Records and Archives Services information sheet

New to Monash?
What do you need to know about records management?

What is a University record?

During your time at Monash, you will use a range of different types of documents. Some of these documents may take the form of research data or may be related to teaching or administrative functions. You may create and receive a lot of 'work group' documents (eg drafts, working papers or copies), which are less likely to be classified as records. You may also create and receive more formal documents that form part of the University's official corporate memory (eg final reports, committee papers, policy documents, records of financial transactions, student documents, human resource documents, official correspondence, legal documents).

These more formal types of documents are classified as corporate records. A corporate record comprises recorded information in any form (regardless of format), created or received and maintained by the University in the transaction of business activities, or the conduct of affairs, and retained as evidence of such activity. Corporate records must be managed in University recordkeeping systems. Records and Archives Services provides advice and guidelines on how to look after corporate records.

Monash University has a legal obligation to create and manage records which support its operational and administrative responsibilities and enable compliance with external demands such as audits and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

Basic things to think about when starting out

There are standards, guidelines, tools and systems to help you manage your records. During your first week at the University, plan how to manage your records.

Some questions to think about when doing this are:

- Am I the creation point for any records that may be used by others?

- Is this just a work group document or is it a University record?

- What are the records management procedures already in place in my work unit?

- Which University systems will I be using, and what types of records are kept in them?

By asking these questions of yourself, your supervisor and colleagues, you will get to know the types of records you will be using in your role and some of the issues that you need to consider when managing your records in your area. Unsure? Contact Records and Archives for more advice.

MONASH University

GROUP OF EIGHT

Australia ■ Malaysia ■ South Africa ■ Italy ■ India

Keep the email monster on a short leash

Email easily gets out of hand. Try and keep control over your email before it builds up to an 'information overload'. It is important to understand that email can be a corporate record, but this will depend on its content. Does the email authorise an action to go ahead or document an important decision or decision-making process related to the University's business activities? If it does, then it is likely to be a corporate record and must be managed in a University recordkeeping system. Email inbox and outboxes are not recordkeeping systems. The type of recordkeeping system you use to manage your email will depend on your work area and what is available to you. Contact Records and Archives Services for advice.

Aim for consistency

Setting up ways to organise records consistently is the first step towards efficient records management at Monash. Corporate records should be managed so that they can be retrieved for evidentiary purposes (eg an FOI enquiry) and to improve business efficiency.

There are tools to help you title folders and documents in a consistent manner. Records and Archives Services manages a tool called 'Locate' that provides a standardised set of titling terms for files and folders, in both hard copy and electronic format. Locate is available here – **http://adm.moansh.edu/records-archives/rmo/monash-only/locate.html** New staff are advised to seek assistance from Records and Archives in using Locate.

Be wary of shared drives

Most areas of the University use shared drives to manage documents. Although shared drives may be adequate for storing work group documents, they are not appropriate for corporate records, particularly those containing personal or sensitive information. While corporate records need to be shared, the University also has to ensure that it complies with relevant privacy legislation. Shared drives are often disorganised, and may store lots of documents that are redundant. They may store multiple versions of the one document, making it difficult to distinguish the final version from drafts. They may also be too full and lack sophisticated searching tools and security and access controls.

So what to do? The University has a number of systems in place to manage corporate records. Student and human resources records are managed in systems, as are many financial records. TRIM is used for the management of corporate records, although it is currently in limited use across the University. If you would like more information on TRIM, please contact Records and Archives Services.

Can I destroy this?

One of the most important aspects of records management is knowing what corporate records must be kept or destroyed. Many records can be transferred to University Archives. You can put yourself and the University in hot water if you don't follow the University's Retention and Disposal Authority when destroying corporate records. See **http://adm.monash.edu/recordsarchives/archives/disposal/index.html** for more information.

Need more information?

Records and Archives Services consists of three areas. The Records Management Office (RMO) creates and retrieves administration files and provides advice on how to manage and classify corporate records and set up recordkeeping systems. It also provides TRIM and records management training.

University Archives provide access/reference services and storage for permanent value corporate records. It also provides advice about disposal of corporate records.

The Student Records Office manages student files and documents and provides advice on student file management.

For more information see **http://adm.monash.edu/records-archives**. Other areas of the University that manage related compliance issues include the Privacy Office **http://privacy.monash.edu.au/procedure** and the FOI Office **www.adm.monash.edu/execserv/foi**

www.monash.edu