

MANAGING DOCUMENTS

All official documents (hard-copy, electronic documents and email) created, received, maintained or dispatched by University staff in the course of business are official records and should be registered within Records Manager (the University's official record keeping system). The following rules are to be applied.

Business rules for managing documents

- 1) If a document is created or received electronically, the document can remain electronic and be fully managed in Records Manager (RM) electronically.
- 2) If a document is created or received in hard copy format, the document can continue to be managed in hard copy, registered in RM and managed using official files.
- 3) All official documents dispatched by University staff in the course of business are to be captured to RM at the point of creation by the author. If the document is attached to an email, both the email and the attachment are to be captured.
- 4) All official documents received by University staff in the course of business from external sources are to be captured to RM by the recipient, or the person responsible for RM capture in their department.
- 5) All official emails created by University staff in the course of business must be captured to RM either as sent, or as a 'thread' when the communication is complete. This is done by the 'owner' of the process being discussed (the person whose role normally creates and controls the record of this process, and thereby has the requisite rights to the folder); or, if either correspondent has equal rights, by the initiator of the exchange.
- 6) All official documents received from outside the University are to be captured to RM by the recipient. To avoid unnecessary duplication, if an email or electronic document sent from outside the University is received by multiple members of staff, only the first recipient on the distribution list is responsible for capturing the document to RM.

If a COPY of a document is circulated widely for information purposes and requires no further action on your behalf, you do not need to save the copy to Records Manager. The creator of the document will save it as a record of its circulation. Staff may retain them for reference purposes outside of Records Manager and dispose of them as duplicates when no longer required.

Capturing documents to Records Manager

Documents may arrive or be sent by various means including post, facsimile, courier, email or by hand. All incoming HARD COPY mail:

- Must be stamped with a date stamp on the top right hand side of the page where possible

Date stamps must include the name of the faculty/business centre, the date and "University of the South Pacific", or similar.

It is preferable that **coloured** ink (rather than black) is used, to aid in distinguishing originals from black and white photocopies or printed scans.

The process of registration of records to Records Manager should occur immediately upon receipt of the document from the mailroom, or immediately prior to its dispatch. *It is recommended that this be monitored by units so as to avoid backlogs of registration; it may be appropriate to add this to KPIs for some positions.*

Registration (or cataloguing) is the capture of a document's key features into a record keeping system. This information enables the future retrieval and processing of the document. Key features may include:

- A unique identifying number (Records Manager will allocate this and it should be added to the document)
- A brief title
- The date the document was written
- The date received
- The author
- The format (e.g. email, agreement, report etc.)
- The appropriate file and required action.

What should be registered in Records Manager?

University employees are required to make full and accurate records that document the University's business activities and transactions for which they are responsible and ensure that these records are included in the official record keeping system.

Examples of documents that should be registered in Records Manager include, but not limited to:

- All official correspondence addressed to the university
- Correspondence relating to significant faculty and departmental initiatives, particularly in relation to faculty/business centre restructuring and external operations
- Original versions of legal documents, such as agreements, lease, contracts, deeds, memoranda of understanding, insurance policies and certifications of title

- Drafts of legal documents circulated for further action and letters constituting legal advice
- Committee minutes and agendas
- Policy and procedures, including significant discussion and consultation leading to decisions
- Official requests for information
- Complaints.

In general, any **official record** that would previously have been housed and maintained in filing systems within faculties and business units. (See below: this does not include duplicates kept for reference).

Electronic records must not be captured in an encrypted or password-protected form. University records are an institutional asset which must be managed by the corporate record keeping system/s. The security of documents is managed by *Records Manager*, or a business information system, based on agreed access controls for the folder in which the document or data are placed.

Personal and Ephemeral records (non-official University records)

Records that do not relate to the University's official business should not be captured in Records Manager (RM). These include:

- Publications, newsletters or circulars sent for general interest
- Advertising material – including form letters and brochures
- Personal correspondence.

Ephemeral records are records that have no continuing value to the University and generally are only needed for a few hours or a few days. They do not need to be placed on an official file or captured to Records Manager and include:

- *Duplicates or copies* which are exact copies of original records, that is, where no annotations have been made and where the original record forms part of the University's record keeping system. Such records may be destroyed when they are no longer needed for reference purposes.
- *Messages including* voice mail, email, telephone messages, post-it sticky notes when the message DOES NOT relate to the business functions of the University.
- *Rough drafts* of reports or correspondence, routine or rough calculations not circulated to other staff for comment/input and of which a final draft has been produced and captured to Records Manager.
- *Transitory messages* giving minor instructions and of a routine instructional nature that are used to further some activity (e.g. corrections, requesting file creation or retrieval, filing a letter, formatting documents)

- *Working papers, background notes and reference material* used to prepare or complete other documents (where these documents have been captured to the record keeping system).
- *Reference sets* of manual, directories, addresses and contact lists.
- *Unofficial photographs* – snaps of an event, un-named people in attendance at tables/holding drinks, etc.

Documenting Conversations

In some instances it may be appropriate to take note of a telephone, text message or other conversation to ensure it is captured (into Records Manager) as an official record. Examples include conversations that:

- Convey the primary response from the university to another organisation, a staff member, a media representative or a client (i.e. instances in which a response will not be confirmed in writing);
- represent complaints from the public requiring further investigation;
- address or discuss concerns or decisions impacting remote staff member or student.

The USP Records Management policy outlines the responsibilities and accountabilities for record keeping and can be viewed at www.usp.ac.fj/records

For further information or for advice please do not hesitate to contact the Records Management office.