

Information & Records Management Policy

1. Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to

- support efficient information and records management within the College,
- support organisational compliance with legislation and regulatory obligations,
- contribute to the effective management of the College,
- manage data and records in order that they can be used as an effective information source,
- support the objectives of the College by ensuring the procedures it follows to achieve those objectives are carried out efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with best practice.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Information is data and recorded knowledge, enabling the College to carry out its business. It can be in any format or medium. Information may or may not be in the form of records.
- 2.2 A record is a document or piece of data, regardless of format or medium, created or received, and maintained by the organisation, for the transaction of a business process, or kept as evidence of a business activity, as a historical record, or for reasons of legal or statutory compliance.
- 2.3 The College's information and records relate to any of its functions, whether administrative or academic, and include personal data as well as non-personal.
- 2.4 Data and records are the property of the College and subject to its overall control and will be created, maintained, processed and disposed of in accordance with its procedures and guidelines.
- 2.5 Information and records management directs and controls the creation, version, distribution, filing, retention, storage, security and disposal of information and records.

3. Information and Records Management Principles

- 3.1 Effective information and records management systems enable the College to create, maintain and process data and records that allow it to:
- conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner,
 - deliver core functions in a consistent and equitable manner,
 - support and document policy formulation and managerial decision-making,

- provide consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration,
- provide continuity in the event of disaster,
- meet legislative and regulatory requirements,
- provide protection and support in litigation, and in the management of risks,
- protect the interests of the organisation and the rights of employees, students, clients and present and future stakeholders,
- support and document current and future developments, activities, achievements, and historical research,
- provide evidence of business, personal and cultural identity, and
- maintain corporate, personal or collective memory.

3.2 This will be done by consideration of:

- the most appropriate format or medium for data and records, and hence preservation for as long as is needed,
- the most appropriate method of transferring and transporting such data and records, both internally and externally,
- the maintenance of the authenticity and integrity of such data and records, in order to protect against their damage and / or loss. This will include all necessary backup. High quality and relevance will be maintained,
- which categories of staff shall have access to which data and records, and
- the best location for storage of and / or processing of data and records, and, if on the website, whether this be in the public or private domain.

3.3 The most appropriate and cost-effective technological solutions will be used to support these principles.

4. The Legal Framework

4.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provide members of the public throughout the world with the right to request information held by public authorities. The College is fully committed to the provisions of the Act and the Regulations, and supports the underlying principles of openness and transparency.

4.2 The College believes that information should be available to all unless there is a valid reason to restrict access, and makes relevant information openly and easily accessible to those who need it.

4.3 A significant amount of information about the College is available to the public as a matter of course through the website and via the Publication Scheme. Other information is available on request and requests are dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

4.4 Advice and assistance will be provided, as far as is reasonably possible, to anyone seeking information from the College.

4.5 Requests for personal information will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018.

5. Responsibilities and Institutional Framework

- 5.1 The College will, through its senior management, ensure the creation and management of authentic, reliable, complete and usable information and records, capable of supporting the College's functions and activities for as long as they are required.
- 5.2 The College Executive members have overall responsibility for the management of information and records generated by all activities, by ensuring that the data and records created, received and controlled, and the systems (electronic or otherwise) and procedures they adopt, are managed in a way which meets the aims of the College's information and records management policy.
- 5.3 The College's Executive Assistant is responsible for drawing up guidance for good information and records management practice and promoting compliance with this policy and good practice in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely usage and retrieval of information. This will include a programme of staff development and training.
- 5.4 The MIS team leader and the Financial and HR managers will provide a key point of contact on information and records management compliance issues. They will be responsible for raising awareness across the College, ensuring compliance, coordinating responses to relevant enquiries, maintaining systems, and coordinating off-site storage.
- 5.5 The College Records Retention Schedule, will identify the data and records it holds. The Information and Records Retention Schedule will be reviewed annually in consultation with the College's Executive Assistant, and procedures for ensuring disposal and deletion in a timely manner will be in place.
- 5.6 The College's Executive Assistant is responsible for ensuring that a full record of a committee's business (its minutes, agenda and all supporting papers and reports - regardless of their format/medium of origin) is preserved for the correct length of time as specified in the relevant Information and Records Retention Schedule, and that any documents generated or received form part of the full and official record.
- 5.7 All administrative, support and academic staff must ensure that information and records for which they are responsible are complete and accurate data and records of their activities, which are created, maintained, processed and disposed of in accordance with the College's information and records management policy and other information compliance policies and Codes of Practice.
- 5.8 The College's Executive Assistant is the designated Data Protection Officer for the College, responsibilities for which include informing and advising the College and staff who are processing personal data of their obligations; monitoring compliance with Data Protection legislation; providing advice regarding Privacy Impact Assessments; cooperating with the supervisory authority (the Information Commissioner's Office), including acting as the contact point; advising on data breaches and coordinating notification of such.

6. Relationship with Existing Policies

6.1 This policy has been formulated within the context of the College’s mission and objectives, its policies and guidelines, national legislation and professional standards for information and records management. It is intended to act as a framework to support standards and promote compliance with legislative and regulatory environments.

6.2 Compliance with this policy will in turn facilitate compliance not only with information-related legislation but also with any other legislation or regulations affecting the institution.

6.3 Key documents which have a direct impact on this policy are:

- Information Security and Assurance Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Archive Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information and Records Retention Schedules

6.4 Relevant legislation includes:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018
- Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

7. Document Control:

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