



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

MODEL ACTION PLAN FOR achieving

compliance WITH THE LORD

CHANCELLOR'S CODE OF PRACTICE on

the management of records

[3]

Model Action Plan for

Higher and Further Education Organisations

with appendices

v.2

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act (2000) creates new rights of access to information held by public bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Comparable Scottish legislation is in preparation. Higher and further education institutions and organisations fall within the remit of the Act. The Act requires relevant institutions to respond to requests promptly; a target of 20 working days has been set by the Secretary of State. Public bodies must provide appropriate advice and assistance to enquirers.

In accordance with the Act, two Codes of Practice have been issued providing guidance to public authorities on the administration of the Act. These are

- Secretary of State's *Code of Practice on the Discharge of Functions of public authorities under Part 1 of the FOI Act*, (dealing with access arrangements) (section 45)
- Lord Chancellor's *Code of Practice on the management of records under the FOI Act* (section 46)

- 1.2 The Lord Chancellor's *Code* has been designed, in consultation with public authorities, to support the objectives of Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation by setting out the practices which public authorities should follow in relation to creating, keeping, managing and disposing of their records. To assist in this process the Public Record Office undertook to produce model action plans for public authorities to use as the basis for their own action plans.
- 1.3 Different parts of the public sector have different requirements in this area. Accordingly variations to the model plan are being developed aimed at different parts of the public sector. This version of the plan is for the higher and further education sector and should be read in conjunction with the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice.
- 1.4 Final implementation of the Freedom of Information Act is required by January 2005. However it should be noted that the complete implementation of a records management programme is likely to require a lead-in period of at least eighteen months. A timetable is set out in Section 4.
- 1.5 It should also be noted that a Publication Scheme under Section 19 of the Act should be in place by February 2004. This also requires effective records management to be in place. Advice, guidance and information about publication schemes are referred to in Appendix 4.

2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 2.1 This action plan covers records created and managed in all media (including electronic) in higher and further education institutions and organisations¹ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 2.2 This action plan outlines the steps needed to create effective records management systems so that FOI requests can be dealt with efficiently within the prescribed time limits. The actions are first presented thematically in detail in Section 3 and are then summarised chronologically in Section 4. The themes follow those set out in the Code of Practice.

There are four Appendices

1. Model records management policy
2. Model competencies framework
3. Glossary
4. Key sources of advice and further information

3 ACTION PLAN: AIMS AND ACTIONS

3.1 The Records Management Function

Records management is a corporate function, in a similar way to human resources, finance and estates management. With other issues such as FOI, data protection and information security it is a vital part of corporate information management as a whole.

Aim To consolidate a co-ordinated approach to the management of corporate information

Actions

- 3.1.1 Review the structure of the organisation to see what changes might be required to achieve this objective.
- 3.1.2 Ensure that there is an integrated approach to records management including data protection, and other information management functions and procedures; alternatively, that working arrangements for close liaison have been established.

¹ These are described and listed in Parts IV and VI of Schedule 1 of the Act.

3.1.3 Conduct an audit of records management practices against the Code of Practice to establish whether action is needed to reach compliance.

3.1.4 Ensure that adequate resources to support the records management function are in place.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Records management responsibilities must be clearly defined and assigned, and made known throughout the organisation. The identification of professional skills and knowledge will enable organisations to recruit and train staff at a level which will ensure compliance with good records management practice.

A model competencies framework is attached at Appendix 2.

Aim To ensure that the organisation recruits staff with the appropriate competencies and has in place the appropriate network to support records management.

Actions

3.2.1 Ensure that responsibility for the implementation of the records management function is designated to a named person. Use an appropriate competency framework to identify the skills and knowledge required (See Appendix 2.) The appointment of a Records Manager will meet the provisions outlined in BS ISO 15489: 2001 Records Management.

3.2.2 Assess the need for records management support staff. Where this need has been identified, ensure that the records management support staff are in place.

3.2.3 Each operational business area (e.g. Schools, Faculties, administrative divisions etc) should nominate an individual who will have responsibility for records management activities in that area.

3.3 Records Management Policy Statement

A policy statement on how the organisation manages its records must be drawn up and made available to all staff. The policy statement provides a

mandate for the records management function. It may be part of a broader Information Policy.

A model policy statement is attached at Appendix 1.

Aim To provide an authoritative statement on the management of corporate records.

