

Preparation of paper records for storage at the University of Warwick

Introduction

This guidance provides advice on how to prepare paper records for storage for a defined period of time at the University of Warwick. The retention arrangements for records at the University is managed by the: [University Records Retention Schedule \(RRS\)](#). This guidance is not designed to provide advice for paper records that are to be preserved and stored in [The Modern Records Centre](#).

When arrangements are made for the storage of paper records this should be carried out in line with the [University Information Classification and Handling Procedure](#) and the specific procedures therein, in relation [to handling paper and other media](#). Please contact the [University Records Management Advisor](#) for further guidance in relation to guidance on the storage of paper records.

Areas to consider before preparing records for storage

Before paper records are prepared for storage the following areas need to be considered by the University Department responsible for the record:

1. Is an entry for the record set out on the [University Records Retention Schedule \(RRS\)](#) and does it still need to be retained?
 - If there is an entry for that record type in the University RRS, its ongoing storage and/or disposal should be applied as set out in the schedule. In instances where the record is not listed on the RRS please consult the University guidance on 'how to set a retention period' and the accompanying 'quick guide' which are both contained on the [University Records Management webpage](#).
 - If the record might be useful for historic research and thus has preservation value please contact [archivists](#) at the University's [Modern Records Centre](#) to discuss the appropriate archival storage arrangements.
2. Was the paper copy originally created, and is it still held, in digital form?
 - If the record originated in digital form (born digital) it is in most instances unlikely that a paper duplicate will need to be retained.
 - An exception to this might be where a paper copy contains: wet signatures (e.g. in relation to a contract) and/or wet annotations and may be required as evidence (e.g. in court proceedings or to meet specialist regulatory or audit requirements) in which case the paper copy, or a scanned and digitally stored version, that meets the requirements of BS 10008:2014 should be held in line with the RRS.

3. Can a digitised version of the paper record be created?

- Where a record's continued retention is required in line with the RRS and it is not being kept for the purposes set out at Section two, or for preservation, then consideration might be given to scanning the paper record using the AutoStore solution on a University printer (Multi Function Devices [MFD]). The scanned document should be titled in line with the [University's Naming Convention guidance](#).
- If consideration is given to destroying the original paper record post-digitisation then the digitised rendering in all cases needs to be able to be managed throughout its lifecycle in line with the [Information Classification and Handling Procedure](#) and therein its section on [Handling Electronic Information](#) and separately also the RRS.

Identification of paper records in storage

The following section provides a guide to information that should be set out on the cover of paper records (or their containers) before a record is placed in storage.

- *Reference*: a unique reference for each new record. (Departments with particular specialisms may have different classifications and metadata requirements according to the type of information being managed and functions it performs – check with head of Department).
- *Title*: a meaningful and accurate title should be given to each record. (The [University of Warwick Naming Convention guidance](#) provides guidance on this area).
- *Date opened and date closed*
- *Departmental Owner*: this should be the name of the University Department that is responsible for the contents of the record.
- *Disposal date / action*: date for disposal and ensuing action. The details of the retention period for the record must first be included in an entry in the University RRS.
- *Information Classification*: consider whether the record needs to have its classification marked on its cover in line with the University handling procedure [for paper and other media](#).

This information should also be captured (registered) on an inventory of the records which must be securely maintained by the relevant University Department.

The inventory should track record movements (e.g. retrieval of a record from storage to a Department, its subsequent return to store and its destruction or transfer to the Modern Records Centre).

N.B. In the limited instances when it is absolutely necessary that the cover of a paper record contains personal data or other sensitive information particular attention should be given to ensuring its storage arrangements are in line with the [University Information Classification and Handling Procedure for paper or other media](#) and adhere to [Data Protection](#) obligations.

Storage arrangements for paper records

Before a new on site, or off-site, storage arrangement is entered into, both the [University Records Management Advisor](#) and the [Information Security and Compliance Advisor](#) should be consulted.

The following practices should be observed when storing paper records at the University.

1. The record storage area (e.g. the repository/registry):
 - Materials such as paper are vulnerable to damage from environmental conditions. The storage facility should not be subject to dampness or significant and regular (e.g. daily) temperature and humidity fluctuations outside of 13 to 20C and 35 – 60 Relative Humidity (RH)%. Please liaise with [archivists](#) at the University's [Modern Records Centre](#) for advice on the appropriate storage environment for records contained in paper formats other than paper (e.g. microfiche/microfilm).
 - Records should be stored in a secure location compliant with the [University Information Classification and Handling Procedure for paper or other media](#)
2. Initial steps to consider when preparing paper records for storage (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Secure all papers within the record cover and in a logical order - this will aid retrieval.
 - Ensure the records are securely packaged prior to transport to the store (e.g. the container/box the records are transported in is secured e.g. with tags). Seek confirmation of safe delivery.
 - Records should not overhang shelves or be stored on the top of shelving units. In certain instances, this may position them too close to lighting and/or expose them to water damage from fire sprinklers and make storage units unstable.
 - In instances where non-archival file storage boxes (e.g. bankers boxes) are used, these should not be stacked more than three high and should not be stored:
 - a) in aisles between racks
 - b) should not block or restrict access to doors, lifts, stairways or office areas.
 - Storage boxes should not exceed 10KG in weight including content. (Do not leave space within boxes where possible - this mitigates the risk of damage to the record when moved).