

(10) The BCS specifies the minimum time frames records must be retained. Records may be kept for longer if there is an ongoing business need to do so. Records required for any legal action (including cases which have not yet begun but are reasonably likely to occur) must not be destroyed until the completion of the legal proceedings, regardless of the retention period specified in the BCS. Please note that it is not permitted to scan records and destroy the originals, unless a Records Conversion Plan has been developed for the records. Records Conversion Plans must be developed in co-operation with Records & Archives Services, and must be signed off by the head of the operational area. Records may be scanned for easier access, provided the original records are kept in accordance with this procedure.

Disposal programs

(11) Disposal should be done as an ongoing program, rather than as one-off projects when there is no more storage space. Managers are responsible for ensuring regular and systematic disposal of records in their areas in accordance with legal requirements. An ongoing program of disposal means records destruction of time expired records occurs regularly, and, in the case of permanent records, they are transferred to the University Archives regularly. This means that records disposal can be built into work processes of the area and be included in work planning rather than being a separate — and often daunting — task. In addition, records destroyed under an ongoing disposal program are less likely to have their destruction challenged as being an attempt to hide or cover up information.

Procedures

(12) Determine if the record you are assessing is an original record or a copy. Under the provisions of Normal Administrative Practice (NAP), duplicates and some reference material may be destroyed without reference to an RDA once it is no longer required. If the following is being destroyed, the rest of this procedure does not apply:

- a. Working papers consisting of rough notes and calculations used solely to assist in the preparation of other records.
- b. Draft material, if:
 - i. the content has been reproduced elsewhere; and
 - ii. the draft does not include evidence of important decisions or modifications. NAP should not be used if drafts include significant comments or changes.
- c. Ephemera and materials preserved solely for reference purposes. For example: phone messages; global emails; brochures and flyers; photocopies kept for reference when original documents are forwarded to other departments; surplus copies of annual reports and other publications; external publications including printouts from websites.

Please note that NAP includes: printouts of meeting agendas, minutes and papers, including papers of committees you may sit on; marketing flyers and other promotional material; and copies of credit card statements and other financial records.

(13) With original records, use the Business Classification Scheme (BCS) on the VU intranet to determine how long the records need to be kept:

- a. Use a keyword search, or browse the hierarchy of terms, to identify the function or activity that the records document.
- b. The "Disposal advice" indicates whether the records are permanent, and if not, how long they need to be kept.
- c. If you cannot find a term in the BCS that covers your records, contact Records & Archives Services for advice.
- d. If the records are permanent and you have no need for continued access to them, continue to paragraph (14) and prepare your records for transfer to the VU Archives.
- e. If the records are temporary, determine if they are due for destruction. For example, attendance records for apprentices are not of permanent value and can be destroyed "7 years after last entry". To work out the disposal date for the attendance records, you would look at the last entry in the book, and add 7 years to the date — this is the date when these records can be destroyed.
- f. Continue paragraph (15) if your records are temporary but cannot yet be destroyed, or step 5 if they are ready for destruction.

(14) If they are permanent records:

- a. Contact the University Archivist, Footscray Park, to inform them that you have permanent records to transfer and to discuss any issues and a possible transfer date.
- b. Complete the Archives Transfer Form, which you need to fill out before transferring the records.
- c. The records must be boxed in acid-free archival-quality boxes and their contents listed before being transferred to the Archives. Archive boxes are available from the University Archivist.
- d. When packing a box, original order must be maintained. This means they need to be packed in the order they were kept in while being used. For example, records may be filed chronologically, alphabetically, or by reference number.
- e. Pack the box appropriately. Do not overfill or underfill the box. As a guide, make sure you can move your flat hand between the records and the box wall. Files, folders, publications and bound volumes should be packed spine downward (against the base of the box) to minimise stress on paper and fastenings.
- f. List the contents of the box. If you have an existing spreadsheet or word document listing the contents, this is sufficient and an electronic copy should be sent to the University Archivist. If you do not have an existing contents list, contact the University Archivist for a box contents list template to be completed.
- g. Label and number each box. Labelling should indicate the type of records, date range of contents, and identifying code range.
- h. Arrange for the removal of the records from your work area to the University Archives. This can be done by contacting the Facilities Service Desk. Contact the University Archivist to inform them that the boxes are to be delivered.
- i. Once the University Archivist has received the records and checked that the contents are complete, they will notify you that the records have been successfully transferred.
- j. Update any records lists to show that the boxes are now located in the University Archives.

(15) If they are temporary records which cannot yet be destroyed:

- a. The records need to be stored securely until they can be destroyed. See the [Records Management - Physical Records Storage Procedure](#) for more information.

(16) If they are temporary records which have reached their destruction date:

- a. Before the records are destroyed, a [Destruction of Records Authorisation form](#) needs to be completed. This form

needs to be signed by the manager of the unit responsible for the records to provide authorisation to destroy the records. This person should consider whether the records are required for legal action (including cases which have not yet begun, but which are reasonably foreseeable), or for any other business reason, before approving destruction.

- b. Send the destruction form to Records & Archives Services, who will verify that the records are due for destruction.
- c. If you have an existing file list, annotate the list to show that the records have been destroyed, and the date of destruction. If the records are registered on RecFind, update RecFind to show that the records have been destroyed.
- d. For physical records, place the records in a secure destruction bin to ensure that any personal or other confidential private information is not disclosed. Only publicly available reference material and copies of material of a non-sensitive nature should be put in the normal recycling bins found in offices, and in general the normal recycling bins should not be used for records disposal.
- e. If you have a large quantity of physical records to destroy, and the records are in boxes, the secure destruction providers can collect the boxes from you.
- f. For electronic records, destruction should include erasing the digital media, or overwriting stored data, not simply deleting the data. If you need to destroy media containing electronic records (such as CDs, videos, disks, USBs, etc.), you should contact the University's secure destruction provider to arrange this.
- g. Send the completed destruction form to Records & Archives Services, K419, Footscray Park campus, and keep a copy of the completed form for your own records.

(17) See flowchart which summarises the disposal process.

Section 6 - Guidelines

(18) Nil

Status and Details

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