Actions

3.3.1 After consultation with stakeholders, prepare a policy statement which will encompass the need to

- meet the organisation's business needs
- address the needs of the organisation's stakeholders
- conform to relevant legislation, regulations and standards
- provide a basis for accountability
- identify in general terms responsibilities for records and in particular refer to the role of the Records Manager

3.3.2 Once the statement has been submitted and approved as organisational policy, communicate it to all staff.

3.4 Training and Awareness

The professional training of records staff, and the general awareness of all staff of records management policies and procedures will ensure that the records management function is robust.

Aim To ensure relevant staff are appropriately qualified, trained or experienced and that *all* staff understand the need for records management.

Actions

3.4.1 Ensure that all induction training programmes, as well as FOI and other related training programmes (e.g. data protection), include awareness sessions on record-keeping issues and in particular on individuals' responsibility with regard to FOI compliance.

3.4.2 Draw up a programme of continuing professional development for records staff which will take account of any changes in FOI and related legislation.

3.5 Records Capture and Creation

Each organisation must document its activities and have systems that enable quick and easy retrieval of information. The need to locate and retrieve information takes on added importance under FOI. The requirements of sections 1 and 16 of the FOI Act which relate to public access cannot be met unless adequate record keeping systems are in place.

Aim To establish and maintain a well-structured system to ensure information can be identified and retrieved when required.

Actions

3.5.1 The Records Manager will need to undertake a corporate records survey. This survey should determine whether:

- the organisation is creating records that adequately document its activities
- records systems are adequately documented
- records are arranged in a record-keeping system that enables the organisation to retrieve information quickly and efficiently and facilitates implementation of authorised disposal arrangements²
- there are procedures and guidelines for referencing, titling, and indexing in order to provide for controlled access
- methods for measuring compliance are in place

See also action point 3.6.

3.5.2 Where the above arrangements are not already established, Records Managers will need to ensure organisations have in place systems that meet their operational needs and accord with the regulatory environment.

3.6 Records Maintenance

Records must be properly stored and protected (from fire, flood, loss etc.) and their content secured against unauthorised access. They should also be organised in such a way that they can be easily located and retrieved.

Aim To ensure authentic records are maintained over time by providing appropriate protection throughout their lifecycle

² Best practice recommends a functional file classification arrangement. A model can be found in *Study of the records lifecycle* (JISC, 1999)

Actions

3.6.1 The records survey described in action point 3.5 should also determine whether:

- records are adequately stored and backed-up
- a tracking system is in place that controls the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved
- access controls are in place
- a business recovery plan is in place

3.6.2 Where the above arrangements are not in place, Records Managers will need to ensure organisations have in place records maintenance procedures that enable them to locate and retrieve information quickly and efficiently.

The efficient maintenance of records will ensure that they receive adequate protection and can easily be located and retrieved when required.

3.7 Records Disposal

Organisations must have in place clearly defined arrangements for appraisal of records, and for documenting such work. It is particularly important under FOI that there are clearly defined policies and procedures for disposing of records (either by destruction or transfer to an archive) and that these are well documented. This will provide appropriate evidence in the event of questions about the provision of information under FOI.

Aim To ensure retention and destruction decisions can be explained by documentation of the appraisal of records

Actions

3.7.1 Ensure that the organisation has in place a system for the controlled retention and disposal of records. This should comprise:

- a retention schedule which lists retention periods and disposal instructions for all corporate records³
- procedures for implementing and auditing the retention schedule

³ A model retention schedule is in *Study of the Records lifecycle* (JISC, 1999)

- making appropriate arrangements for the preservation of records of enduring value within a professionally managed archive
- procedures for the timely and secure destruction of records no longer required for business purposes and not selected for preservation
- a system for documenting all appraisal decisions to include information on records destroyed, retained by the organisation or selected for preservation

4 ACTION PLAN

The timing of each action point allows for the gradual implementation of records management procedures in order to meet the deadline for implementation of the Act. It is important to follow the sequence of steps as set out below. An immediate start is strongly recommended.

