A digitisation plan gives assurance that the scanning and all audit and management processes are done with minimal risk. Once you have a digitisation plan you can scan and destroy as long as the plan is followed.

Talk to one of our Records Services staff if you think you need to create a digitisation plan.

Any questions?
Records Services staff can provide advice about records management

Contact us on ext. 43534 or records-services@unimelb.edu.au

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Help with disposal

Records Services has a number of tools to assist when you work on disposal of university records.

- the University Records Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA) describes types of records and how long to keep them
- Destruction list. A way to record and seek approval before actioning destruction
- Disposal advice service. Experienced Records Services staff are available to answer your questions
- Training in records disposal. Tailor a training course to your unit’s needs in consultation with our staff
- Find more information on the Records Services website: www.unimelb.edu.au/records/

Disposal and the University

Imagine if all the business units in the University kept all their records forever. The University would be under enormous strain just managing the sheer volume of paper and electronic data – a lot of it ephemeral. Often it seems too hard to decide what to keep. Thankfully records management techniques are at hand to help make the right decision and manage records more efficiently.

Not managing physical and electronic records correctly creates problems. With rising space costs, and the push to paper-free offices, storage for paper is increasingly scarce. In addition, electronic storage, while cheaper, isn’t free – and finding the records you want in a crowded and out of control shared drive is a frustrating exercise.

Over retention by keeping everything is inefficient, costly and poor records management practice. It also could have implications for FOI requests and privacy compliance. Alternatively, destroying records too early means that the University is in breach of the Public Records Act and may not have the evidence it needs.

That’s why good disposal processes include regular appraisal of records using the University’s Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA). The RDA tells you whether a record is permanent or temporary. If temporary it tells you how long it must be kept and the trigger for timing destruction.

Of course, when we say disposal, most people think only about destruction of records but that is only half the story. Disposal covers destruction, retention and transfer of records to the University Archives, and appraisal and storage of temporary records until they are due for destruction. All three are elements of an effective disposal program.

Most importantly, disposal isn’t a one off activity. An effective disposal program is cyclical and should be undertaken regularly – at least once a year.

Consider two mythical faculties – one, undertakes a regular disposal program. They have a small task to complete each year, following clearly understood procedures. The other hasn’t done any disposal for and is now facing a large bill for casual staff and materials to undertake what could be a months-long project. Which would you rather be?

Remember – if you would like advice, please contact Records Services – we’ll be happy to help.
and can cause a headache. Put simply, legacy records are those that are no longer appraised or controlled. Here are some ideas for working out how valuable legacy records are and tips for preventing future headaches.

Tip 1: don’t let legacy records happen in the first place. Organise your current records well and have a plan for their lifespan. Business practices with good records management and budgeting for the project.

Tip 2: work out exactly how much and what type of records you have to deal with. Files? Boxes? Storerooms? This will drive. Metadata is helpful for understanding the way in which records are organised and stored to make them easy to find. From using a simple file in/out book for hardcopy files up to using file movements in systems like TRIM, knowing who has accessed a file – and where the file currently is – is vital to good information security.

Organise your current records well and have a plan for their disposal …

First, you have to deal with. Files? Boxes? Storerooms? This will give you a scope of the issue and allow you to start planning and budgeting for the project.

Tip 3: talk to Records Services to help you plan, scope, appraise and sentence these records – our job is to provide expert support.

Some examples are grouping committee records together, or all records relating to a particular employee or legal matter. Classification is the sorting of records into groups of similar things.

Tip 4: I can get any company to destroy them securely. For confidential records, the secure destruction service provider shreds records in a recycle bin is the best way to destroy them securely.

Malaysia

For digital media – contact Records Services for recycling through the University’s eWaste suppliers.

For computer hardware, make sure that you have removed files before sending them off for recycling through the University’s eWaste suppliers.

Key concepts

Dispensing myths about disposal

There are many myths out there about the how, what, where and why of disposal …

Let’s see if we can dispel some

Myth 1 – Disposal means destruction.
False

Disposal is often used interchangeably to mean the destruction of records. However it also means the transfer of permanent records to the Archives or the placing of temporary records in a local holding area until they are due for destruction.

Myth 2 – All records should be kept for 7 years.
False

This statement assumes that all records are the same and have the same value. The amount of time a record must be kept depends on what type of record it is – including the reasons it might be needed in the future. Refer to the University Records Retention and Disposal Authority for information on retention periods.

Myth 3 – If you have old records you can throw them out.
False

Old doesn’t automatically mean of no value. Records may not be relevant to today’s priorities but they may provide critical information about past events and activities. Old or legacy records can contain precedents for decisions or explain the establishment of a university function. Sometimes they have historical or cultural significance. Use the University Records Retention and Disposal Authority to determine how long records should be kept or seek advice from Records Services.

Myth 4 – I can get any company to provide a secure destruction service.
False

The university service provider for destruction of records is In Confidence. They supply 240L destruction bins to areas on a fortnightly basis. To order secure destruction bins go to the Property and Campus Services webpage about confidential waste bins.

Myth 5 – Putting university records in a recycle bin is the best way to destroy them securely.
False

Records still need to remain confidential, even if they’re not wanted any more. The only exception is if the material is freely available such as copies of leaflets or newsletters. This material can be recycled.

For confidential records, the secure destruction service provider shreds and pulps paper records so that they cannot be reconstructed. They also provide a certificate to guarantee that destruction was carried out as authorised.