



STUDENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE MANUAL

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1. Introduction

The manual and its underpinning procedures set out requirements and standards for the creation, management, security and retention of student records in all formats, together with lines of accountability. The manual further provides a consistent, auditable standard for the management of registered and former student records, to ensure records are stored securely and accessed by authorised users only following legal requirements. The manual must be utilised in conjunction with the University Records Management Policy Framework, University of Limpopo File Plan and Disposal Schedule.

2. Background

The University of Limpopo, in compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act No.4 of 2013 (hereinafter “POPIA”), the Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000) (PAIA), and the Higher Education Act No.101 of 1997, aims to ensure that all processes and procedures are in place to ascertain that student records are managed effectively and correctly as prescribed by legislations, to meet compliance obligations and achieve good corporate governance.

No one outside the University shall have access to student records nor will the University disclose any information from a student file without written consent by the student, except for the following as permitted by the Act:

- University administrative staff member(s) who deal(s) with student records;
- Officials of other institutions in which a student seeks to enrol/register;
- Persons/organisation providing student financial aid;
- Authorised accredited agencies carrying out their accreditation functions;
- Person(s) in compliance with a judicial or legal order; and
- Person(s) in an emergency to protect the health or safety of a student.

The procedure manual will ensure that:

- Student files are created for every registered student of the University following prescribed uniform standards;
- Student records are accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive to meet the University operational and evidential needs;
- Student records are filled continuously and accordingly; and
- Student records are held and stored securely to prevent unauthorised/unlawful access, use/disclosure, and against accidental loss/destruction of student records.

3. What are student records?

Student records, also known as education records, contain records directly related to a student, i.e., personally identifiable; encompass student identity document, certified copy of the statement of results, certified copy matric certificate, University acceptance letter, signed registration form, academic transcript, course registration and cancellation; and all other documentation that relates to the student academic activities.

Student records are generated or created by the University. Some are presented by a student during the student admission and enrolment phase.

Student records can be organised into the following categories:

I. Academic records

The Office of the Registrar is designated as a custodian of Academic Records of a student.

II. Student conduct records

The Office of the Dean of Students is designated as a custodian of Student Conduct records, however, disciplinary actions affecting a student enrolment status with the University might reflect on a student academic records.

III. Counselling records

The Centre for Student Counselling and Development is the custodian of student counselling records. Records developed in the provision of personal counselling services or through consultation are confidential and available only to the dedicated staff in the centre. It is, however, only if it is required by law or with the specific authorisation given by the student concern that such information would be released.

IV. Medical or health records

The Student Health and Wellness Centre is the custodian of student health records. Except as required by law or with the consent of a student or student health and wellness medical staff.

4. Records to be included in a student file?

Mandatory Documents to be attached to the routine student file are those relating to general student administration matters and are including:

- University signed acceptance letter;
- Signed registration form by the (students, Heads of Department (HOD) and Director);
- Signed proof of registration;
- Certified copy of identity document or passport;
- Marriage certificate/decreed of divorce;
- Letter of employer and curriculum vitae;
- Certified copy of matriculation certificate;
- Certified copy of change of name/s /surname(s) ;
- Proof of residence (International students);
- Ordinary and advance level certificates (international students);
- Universities in South Africa (USAf) certificate evaluation(international students);
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) certificate evaluation (International students);
- Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) for students in Health Sciences;

- Academic records from other institutions (if applicable)
- Degree/diploma certificates, including a complete graduation record (if applicable);
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) documents/ evidence;
- Study Permit (International students);
- The outcome of student disciplinary letter;
- The outcome of academic dishonesty;
- Change of qualification; recognition of modules forms;
- Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), National Credit Act (NCR) evaluation and any other legal documents (International student);
- School Higher Degrees Committee (SHDCO / Faculty Higher Degrees Committee(FHDC) letter , approval letter;
- Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) letter;
- Further Education and Training (FET) letter

5. Records not supposed to be included in a student file

The below-mentioned documents should not be attached to or included in the student file:

- Allegations and case created under academic dishonestly/plagiarism ;
- Allege misconduct documents and student disciplinary matters case documents;
- Student placement/practicum;
- Financial assistance;
- The request of academic transcript;
- Special consideration documents including medical certificates; and
- Student appeals;
- Executive Committee of Senate (ECS) notification of previous concessions.

6. Managing academic student records

There are two types of academic student records, namely, active academic student records and inactive academic student records. Active student records are records that are referred to frequently, i.e., daily/weekly, and are managed securely in office files or storage for immediate access, use, reference and such are also considered as current records, e.g., current registered student records. Inactive student records are records that are no longer are referenced or utilised on a day-to-day basis; such records may be removed from the office and archived safely electronically or physically for legal or legislative compliance obligations, e.g., record files former student or University graduates. Respective faculties are expected to manage their respective active student record (i.e., current registered student records) created, and they are generally responsible for ensuring that their active student records are accurate and appropriately stored in line with the Records Management best practices to meet compliance obligations. The University Records Manager will conduct student Records Management and storage assessment annually.

