



RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Botswana Open University (BOU) recognises records as a valuable asset and a key resource for effective and efficient operation of the University. Records are needed for policy-making, accountability and preservation of corporate and cultural memory. To achieve this, the University requires that its records be managed in a systematic and logical manner that complies with its legal and regulatory obligations.
- 1.2. This Policy provides the framework through which effective records management can be achieved and audited. As a public institution, the University is subject to the National Archives and Records Management Act 14 of 2007 and must comply with other national statutes that may from time to time be developed for the management of records.

2. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- 2.1. **Archives:** means records that are not required for daily operations and have been selected for permanent preservation due to their continuing value.
- 2.2. **Records disposal schedule:** The process that implements and documents the operation of the retention schedule recommendations, ensuring that records in all formats that are no longer needed are disposed of confidentially, or reviewed after a formerly agreed periods of time, or permanently preserved as the archival record.
- 2.3. **Records:** recorded information in any form (documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers), hard copies or electronic, created or received and maintained by an organization in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.
- 2.4. **Records management:** is an administrative process which is used to direct and control the creation, use, maintenance, storage, retrieval, disposition, distribution, filing, retention, and disposal of records in a way that is legally sound whilst at the same time serving the operational needs of the University and preserving an adequate historical record.
- 2.5. **Authentic record:** is a record that can be proven to be what it purports to be, to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it, and to have been created or sent at the time purported.

2.6. **Usable record:** is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted.

2.7. **Records Management Committee:** means the University committee constituted for coordinating the University's records management.

3. PURPOSE

The main purpose of the Policy is to provide authority for the development and implementation of a records management programme that will encourage the creation and management of authentic, reliable, complete and useable records capable of supporting business functions and activities for as long as they are required.

4. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all records, including electronic records, created, received or maintained by the staff of the University in the course of carrying out corporate functions. The Policy applies to all aspects of the University's records including electronic, personal, academic and student records, policy files, financial and procurement records, projects and confidential, records created and received during the conduct of the business. The scope also includes all information systems used to create records including e-mail, database applications, graphic designs and websites.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The Botswana Open University (BOU) is committed to availing resources for creating and maintaining records on its key activities and shall meet legal record management requirements and comply with relevant international standards and other codes of best practice.

6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The University shall put in place a Records Management System that document all activities providing fast and easy retrieval of information and to support this, the system shall include:

6.1 Records creation and capture

- 6.1.1. The University shall create and maintain records that document its business transactions and all such records shall provide full and detailed information regarding activities carried out.
- 6.1.2. All official records created by the University shall be authentic, reliable and unaltered and shall have sufficient value to support business process to which they narrate.
- 6.1.3. Records shall be reliable and trusted as accurate representation of the activities which led to their creation.

6.2 Mail Management

The University shall adhere to mail management standards and processes to cater for incoming, outgoing delivered mail. An audit trail shall be kept for all the mail. All mail will be processed through the Records Management Unit (RMU) or other designated offices.

6.3 Records Classification

The University shall develop a functional file classification scheme to facilitate filing and arrangement of records. The functional classification is initiative undertaken to ensure filing of records in accordance with business functions, activities and processes in the University.

6.4 Storage and handling

- 6.4.1. The University shall ensure that its records are stored in a facility that ensures security and preservation.
- 6.4.2. The University shall facilitate maintenance of backup of records through cross storing (those for Regions in HQ and the records HQ kept in the regional campuses) of records that may not be immediately deposited. Records will also be kept through scanning hard copies to be able to keep them as scanned records.
- 6.4.3. The University shall put in place procedures and standards to facilitate proper handling, retrieval and use of the records to retain their authenticity

6.5. Access, retrieval and use

The University shall develop access regulations to ensure that its records are accessed, retrieved and used by authorized personnel.

6.6. File tracking mechanism

The University shall document the circulation of its records to ensure that files are always located when required. This will be done by having appropriate file location tracking mechanisms that may record the item identifier, file title, the person/unit having possession of the item and the date of movement.

6.7. Appraisal, retention and disposition

The University shall develop a retention and disposal schedule to guide the appraisal of its records with the aim of retaining them as long as necessary and disposing those whose retention period has matured appropriately

6.8. Protection of Records

The University shall protect its records physically and intellectually throughout their lifecycle to ensure their survival for as long as they are needed as evidence and information in the past and present. The intellectual security mechanisms include coming up with access and security classification of all records at the file level (and folio level if necessary). Records will be classified into open and confidential records. Open/unclassified records will have no access restrictions whilst the confidential records will be accessed only by authorized officers.

6.9. Training and awareness

The University shall regularly organize records management campaigns, raise awareness for its officers. It will also contribute to the training and development of Records Personnel (including other officers with records management responsibilities) The University shall ensure that all action officers are trained on Records Management Policies, Procedures and shall conduct or arrange training to equip staff with Records Management skills for efficient performance of records management obligations.

6.10. Utilization of Information Technology

The Records Office shall implement appropriate information technology records management systems in collaboration with all stake holders.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The University shall put in place necessary structures and resources to ensure effective implementation, management, use, compliance, monitoring, and adherence to this Policy.

7.1. Vice Chancellor

As the accounting officer, the Vice Chancellor shall have the overall responsibility for the University's Records Management Policy implementation.

7.2. Legal Office

The Legal Office shall be responsible for updating the Records Management Unit on developments regarding legal and statutory environment that may impact on records keeping and records management practices.

7.3. Head of Units/Departments/Divisions

Heads of Units /Departments/Divisions shall ensure compliance with the Policy with respect to their records. This shall include having in place measures and processes to manage risks associated with their records in accordance with the University Risk Management Framework.

7.4. Director, Administration and Office Services

The Department of Administration, through the Records Management Unit shall be responsible for setting and implementing the records management processes to raise and maintain standards of records keeping and information management within the University through:

- 7.4.1. Ensuring that records management policies and standards are kept up to date and are relevant to the needs and obligations of the University
- 7.4.2. Developing appropriate procedures and guidelines to underpin the policies and standards
- 7.4.3. Communicating procedures and guidance on records keeping and information management within the University

7.5. Records Management Committee

The University shall establish a Records Management Committee to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the records management programme, which will be undertaken to meet the requirements of this policy. The Committee shall comprise of representatives from directorates and units, including Regional Campuses.

7.6. Executive Management Team

The Executive Management Team shall be responsible for assessing and approving proposals for disposal of records

8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed every three years or as is necessary.