

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES MANUAL  
BEST PRACTICE PROCEDURE NO. 10**

**Disposal of Records Created by Academic Staff**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This guideline has been produced to provide a framework for the evaluation and disposal of records created and collected by academic staff.

1.2 Legally, all records, regardless of format, created and received by employees in the course of the University of London's business are the records of the University. In practice the University permits that ownership of material produced by academic staff (e.g. material produced for personal use and reference, including teaching aids) may in some cases be considered to belong to the individual staff member.

## **2.0 Ownership of records: what constitutes a record of the University?**

2.1 Records created and maintained by academic staff may include:

- Research material, including policy records, selection of personnel, background information and questionnaire (sometimes including personal data), statistics, reports and publishing records.
- Material relating to lectures seminars etc. given by/participated in by academic staff.
- Records relating to students with whom academic staff deal, including, in some cases, personal data.
- Records relating to examinations.
- Papers produced and/or collected by academic staff as part of their membership of committees, working parties and external organisations.
- Information on areas of interest to the individual staff member's particular field of study.

2.2 A list of the major categories of record created or collected by academic staff, which could be classified as records of the University, is attached, with recommended disposal provisions, as an appendix. Where such records are not the property of the University, academic staff are welcome to use the list and its recommendations as guidelines for their own disposal action and, if they wish, to offer records which are regarded as being of permanent value to their organisation's archives.

## **3.0 Intellectual Property**

3.1 The University's Financial Regulations contain guidance for academic staff with regard to intellectual property. Inventions by employees are assumed to have originated in the normal course of their employment and belong to the University. Employees responsible for inventions will normally receive a share in the benefits derived from any exploitation of their inventions. The word invention is defined in the Financial Regulations and includes copyright material.

#### 4.0 Data Protection and Freedom of Information

4.1 The Data Protection Act 1998 sets down principles regarding the obtaining, processing, storage and transfer of information about living individuals. The Act requires those processing personal data to adhere to Data Protection principles, and grants the individuals concerned certain rights, including the right to access to the personal data held about them and to correct errors in that data.

4.2 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, members of the public have the statutory right of access, subject to certain exemptions, to all information (other than personal data) held by the University.

4.3 Both Acts require that information be disposed of in accordance with agreed retention schedules. Further information can be found in the University's Records Management Best Practice Procedures on Data Protection (No. 5) and on Freedom of Information (No. 12).

#### 5.0 Disposal of records: notes on procedures

5.1 Before discarding, destroying, donating or otherwise disposing of records that they have created, academic staff should identify ownership of the record, subsequent to which the following notes will apply:

- Disposal of records should be carried out in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Electronic records and other records in non-paper format should be treated for disposal purposes in exactly the same way as paper records.
- Records relating to students' examinations may be passed to the Registrar at the Institute, Division, Responsibility Centre, or to the central University, whichever is appropriate.
- Disposal should always be carried out in conjunction with the person in the Division, Responsibility Centre or Institute responsible for records management, and according to the provisions of an approved retention schedule for the relevant office or Institute. In the absence of such a schedule, Records Management Best Practice Procedure No. 9: *General Records Retention Schedule* may be used as a guide, as may the records retention guidelines in the attached appendix.
- Physical disposal of records should be carried out as follows:
  - a) destruction by individual members of staff: non-confidential records may be destroyed in the most convenient way. Confidential records must be shredded; please refer to Records Management Best Practice Procedure No. 6: *Destruction of confidential paper records*.
  - b) for transfer to records storage for permanent retention or later review please refer to Records Management Best Practice Procedure No. 7: *Transfer of paper records to semi-current storage*.

University Records Manager & FOI Officer

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**Appendix:****UNIVERSITY OF LONDON RECORDS RETENTION GUIDELINES:  
RECORDS CREATED BY ACADEMIC STAFF**

**Note I:** The term “Records Management Team” (RMT) is a generic term which may mean the on-site archives or the semi-current record store of the University of London central administration or of the individual Institute, plus the member/s of staff responsible for records management.

**Note II:** The term “review” is the process of appraisal of a record, usually a file (either paper or electronic), and usually (but not always) post-transfer, to determine whether a record, or individual documents within a record, should be destroyed or retained permanently as follows:

- Documents which should be destroyed will comprise drafts, duplicate material, ephemera (e.g. arrangements for meetings, travel arrangements, petty cash payments, thank-you letters, notices of changes of dates, venue or personnel, routine enquiries, requests for papers, printing arrangements) and external information material.
- Documents which should be retained permanently comprise policy and procedural material, strategy papers, forward planning documents, progress reports, legal documents, final draft or published documents and material of potential archival value.