Inactive student records (former student or University graduates) are digitised and stored both electronically on DataStore (a secured document management hosting solution system) and physically at a secured off-site storage facility. Certification and Student Records Section, with the assistance of the University Records Manager, oversees the maintenance and management of all inactive student records. Student records access is limited only to authorised University staff members for educational, administrative or research purposes. Violation may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination of service/employment and applicable civil and criminal procedure.

7. Active student records physical storage and maintenance

Student records storage areas/rooms are buildings designated for the safe and secure storage of student records. These areas are located in various faculties' buildings. The University of Limpopo does not have in-house central records registries to store active or inactive student records. An off-site storage area has been secured by the University and it is utilised solely as an Archive Centre designated to permanently preserve historical and vital records as identified by the University Records Manager.

8. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the faculty Assistant Registrar to ensure active student records compliance, maintenance and procedures are in place and there is adherence; taking into account that the records stored therein belong to the University of Limpopo. The faculty Assistant Registrar should liaise with the University Records Manager regarding records storage areas management and maintenance.

9. The physical condition of student records storage areas

I. Steel shelves/Wooden shelves

The shelves can either be mobile/fixed to the wall. Should the shelves be wood, please ensure the storage is fumigated more often. If the shelves are fitted to the wall, the first shelf should be 15cm high from the floor and have an open space between the top shelf and ceiling. This will ensure that student records are preserved in the event of water leakage/flooding mishap.

II. Flooring and walls

A sealant or tile flooring is recommended. Avoid carpeting as far as possible; the storage floor must be swept at least once a month and the walls must be painted.

III. Lighting

Fluorescent lighting should be installed or lighting should just switch to lower wattage bulbs. Shades or blinds must be installed over windows in the storage area to guard against sunlight damage.

IV. Fire and waterproofing

Ensure that no flammable liquids are stored in the same area/room with student records. Fire extinguishers shall be fitted on a strategic area, just beside the storage door. Regular records storage roof leaks inspections shall be conducted, which include unblocking of gutters, drains and pipes.

V. Security

Steel doors, security doors, instead of wooden doors, must be installed at all student Records Storage Areas/Rooms if possible. In instances whereby a storage room has a wooden door, a burglar door or bars must be installed. Ensure all windows are fitted with burglar bars if the storage area is on the ground floor. Storage access keys shall be stored in locked drawers or cabinets, controlled by staff members in charge of the records storage areas, and no other staff members/students should be allowed. Uncontrolled entry into the student Records Storage Room is prohibited.

VI. Student records storage room temperature and humidity

The Records Storage Room temperature must be kept cool, either employing extraction fans or air-conditioning to ensure that the normal temperature is constantly above 21°C in the storage area or room. If the storage room or area is humid, regular inspection intervals for mould is essential. In such a case, please contact the University Records Manager for urgent assistance.

VII. Classification of active and inactive student records in storage areas

Student records in storage areas must be classified according to the following fields: qualification registered, registration year, student number, student surname and initial. A faculty shall conduct student records file audit as soon as a student shall have satisfied the requirements for a qualification.

VIII. Dust and Insects

Student Records Storage Areas/Rooms must be inspected regularly for insect infestations and ensure the storage area is dust-free. No food is to be taken into storage areas. Storages must be fumigated annually.

10. Designation of directory information

Directory Information consists of information that is generally considered neither harmful nor an invasion of privacy if made publicly available. Directory Information is considered public and may be released without student consent or written permission if the below information is already accessible in a public space:

- Student name;
- Major field of study;
- Attendance dates;
- Enrolment status; and
- Photographs.

11. Student access to active student file

Students are entitled to seek access to all information about them held by the University of Limpopo. However, to officially obtain such access, a formal written request that stipulates the record(s) the student wishes to inspect must be officially submitted to the faculty Executive Dean/Dean. The faculty shall make access arrangements and notify the requesting student of the time and place where the requested records may be inspected/accessed. If the records are not maintained by the faculty, the student shall be advised of the correct unit or department to whom the request should be addressed. For inactive student file, a written request must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar or the Deputy Registrar, after which access/inspection shall be arranged accordingly.

12. Amendment of active student records

If a student believes that any of their academic records is inaccurate or requires to add/update information, such as submitting a change of surname document approved/signed by the Department of Home Affairs; or contact details, he or she shall consult at the University Central Enrolment Section to officially submit such information and ask that such specified amendments be made to the Student Record File. Central Enrolment Section should compile a list of added or update information including certified copies of such documents and submit them to the respective faculties for filing purposes or for information amendments.

13. Procedure manual revision and clarification

The Student Records Management Procedure Manual revision and clarifications shall be effected in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the Higher Education Act, the Promotion of Access to Information Act, University of Limpopo Policy Framework, University of Limpopo File Plan and Records Retention Schedule.

14. Contact details

University Registrar
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