By	ACTION PLAN	See Action
31 Dec 2003	Review the structure of the organisation to see what changes might be required to consolidate a co-ordinated approach to the management of corporate information	3.1.1
	Ensure that there is an integrated approach to records management including data protection, and other information management functions and procedures; alternatively, that working arrangements for close liaison have been established.	3.1.2
	Ensure that responsibility for the implementation of the records management function is designated to a named person.	3.2.1
	Conduct an audit of records management practices against the Code of Practice to establish whether action is needed to reach compliance.	3.1.3
	Ensure that adequate resources to support the records management function are in place	3.1.4
31 July 2004	Communicate an approved policy statement to all staff	3.3.2
	Complete a corporate records survey.	3.5.1
	Assess the need for records management support staff and ensure that these staff are in place	3.2.2-3.2.3
31 Dec 2004	Ensure the organisation has in place a records management system that meets its operational needs and accords with the regulatory environment	3.5 - 3.7
30 June 2005	Ensure that all induction training programmes include awareness sessions on record-keeping issues	3.4.1
	Draw up a programme of continuing professional development for records staff	3.4.2

Appendix A: Model Records Management Policy for HE and FE institutions

UNIVERSITY OF BLANKSHIRE

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The University recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary, to support its core functions, to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers

1. Scope of the policy
2. Responsibilities
3. Relationship with existing policies
4. Available guidance for implementation of the policy
5. Contacts

1. Scope of the policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff of the institution in the course of carrying out their corporate functions. Records and documentation created in the course of research, whether internally or externally-funded, are also subject to contractual record-keeping requirements.
- 1.2 Records are defined as all those documents, which facilitate the business carried out by the University and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.
- 1.3 Records management is defined as a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including process for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.⁴
- 1.4 A small percentage of the university's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the institution's archives, for historical research and as an enduring record of the conduct of business.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The University has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record-keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The Senior Management Team member with overall responsibility for this policy is the

⁴ BS ISO 15489: 2001 Records management

Registrar.

- 2.2 The University's Records Manager is responsible for drawing up guidance for good records management practice and promoting compliance with this policy in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information.
- 2.3 Individual employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the University's records management guidelines

3. Relationship with existing policies

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

- Information Strategy (available at www.blankshire.ac.uk/InfoStrat.htm)
- Freedom of Information policy (available at www.blankshire.ac.uk/Folpolicy.htm)
- Data Protection policy (available at www.blankshire.ac.uk/DPpolicy.htm)

Compliance with this policy will in turn facilitate compliance not only with information-related legislation (specifically Fol 2000 and DPA 1998) but also with any other legislation or regulations (including audit, equal opportunities and research ethics) affecting the institution.

4. Guidance

Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this Policy is available from the Records Manager. This guidance covers

- records creation
- business classification (for filing schemes)
- retention periods for records
- storage options for records
- destruction options for records
- archival records: selection and management
- external codes of practice and relevant legislation

5. Contacts

University Records Manager: Shaun Appleblossom x2345

V.1.2 March 2002

APPENDIX 2 MODEL COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This Competency Profile describes the key knowledge and skills required by a Records Manager in a higher or further education institution. It can be used as a basis for developing role specifications, identifying training and personal

development needs and assessing performance.

The Profile sets out competencies in four categories:

- Business (i.e. the higher/further education sector and the institution)
- Technical (i.e. records management)
- Personal
- Management

The scope and level of the competencies is based on three assumptions which reflect current best practice:

1. The Records Manager is/will be professionally qualified in records management.
2. The Records Manager is/will be appointed at middle-management level or higher in the organisational structure and will have sufficient authority to operate effectively.
3. The Records Manager's primary role is/will be to develop and implement records management policies, procedures and guidance, and to provide advice on all record-keeping issues in the institution. It is not assumed that s/he will have any direct responsibility for managing or operating facilities (e.g. storage facilities for inactive records) or services (e.g. disposal of confidential waste).

1 BUSINESS

1.1 Business Knowledge

- Understands the legislative environment within which the higher/further education sector operates.
- Understands the institution's role, mission, aims and objectives.
- Understands the institution's functions and activities.
- Understands the nature of the institution's relationships with its key external stakeholders.

1.2 Business Orientation

- Understands how records management contributes to the achievement of the institution's mission, aims and objectives.
- Can articulate effectively the benefits of good records management to the institution.
- Demonstrates understanding of the decision-making process within the higher/ further education sector and the institutional environment.

- Proactively identifies opportunities to raise awareness of the relevance and importance of records management to the institution's business.
- Takes ownership of records management issues within the institution and ensures their successful resolution.