Description of records	Disposal action to be taken in office where record is designated as the property of the University	Disposal action to be taken by RMT where record is designated as the property of the University	Statutory authority or guideline
<b>Research records</b>			
<b>Research strategy development</b>			
Research policy/strategy files	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Development of publicity material	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Review 5 years after file closed	
Records relating to funding	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
<b>Research proposals</b>			
Research grant applications	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Destroy 7 years after file closed	Limitation Act 1980
Research grant application summaries	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Preparation and submission of research proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research proposals – successful</li> <li>• Research proposals – unsuccessful</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain permanently</li> <li>• Destroy 5 years after file closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain for possible re-use of content</li> </ul>

Research programme management			
Research assessment exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final reports</li> <li>Drafts, correspondence</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain permanently</li> <li>Destroy 5 years after file closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archival value</li> </ul>
Progress reports	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Research materials			
Reference/information materials	Destroy when project terminated		
Material collected under conditions of confidentiality and/or which contains personal data e.g. questionnaire, interviews	Refer to RMT on completion of project for assessment of archival value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no: destroy</li> <li>If yes:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain permanently</li> </ul>	Data Protection Act 1998
Medical research data	Transfer to RMT	Review after 20 years	Medical Research Council guidelines
Research outcomes			
Research outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published/printed reports</li> <li>Unpublished reports</li> <li>Lectures and presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send one copy to Library and/or Archives; destroy duplicates</li> <li>Transfer to RMT</li> <li>Transfer to RMT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain permanently</li> <li>Retain permanently</li> </ul>	Archival value/possible re-use of content
Publications			
Policy files	Transfer to RMT	Retain permanently	
Contracts	Transfer to RMT	Destroy 7 years after termination of contract	
Distribution of publications	Destroy when reference ceases		
Fellowships and awards			

Policy: general	Transfer to RMT	Retain permanently	
Policy: finance	Transfer to RMT	Retain permanently	
Publicity	Transfer to RMT	Retain permanently	
Accounts	Transfer to RMT	Destroy 7 <sup>th</sup> year after last date on file	Finance regulations
Applications for fellowships: • Successful • Unsuccessful	Transfer to RMT	• Retain for 7 years • Destroy 3 years after file closed	
General and routine enquiries	Destroy after 2 years		
<b>Records of seminars, lectures, conferences, workshops</b>			
Course materials	Transfer to RMT	Review 5 years after file closed	
Workshops: • Programmes • Lists of participants • Copies of papers given • General correspondence	Transfer to RMT	Review 5 years after file closed	
Meetings and conferences: • Information packs • Policy files  • Finance files  • Promotion	Transfer to RMT	Review 5 years after file closed	
Discussion groups – papers	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Review 5 years after file closed	
Copies of any of the above where the individual was a participant, not an organiser	Destroy when reference ceases		Best practice/ Information available elsewhere
<b>Records relating to students</b>			
Student files	Transfer to RMT when course completed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Provision of information to/about current/past students, including: • Requests for references/confirmation of attendance, and responses • Transcripts/confirmation of attendance/results,	Destroy 1 year after completion of request		Best practice under the Data Protection Act 1998

and responses			
Unprocessed enquiries	Destroy 2 years after enquiry		
Degrees – policy files	Transfer to RMT	Review 5 years after file closed	
Rejected Degree applications files	Transfer to RMT	Review 5 years after file closed	
<b>Records relating to examinations</b>			
Definition of examination / assessment rules, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination rules/ protocols</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Design of examinations and assessments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination papers</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Archival value
Marking of examinations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination scripts/ assignments</li> <li>Examiners' marking sheets</li> <li>Examiners' notes</li> <li>Examiners' reports</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destroy 1 year after file closed</li> <li>Destroy 4 years after file closed</li> <li>Destroy 7 years after file closed</li> <li>Destroy 7 years after file closed</li> </ul>	JISC guidelines
Communication of examination results to students	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Retain permanently	Evidential value
Processing of complaints and appeals about examination procedures and results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints files (unless merged with student file)</li> <li>Appeals files (unless merged with student file)</li> </ul>	Transfer to RMT when file closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destroy 7 years after file closed</li> <li>Destroy 7 years after file closed</li> </ul>	Limitation Act 1980
<b>Records as a member of committees or working parties and external organisations</b>			
Information copies of minutes and papers	Destroy when reference ceases		
Files relating to activities as a member of a committee/working party of the University of London	Transfer to RMT when file closed	Review 5 years after file closed	Possible archival value
Files relating to activities as a member of an external committee/working party	Destroy or offer to the Archives of the external organisation		

<b>Information material</b>			
Copy material from external sources	Destroy when reference ceases		Best practice/available elsewhere
Published material from external organisations	Destroy or offer to the University or Institute Library		Best practice
Circulars	Destroy when reference ceases (e.g. after 3 months)		Best practice