



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES @ UL

Who are we and what do we do?

Records are one of the University's most valuable assets because they support decision-making processes, demonstrate compliance, document the history of the University and enable staff members to perform their functions effectively and efficiently. Just like all other University assets, records need to be properly managed in order to optimise their value, minimise costs and ensure the University complies with South Africa's records management requirements, legislative and adopted international standards.

By implementing proper records management practices, offices, departments, faculties, schools can amongst others:

- Meet compliance obligations
- Minimise legal risk posed by inadequate records management practices.
- Ensure that permanent and historical records are captured, preserved and maintained.
- Improve and control access to information.

The Records management services is committed to assisting all University employees, offices, departments, schools, faculties to meet records management compliance obligations through high-quality records management best practices and provide guidelines which will ensure that vital and historical value records are managed appropriately. The unit will further provide resources for all stages in the records and information lifecycle, from creation/receipt through to disposal.

For more information regarding Records Management Services, please call X 2408 / 2105 or email office.registrar@ul.ac.za

University Employees Records Managements Responsibility

The University of Limpopo is subjected to records management public laws and transparency. Subsequently, each office, department, faculty, unit and employee has legal responsibility to demonstrate proper care and management of their created records. This means:

- Keeping records for the appropriate amount of time (as per records retention period).
- Keeping records in such a way that, they are not damaged or destroyed.
- Keeping records in such a way that, they can be easily located and retrieved.
- Being able to produce records quickly in the event of litigation, audit, or public records request.
- Being able to dispose records promptly, in an appropriate manner, once the retention period has expired.

It is very essential for each office, department, unit, school etc. Administrators, Secretaries and Records Owners to assist in their respective departmental records management process such as administering all day-to-day transactions associated with the office's records-related functions, implementation of proper records filing system and retention schedule.

What is Records?

Records – are documents created, received or maintained in any format or medium, in any location that facilitate the business carried out by the University of Limpopo (UL) and which are retained for a set period to provide evidence of the University transactions or activities. Records within an office fall into two categories - active or inactive - and these can be in paper or electronic form i.e. **Active/Inactive Records**

Active records are documents which are still actively being used by an office. They are usually referenced on a daily or monthly basis. Often times, if in paper, these records will be

located in a handy place within the office since they are used frequently or electronically stored on folders.

Inactive records are documents which are no longer referenced on a regular basis and tend to be stored in a less accessible place since they are not used frequently. Many a times records become inactive when they superseded, outdated or reached cut-off date. When a record has reached its cut-off, it is time to start monitoring the retention period and possibly moving records to inactive storage to free up office space, archive electronically or destroy.

Records Destruction

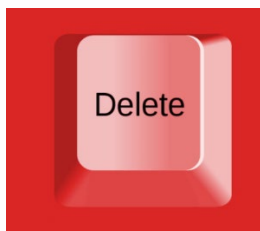
Every paper or electronic record has a specific amount of time that it needs to be kept. This is called a retention period. The UL records retention periods are incorporated with the UL File Plan for members for each type of record. Once the retention period has ended, records should be disposed according to their content and value.



Shred confidential records such as student examination scripts and financial records that have account numbers listed.



Recycle records that are not confidential and do not contain personal/financial identifying information.



Delete electronic records that do not have archival value.



Transfer paper and electronic records to the University Archives if they have permanent legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical value. Contact University Records Manager for assistance.

Destruction Holds



Be aware that all records pertaining to ongoing or pending audits, lawsuits (or even reasonably anticipated lawsuits), litigation holds or public disclosure proceedings must not be destroyed, damaged or altered until the issue is resolved and you are specifically advised that such records may be destroyed.

Vital Records

A Vital Record is a recorded information, regardless of its format (i.e., paper, photo, database, Audio-visual etc.), which must be protected in the event of an emergency or disaster. Loss or destruction of this record will result in a severe consequences which can impact the office and the University as a whole financially and otherwise. A vital record can be active (currently used by the office) or inactive (in storage). Vital records are essential:

- To the mission and vision of the University.
- To the continuous operation or reconstruction of any University owned buildings.
- To establish or protect the legal or financial position of the University.
- To protect and ensure the rights and interests of the employees and clients of the University.

Tips for identifying Vital Records

Identifying vital records in the office or within the department is one of the most critical tasks. It needs to be done urgently, so that proper records protection and disaster recovery plan can be effected. By applying the below listed steps, respective UL staff members will be able to identify vital records with ease after a disaster.

Step 1:

Identify key office /department/ faculty functions or responsibilities based on the following criteria:

- Operational - Any functions which are vital to the operation and continuation of the office or the University as a whole.
- Legal - Any functions which provide proof of the University's legal stand on an issue.
- Fiscal - Any functions which prove the University's financial standings, i.e. accounts receivable or general ledgers.

Tools to help you identify the unique functions of your office may include:

- Functional/Organisational charts. If these exist in the office or department, they are a good place to start as they provide a comprehensive list of the office or department normal functions.
- UL File Plan and Disposal Schedule. The File Plan provide a list of all unique records available in the University. The schedule also indicate record preservation methods.

Step 2:

Conduct vital records checklist to assist in answer the following questions:

- What function will we be unable to do or perform if this record is destroyed (i.e., can the work be carried out or continued if this record is gone)?
- How critical will the inability to perform this function be?

- What will the consequences be to the University if these records are lost?
- Will any University client, employee, or student suffer any loss or be severely inconvenienced if these records are lost?
- What will the cost be in terms of time, money and labour in reconstructing the lost records?
- Can these records be replaced from another source?
- Is there a functional records backup system in place for these records or duplicated in different format?
- How unique is the records?

Electronic Records

Are electronic documents and information records?

Yes!

Any information created or received by the University of Limpopo electronically is considered a record, regardless of its physical format or characteristic and are legally bound by approved records retention schedule similar to that of print records. Every UL employee is individually responsible for maintaining and managing electronic records they create and received in accordance with the University of Limpopo Records Management Policy Framework.

Examples of electronic records include amongst others:

- E-mails
- Websites
- Word/Excel documents
- Digital purchase receipts
- Databases
- Text messages
- Social media postings
- Information stored on SharePoint sites
- Content management systems (Catalyst, Slack, DropBox, etc.)

How to Store Electronic Records

Electronic records should be stored in a repository that is:

- Backed up regularly.
- Compliant with all privacy and security requirements measures.
- Consist of network or cloud based storage.
- Shared information access.
- Organised in such a way that records can be identified and removed appropriately.
- Able to migrate content to a new system upon replacement.
- Maintained through regular software updates

Training and Consultation

We are happy to schedule training on request for individuals, staff meetings, or other groups. For training and consultation please kindly contact us at X 2408 / 2105 or email office.registrar@ul.ac.za

The following training sessions on variety of related topics are offered quarterly:

- Introduction to Records Management.
- Electronic Records and E-mail Management.
- Litigation and Records Management.
- Using File Plan and Disposal Schedules.
- Vital Records Identification and Protection.
- Files Management (Paper and Electronic).