Let us introduce ourselves...

The Records Management Unit (RMU) is a unit of Information Technology Services (ITS) within the University of Tasmania.

The Records Management Unit’s mission is to:

- provide University of Tasmania staff with the knowledge and tools to manage their corporate information (in both electronic and paper format) in a more consistent manner.
- improve availability and accessibility of information across all our campuses.
- ensure the University complies with all administrative, legal, and archival requirements with respect to records.

This is achieved by providing policies, guidelines, education, training and resources to staff on how to store, manage and dispose of records.

Recordkeeping fundamentals

What is a record?
The Australian Standard on Records Management (AS ISO 15489) defines a record as recorded information in any form, “created or received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business”.

This includes emails, electronic documents, maps, films etc. It is the content that matters, not the format.

Why do we need to keep records?
As an entity established by an Act of Parliament, the University is bound by the Archives Act 1983. The Act stipulates, “agencies must not dispose of records of any type or format (including electronic records, microfilm, sound recordings etc.) without the written approval of the State Archivist. Disposal of records involves their destruction, their removal from the custody of their creating Agency, or their transfer to the Archives Office.”

What do we mean by recordkeeping?
Recordkeeping is a logical and organised approach to the creation, maintenance and disposal of records. Each University business area is responsible for the management, storage and disposal of that area’s records.

What happens if we don’t keep adequate records?
Inadequate records and poor recordkeeping can contribute to accountability failures through:

- failure of individuals or systems to create records
- failure to create complete and accurate records
- failure to capture records into recordkeeping systems
- failure to identify the authoritative/final version of a record where multiple versions exist
- failure to maintain records for the time necessary to meet specific accountability requirements
- failure to assign responsibility for recordkeeping.

These failures can result in:

- fines - under the Archives Act 1983, unauthorised destruction of records is subject to a fine of 50 penalty units (i.e. $5000)
- litigation arising out of decision-making deficiencies caused by inadequate records
- litigation arising out of defamatory or confidential material appearing in inappropriate files
- lacking evidence vital to the defence of an action
- State government/auditor-general investigations
- reputational damage
- loss of historical/corporate memory.

Recordkeeping responsibilities

Individual employees
As records creators, all employees are responsible for creating and keeping complete and accurate records that document University business activities and support any decisions made, thereby promoting accountability and corporate memory. Employees must understand and follow records management policies, procedures and guidelines.

Managers and Heads of Divisions/Faculties/Sections/Schools/Institutes
Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff create and maintain adequate records and that they comply with records management policies, procedures and guidelines. Managers must provide those under their supervision with adequate resources, education and training in recordkeeping.

Records Management Unit (RMU)
The RMU is responsible for the development, monitoring and review of Records Management policies, procedures and guidelines in consultation with senior management and Heads of Divisions / Faculties / Schools / Institutes. It is also responsible for the education, training and dissemination of information to University employees in regard to records management.

Senior Management
Senior management is responsible for approving recordkeeping policies and ensuring that adequate resources are available for implementing these policies.

Information Technology Services (ITS)
IT Services is responsible for maintaining the databases and systems on which information is stored.
**WHERE SHOULD I KEEP RECORDS?**

With the exception of ephemeral records, all records should be lodged in a formal recordkeeping system which preserves, manages and provides access to records over time.

**Paper records**

Paper records can be stored in a traditional paper-based filing system using numbered folders tracked via a centralised register. They should be stored in an area with appropriate environmental conditions where they can be accessed by all relevant staff, not in a desk drawer!

**Electronic records (including emails)**

Electronic records should be captured into HP Records Manager (the University’s electronic recordkeeping system) if available, or saved in an appropriately configured shared/network drive if you don’t have HPRM access.

**HOW SHOULD I DISPOSE OF RECORDS?**

As the University’s records are State Records, they cannot legally be destroyed without the authorisation of the State Archivist.

In practice, this usually means that records must be disposed of in accordance with one of the disposal schedules applicable to the University. These list categories of records called disposal classes that the State Archivist has authorised the destruction or transfer of after a period of time known as a retention period.

To destroy the records, you will need to list them and their disposal classes in a Register of Records Destroyed, which must be approved by the RMU and the head of the relevant business area prior to destroying the records.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please refer to the University’s Records Management Policy and Guidelines for more detailed information. These and many other resources are available from the Records Management Unit website:

http://www.utas.edu.au/it/records

If you have any questions about recordkeeping, please contact the Records Management Unit:

Email: RMU.Staff@utas.edu.au
Mailbag: Private Bag 69
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