2 TECHNICAL

2.1 Legal & Regulatory Framework For Records Management

- Understands the legal and regulatory framework for records management in the UK.
- Contributes to the development and implementation of institutional responses to changes in legislation or regulations directly affecting the management of records.
- Can identify records management implications of changes in other legislation or regulations affecting the higher/further education sector or the individual institution.

2.2 Records Management Theory and Practice

- Has a sound knowledge of records management theory and practice, including current standards and recognised best practice.
- Applies and adapts records management standards and best practice effectively in the institutional context.
- Understands and can apply a range of records management tools and techniques.
- Has a good knowledge of records management software applications and their use.

2.3 Professional Networking

- Proactively liaises and forms working relationships with colleagues in related fields within the institution.
- Liaises with records managers in other higher/further education institutions in order to maintain awareness of practice within the sector.
- Has a good knowledge of other organisations' records management systems and experiences, in the higher/further education sector and elsewhere.
- Shares and publicises own institution's experience.

2.4 ICT Systems

- Has good knowledge of standard desktop ICT systems.
- Has good knowledge of key institutional ICT systems.

3 PERSONAL

3.1 Professionalism

- Creates a positive impression of records management within the institution.
- Is up-to-date with developments in own field of expertise.
- Demonstrates personal and professional integrity.
- Leads by example on records management practices within the institution.

3.2 Communication

- Makes appropriate use of the available means of communication.
- Communicates clearly, confidently and effectively both verbally and in writing, with colleagues at all levels.
- Can interpret a brief, and create and deliver effective presentations and training to any audience.

3.3 Flexibility

- Is responsive to changing needs within the institution.
- Initiates and manages change where appropriate.
- Is results-oriented and can apply policy flexibly.
- Works effectively in a changing environment.
- Can alter working style to suit different situations.

3.4 Influencing

- Understands and can apply a range of influencing techniques to achieve desired outcomes.
- Can generate interest and enthusiasm in others.

3.5 Teamworking

- Recognises the necessity of working with colleagues across functions to achieve effective results.
- Understands own and others' roles within cross-functional teams, and willingly undertakes different team roles. Proactively supports other team members and pursues team targets.

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Planning and Performance Management

- Develops sound business plans to achieve aims and objectives.
- Manages the successful achievement of targets within budgets.

4.2 Project Management

- Understands and can apply a range of project management techniques.
- Can plan and manage complex or multiple projects to complete within time, cost and quality targets.
- Can create, develop and manage effective project teams.

APPENDIX 3 GLOSSARY

Introduction

This glossary contains some general terms that are not explicitly referred to in the MAP but are useful for understanding the implementation of a records management programme. These definitions are drawn from a number of sources identified in Appendix 4.

accountability

The principle that individuals, organisations and the community are required to account to others for their actions. Organisations and their employees must be able to account to appropriate regulatory authorities, to shareholders or members, and to the public to meet statutory obligations, audit requirements, relevant standards and codes of practice, and community expectations. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

appraisal

Process to evaluate business activities to determine the archival worth or evidential value of a record in terms of the quality of its content in relation to stated objectives, standards or criteria. It identifies 'which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirement of organizational accountability'. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

archive (n)

The physical place where archives are managed.

authentic

An authentic record is one that can be proven to be what it purports to be, to have been created or sent by the person identified, and created or sent at the time purported. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

business recovery plan

A document which sets out the measures to be taken to minimise the risks and effects of disasters such as fire, flood, or earthquake, etc. and to recover, save and secure vital records should a disaster occur. It should include operational measures that enable the re-start of the business.

classification system

The process of devising and applying schemes based on the business activities which generate records, whereby they are categorised in systematic and consistent ways to facilitate their capture, retrieval, maintenance and disposal. Classification includes determining document or file naming conventions, user permissions and security restrictions on records. (BS ISO 15489: 2001) In broad terms it is the process by which records are categorised or grouped into retrieval units, whether by function, subject, or other criteria.

compliance

Fulfilling legal and regulatory requirements.

digital

When applied to information, documents, etc. - information stored in a form, based not on human readable symbols but on a binary encoding, which can be manipulated by computers (and thereby made readable by humans).

disposal

A range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from record-keeping systems. They may also include the migration or transmission of records between record-keeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

document

A structured unit of recorded information, published or unpublished, in hard copy or electronic form, and managed as a discrete unit. (BS ISO 15489: 2001) A document becomes a record when it forms part of a business transaction and is linked to other documents relating to that transaction or process.

