Records management procedures: Destruction of Confidential Paper Records

Summary

This document is designed to give a quick step by step procedure for the destruction of confidential paper records. If the procedures are followed, you should be able to ensure that sensitive information is disposed of securely.

Disposal of University records and information

1. Destruction of any record produced by the University in the course of its activities, including confidential records, should only be carried out where authorised. There may be legal, administrative or archival retention requirements.

2. Provision of lists of categories of records destroyed and the authority under which they were destroyed is a requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. These requirements do not, however, apply to material routinely discarded in the course of an administrative activity i.e. duplicates, information material, rough drafts or ephemera.

4. Unless your office deals with financial or personal matters (e.g. staff or students) only a small proportion of the records you produce will be confidential (i.e. subject to restricted circulation and processing).

5. Any record produced by the University which is not in the public domain and which contains information on identifiable individuals should, however, be treated as confidential.

6. An individual handling or processing confidential material should take personal responsibility for the proper disposal of such information.

Destruction procedure – day to day

1. Facilities Management has introduced blue, lockable bins to be used by staff for the destruction of confidential material.

2. These bins are located throughout Senate House and Stewart House.

3. The bins should be used for day-to-day destruction of any confidential material routinely discarded in the course of an administrative activity.
**Destruction procedure – larger projects**

1. This procedure concerns the regular, systematic destruction of particular types of records at a time designated by the appropriate records retention schedule.

2. Where large-scale destruction of records not yet covered by a retention schedule is desired, the Records Management Team should first be consulted to ensure that there are no legal or administrative retention requirements.

3. The Records Management Team will accept transfers of records which are causing congestion but which may not be destroyed immediately. The records management procedure *Transfer of paper records the Senate House records store*, should be followed in these circumstances.

4. E-mail records.management@london.ac.uk with a list of the categories of records you wish to destroy, with covering dates and reference to the relevant retention schedule. All notifications will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

5. Once agreement is secured by return e-mail, remove the material from its container and remove bulldog clips, plastic wallets etc.

6. Ensure that the waste is kept in a secure location pending transferral to the blue bins e.g. in your office.

7. Transfer the waste to the blue confidential waste bins (or use on-site shredders) provided in your Department/section.

**Version history**

Procedure approved as *Destruction of confidential paper records* 9/9/02; amended 15/11/02; 30/1/03; 7/3/03; 6/05/05; 3/7/06; 25/9/09; 6/11/09; updated as *Destruction of Confidential Paper Records* 9/1/12.

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<th>Reason for change</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>Procedure approved as <em>Destruction of Confidential Paper Records</em> 9/1/12</td>
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University of London Records management

Records: Records are the evidence of our actions and decisions as a University
Responsibility: Keeping accurate records is the responsibility of every member of staff
Risk: There are risks around records (loss, damage, unauthorised access) which need to be managed
Retention: We should keep our records only as long as they are relevant or as long as we are required to by law
Rights: The public has a right to access our records under legislation such as FOI and DPA

UoL website link: [http://www.london.ac.uk/955.html](http://www.london.ac.uk/955.html)
Staff intranet link: [https://intranet.london.ac.uk/3632.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/3632.html)
Email: Records.management@london.ac.uk
Appendix I: Confidential and non-confidential records: definitions

Appendix I: Confidential and non-confidential records: definitions. This appendix lists the main categories of records which are and which are not confidential.

Appendix II: Sample records destruction schedules. The samples are intended to give guidance on how to keep lists of records destroyed by staff in offices. It will be necessary to create and keep such lists for up to 10 years as proof of authorised destruction.

Note: Information held by a public authority is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act includes various exemptions to the disclosure of certain types of information, which may include confidential information as defined in this document.

Unlikely to be confidential

Records or information thereof which is already in the public domain e.g.

- Mission statements
- Charters
- Constitutions
- Ordinances
- Statutes
- Regulations
- Published directories
- Internet websites
- Published minutes
- Published reports
- Press releases
- Prospectuses
- Timetables
- Presentation materials
- Course guides and outlines
- Publicity material
- Blank examination papers (post exam)
- Theses (accepted)
- Data which has been anonymised
- Published surveys
- Magazines
- Published circulars
Likely to be confidential

Records or information which contains personal information about a living individual e.g.

- Questionnaire or other data collected under a guarantee of confidentiality.
- Correspondence or other documents which reveal the contact details or any financial details of a named living person, unless permission has been given to circulate the details.
- Correspondence or other documents which reveal personal details or pass comments on a named living person.
- Staff personnel records
- Discipline records
- Student records
- Grant applications
- Job applications
- Interview notes
- Admissions records
- Redundancy records
- Sick pay records
- Maternity pay records
- Income tax and National Insurance returns
- Wages and salary records
- Accident books and records
- Health records
- Medical records

Information which, if made public before a certain period, may breach commercial confidentiality e.g.

- Contracts
- Tenders
- Purchasing records
- Maintenance records
- Insurance records
- Unpublished accounting records

Records which may breach intellectual property rights e.g.

- Unpublished research material, drafts and manuscripts.
Appendix II: SAMPLE RECORDS DESTRUCTION SCHEDULES

(a list on a spreadsheet or table is recommended)

[sample I]: INSTITUTE OF [-]-:

SCHEDULE OF RECORDS DESTROYED under Section 1 for accounting records of the INSTITUTE RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE (approved 26/2/03)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institute of [-] Studies</th>
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SCHEDULE OF RECORDS DESTROYED according to the RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE for the Examinations Office

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