

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FACT SHEET

Intended audience: All staff of the University of Queensland
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Information

Information is one of the key assets of the University. The activities associated with research, teaching and learning, and administration generate information. All UQ employees need to deal responsibly with this information so that it is secure against fraud and interference, it can be used to support business processes and decision-making and what is of enduring value is preserved for history and accountability purposes.

Information can be both paper and technology-dependent, and includes documents and databases on computers, email, websites, photographs, plans etc.

Information becomes a record when it provides evidence of decisions and actions of the University whilst undertaking its business activities and is subject to the *Queensland Public Records Act 2002*.

Principles of Good Information Management

- Information systems should be **secure** and only able to be accessed by authorised users;
- Information provided to clients should be totally **reliable**;
- Staff responsible for sources of information must ensure that these are reliable and kept up to date;
- Websites and other systems should be constructed so they draw information from **authoritative sources**;
- Information provided in paper forms should be as generic as possible and point to a website where information is reliable and kept up to date;
- Information should be **accessible** – shared servers should have a logical structure;
- Information is searchable under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. Only include in documents (including email) what you could ‘pin on a noticeboard’.
- Information collected by UQ is subject to **the Australian and Queensland privacy laws and guidelines**. Refer to the UQ privacy statement: <http://www.uq.edu.au/privacy/>
- Where **confidential information** is to be shared with external parties, a legal agreement protecting the confidentiality of the information must be in place.

Security of Information

All staff are required to secure both paper and technology-dependent information using a level of security commensurate with the sensitivity and criticality of the information and any legal and/or legislative requirements. Both physical and electronic measures are to be implemented to ensure the integrity, availability and appropriate level of confidentiality of information. The roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to security are outlined in [Information Technology Security Management Policy](#). Relevant policies related to the management and use of electronic information include:

- 6.10.1 Internet Code of Practice**
- 6.10.2 Use of Directory and email messaging system**
- 6.10.3 Telecommunications Network Management**
- 6.10.4 Information Technology Security Management**
- 6.10.5 Email for staff and students**
- 6.10.6 eLearn Systems Management Policy**
- 1.60.4 Records Management Policy.**

Email

Under the **Records Management Policy (HUPP 1.60.4)** staff are required to print out a copy of an email which is evidence of a business transaction and place it on the relevant file as a record. Information exchanges which are evidence of a decision or progress towards a decision or advice (i.e. a record), should be printed out and placed on file, so that they can be found by relevant staff as required. This includes correspondence with students.

Staff and students are provided with UQ email addresses, and are advised that their email address will be used by The University of Queensland for the delivery of all official University email (**HUPP 6.10.5 Email for staff and students**). Students are advised that email is the preferred means of fast and efficient communication with them.

Email is a common transportation mechanism for virus infections. To help protect your computer from viruses, do not open attachments which look suspicious. Suspicion may be aroused by: strange words which you would not expect of the sender appearing in the body of an email; someone you do not know in the 'from' field; and ploys to increase curiosity or interest.

Electronic Documents

Not all documents are records. A document becomes a record when it is part of a business transaction. Until such time as the University moves to electronic recordkeeping systems, you need to treat the electronic information on your computer as documents. They are useful as templates or for quick reference, but the paper copy is the record and should be placed on file.

Computer hard drives can fail. It is sound practice to work from a server which is regularly backed up by the University. If storage on a hard drive is required, files must be appropriately backed up.

Documents should always have a title, author, date and storage location. Without this information, a reader may not know how to locate an electronic copy for revision purposes, or what the document is about. Version control is also important, particularly if the document is being shared around a group; and public access needs to be to the authoritative version.

Computer Files And Servers for Organisational Units

Shared servers need a logical structure which other people can follow. It is good practice to **name the folders by the core business functions** of the work area. Then, at agreed times, old files and folders can simply be deleted.

For example, a typical progression might be

Committees [perhaps the name of the committee]
 Meeting 1/2004
 Minutes
 Agendas
 Submissions
 Meeting 2/2004
 Minutes
 Agendas
 Submissions

What about Phone Calls?

