

# HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. SUMMARY

Heriot-Watt University depends upon the reliability, integrity and accessibility of its records for the efficient and effective discharge of its responsibilities. Records created in the course of University business belong to the University, rather than the individuals that create or use them. However, everyone within the University has defined and shared responsibilities for managing records. This policy defines a structure for the management of the University's records. It aims to

- ensure that the University retains, and increasingly creates, only those records which it requires to conduct and document its business and to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations
- save time and money by promoting the use of simple, cost effective and easily manageable records and information retrieval systems throughout the University.

### 2. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This policy applies to all records created, received and maintained by University employees in the course of University business.

A **Record** is a document in any format that has been generated or received by the University in the course of its activities and has been, or may be, used by the University as evidence of its actions and decisions, or because of its information content.

**Records management** is a series of integrated and embedded systems related to the core processes of the University by which the University seeks to control the creation, distribution, filing, retrieval, storage and disposal of those records created or received by the University in the course of its business.

**Archives** are records selected for permanent preservation as part of the University's corporate memory and as a resource for research.

### 3. KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

To ensure that University records

- and records systems are authentic, reliable, protected against unauthorised alteration, comply with regulatory and other business needs and remain accessible to those that need to use them for as long as they are required,
- and the information they contain can be retrieved accurately and quickly to aid decision-making and increase management effectiveness
- are managed cost effectively, avoid unnecessary duplication and are retained only as long as required
- are held securely in a manner commensurate with their value and retention period, in the medium most appropriate for the task they perform
- vital to the survival of the University are identified and protected
- that are no longer current will be stored cheaply, retrieved promptly, reviewed and disposed of only in accordance with a defined approval process
- worthy of permanent preservation as archives are identified as early as possible and preserved in the University Archive

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective records management is a shared responsibility.

- The University Planning and Management Executive is responsible for approving and promoting compliance with Records Management Policy and procedures throughout the University. The Secretary of the University has overall responsibility for this policy.
- All staff are responsible for creating and maintaining records in compliance with relevant University policies and procedures
- The Director of Computing Services is responsible for developing and maintaining systems to ensure that records will remain authentic, reliable and usable throughout any system change, including

format conversion, migration between hardware and operating systems or specific software applications, for the entire period of their retention.

- The University Archivist and the Archive, Records Management and Museum Service are responsible for developing records management procedures, promoting supporting compliance with the policy and recommending revisions to the Records Management Policy in line with professional best practice.

## **5. RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING POLICIES**

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following University documents:

Information Strategy: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/info\\_strategy/](http://www.hw.ac.uk/info_strategy/)

Corporate IT Security Policy (being finalised, April 2002)

Data Protection Policy [http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/data\\_protection\\_policy.pdf](http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/data_protection_policy.pdf)

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Archive, Records Management and Museum Service will support local records administrators in complying with the policy by developing a records management programme, procedures, and advice on the following:

- A high-level records selection policy based on core University functions and activities, identifying records for permanent preservation and the periods for which other records should be retained
- Records retention/disposal schedules for each School, Department and Section.
- Appraisal and destruction of time-expired records, including a permanent record of why records were destroyed, when and on whose authority
- Registration and tracking systems for records
- Advice on current records systems, options for streamlining shared filing to save space, time and money, business classification filing schemes, information retrieval, setting security and access levels, meeting Data Protection, Freedom of Information and audit needs, when to close files,
- Identifying and protecting vital and restricted access records and making provision for these in the University's contingency and business continuity plan
- Storage and destruction of non-current records
- Strategy to preserve, document and provide long term access to electronic records to be kept permanently as archives
- Publishing a records management user guide, supported by training delivered in collaboration with the Staff Learning and Development Unit

## **7. GENERAL GUIDANCE ON RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** includes

- ISO BS 15489-2001 –Records Management
- BSI DISC PD0008 A code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information stored Electronically (2<sup>nd</sup> edn)
- Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Data Protection Code of Practice for the HE and FE Sectors Version 2.0: available at [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub00/dp\\_code.pdf](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub00/dp_code.pdf)
- JISC Digital Preservation Strategy <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/preservation/presstrat.html>
- JISC Records Management Policy Statement, June 2001: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/preservation/jiscpolstat.html>
- Freedom of Information Act Scotland [2002] Draft Code of Practice on Records Management February 2002: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official\\_report/cttee/just1-02/j1p02-04.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/cttee/just1-02/j1p02-04.pdf)

Approved by Planning and Management Executive

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This policy will be reviewed in April 2005

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<http://www.hw.ac.uk/archive/>