file

An organised unit of records, accumulated during current use and kept together because they deal with the same subject, activity or transaction.

integrity

The quality which when present means that the record possesses a verifiably incorruptible data/content and can identify the intellectual qualities of information that make it authentic.

lifecycle

An approach to viewing the records management through a lifecycle model. It divides the record five major phases of existence - creation, distribution, use, maintenance and disposal. As part of the disposal it may enter into the archive or be destroyed.

metadata

Descriptive and technical documentation to enable the system and the records (that are described) to be understood and to be operated efficiently, and to provide an administrative context for the effective management of the records. (Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Freedom of Information)

migration

In this context, it refers to the movement of data from one medium, or system, to another while maintaining the records' authenticity, integrity, reliability and usability.

record

In the records management sense a record is the result of an activity or transaction, and may result in more than one physical object; for example, a spreadsheet which is accompanied by a text commentary. (Public Record Office: www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/eros)

record-keeping

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

records management

Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. (BS ISO 15489: 2001)

retention schedule

A means to enable records managers to dispose of records promptly, consistent with effective and efficient operations, when the appropriate period of retention has expired.

semi-active records

Those records that are required infrequently in the conduct of current business but are needed to fulfil compliance requirements prior to their ultimate disposal.

survey

An examination of current and semi-current records noting briefly their nature, systems of arrangement, date ranges, quantities, function, physical condition, reference activity and rates of accumulation.

version control

A process that allows for the precise placing of individual versions of documents within a continuum.

vital records

Those records that are essential to the operation of the organisation, the continuation and/or resumption of operations following a disaster. The re-creation of legal, regulatory or financial status of the organisation, or to the fulfilment of its obligations, in the event of a disaster.

APPENDIX 4 KEY SOURCES OF ADVICE AND FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Standards and Codes of Practice

BS 7799 *Code of practice for information security management*
A sector-specific guide to *Developing an information security policy* is available at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub01/security_policy.html#S6

PD 0008 *A code of practice for legal admissibility and evidential weight of information stored electronically* (2nd ed) BSI 1999

PD 0010 *The principles of good practice for information management.* BSI, 1997

BS ISO 15489: 2001 – *Records Management*

Lord Chancellor's (draft) *Code of Practice on the management of records under section 46 of the Fol Act.* Available at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/foicopy25.rtf>

Draft Code of Practice on the Discharge of the functions of public authorities under Part 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Available at <http://www.lcd.gov.uk/foi/dftcp00.htm>

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.html

Public Record Office Standards for the management of Government records (PRO publications). Available at http://www.pro.gov.uk/records_management/standards

Public Record Office – electronic records guidance. Available at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/eros/>

2. Guidance

Study of the records lifecycle (JISC, 1999) Available at <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/projects/srch/reports/TFPL%20links%20page.html>

Currall, James Claire E. Johnson, Pete Johnston, Michael S. Moss, Lesley M. Richmond. *No going back? The final report of the Effective Records Management Project at the University of Glasgow* (Project funded under the JISC Technology Applications Programme. JTAP – 375) 2002. Available at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/InfoStrat/ERM/Reports/>

Parker, Elizabeth *Managing your organization's records* (Library Association,

1999)

Hare, C and McLeod J *Establishing a records management programme in the electronic environment* (Aslib, 2002)

3. Professional associations

Records Management Society of Great Britain

Woodside
Coleheath Bottom
Speen
Princes Risborough HP27 0SZ
Tel: 01494 488599
Web: <http://www.rms-gb.org.uk>

Produces a newsletter, a bi-monthly Bulletin and runs an annual conference. Advertises job vacancies. Can provide details of consultants and locally-based records managers or records management services.

Society of Archivists

40 Northampton Road
London EC1R 0HR

Produces a monthly newsletter (which includes job advertisements), a job bulletin and a journal. Can provide details of consultants and locally based professionals, either records management or archivists, and services. Includes a specialist Records Management Group.

Tel: 020 7278 8630
Web: <http://www.archives.org.uk>

Listservs

A listserv for anyone responsible for or interested in records management issues within the sector is run by Charlotte Brunskill at the University of Westminster. Contact: c.brunskill@westminster.ac.uk Tel: 020 7911 5158.

Information about the JISC FoI listserv for discussion of the implications of FOI for FE and HE institutions is available from <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/freedom-of-information.html>

13 May 2002
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