Generally, the University does not keep details of phone conversations. However, there may be times when you realise that the call may influence future events. In these cases, you may wish to make a brief file note of your phone conversation.

If the phone conversation is subsequently used as evidence, a copy of your file note may be provided to another person.

Web Sites

Web sites provide access to a lot of information. Information on websites should be drawn from authoritative sources. This ensures consistency of advice to clients, and good decision-making. Why print a brochure, when students can get the most recent advice electronically?

Web sites are to be developed in accordance with the UQ standards (**HUPP 6.10.1 Internet Code of Practice**). The static information on web sites should be reviewed regularly and revised as needed.

Systems and Database Development

When systems are developed, information should be sourced from authoritative databases. Maintaining the appropriate level of access to this information is critical in these situations.

The development of databases which draw information dynamically from a central database (eg SI-net) should only be done in consultation with the business owner of the database (eg Student and Administrative Services).

Information as Record

As a public authority under the *Public Records Act 2002*, the University is required to create, capture and keep **records** for as long as they are required regardless of the media by which they are created. A **record** is:

Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. *AS ISO 15489 (2002). Records Management.*

The record is information which is evidence of a business transaction. This may be kept in accordance with a legal requirement, or to help you or other staff in the conduct of your duties, or to meet community expectations. **All staff have a responsibility for recordkeeping.**

Records Management Services and University Archives

The University of Queensland's **Records Management Policy (HUPP 1.60.4)** sets the framework for records management. Records Management Services manage and provide advice about the records which support the current business processes of the University. The University Archives preserve and manage the official records of the University which are of permanent value.

Records Management Services is located in the JD Story Building (room 505) and manages the corporate records of the University which it groups as Administrative files, Student files and Staff files.

Not all students have a **student file** – usually they are created for credit transfer, postgraduate research, student discipline cases, and international students. If the matter can be documented in SI-net, there is no need to replicate it on the file.

Staff files – are established for each employee under the terms and conditions of an industrial award (ie not casual staff). Faculties and Schools are required to forward copies of all correspondence relating to staff employment activities to Records Management Services. The **Records Management Policy** has a list of those documents which constitute a staff file.

Administrative files include committee files, legal files and policy files. Records are classified according to the activity they are evidence of, and are grouped into a 'file'. These titles are stored in an electronic recordkeeping system (TRIM). This system also stores the disposal action which may be 'retain permanently' or 'retain for 5 years after last action.'

University Archives is located in Parnell Building (room 118) and preserves and manages the official records of the University which are of permanent value. Records are transferred to Archives in two ways – by Records Management Services for administrative records (for example, policy, research strategy, files of special interest, Senate minutes); and by organisational units and individuals for materials which capture the history of the University in ways that other records may not.

Disposal of Information

Information can be destroyed when it is no longer needed, as long as information which has been identified as forming a **record** is captured into a records management system.

Disposal of Records

Under the *Public Records Act 2002*, disposal of records can only occur with the authority of the Queensland State Archivist. To enable this to occur routinely for groups of records, schedules called disposal authorities have been developed.

To cover records which are generated by organisational units of the University which are common to many institutions, such as personnel, financial and property, a **General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records** has been developed by Queensland State Archives. This may be applied to those classes of records which are listed. For further advice, contact the Manager, Records Management Services on 336 52284.

Information relating to financial records is available in the **Financial Management Practices Manual** which has been prepared by Business Services. For advice contact the relevant area in Business Services.

The public universities in Queensland are developing a disposal authority for records which are specific to universities. For more advice on this, please contact the Manager, Records Management Services on 336 52284.

Contacts

The staff of **Records Management Services** in the JD Story Building St Lucia are responsible for providing professional advice and assistance with enquiries. Phone any of the following numbers for assistance: 52312, 57189, 53228, 52213, 53361, 52878; and at Gatton 50223.

University Archives manage records of permanent value which are no longer required for current administrative purposes and provide appropriate access to these for research purposes. Phone: 51207

Information Technology Services provides advice on the security of information and IT policies and guidelines. See the Information Technology Services website for details.