

Vital Records Policy

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Document URL	http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Vital-Records-Policy.pdf
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Description	This policy details Griffith University's management principles for the identification, registration, storage and disposal of vital University records in order to assist staff to identify those records without which the University could not continue to function.

Related documents

[Destruction of Digitised Records Policy](#)

[Disposal Authorisation Form](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

[Vital Records Lodgement Form](#)

Vital Records Register (Document registered in EDRMS)

[Vital Records website](#)

University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule (QDAN601)

[\[Introduction\]](#) [\[What is a Vital Record?\]](#) [\[Management of Vital Records\]](#) [\[Format and Storage\]](#) [\[Retention and Disposal of Vital Records\]](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This Policy sets out Griffith University's management principles on the identification, management, storage and disposal of vital University records. Read in conjunction with the Vital Records Register, this Policy provides assistance to University staff in identifying those records without which the University could not continue to function effectively.

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all University staff.

2. WHAT IS A VITAL RECORD?

Vital Records are records that are essential for the ongoing business of the University, without which the University could not continue to function effectively or protect its interests. Such records may be only considered vital in the short term, or may retain this status indefinitely.

Vital records are required to:

- operate Griffith University during a disaster,
- rapidly re-establish the University's functions and legal and financial position after a disaster, and/or

- establish and protect the rights and interest of the organisation and its employees, customers and stakeholders at all times.

Vital records can exist in any format (e.g. hard copy, electronic, audio-visual tapes, microfiche etc.) and can include, but are not limited to:

- All students' academic transcripts
- Bank guarantees
- Contracts/Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding
- Core financial and personnel data
- Deeds and Leases
- Disaster management & business continuity plans
- Evidence of ownership of physical and intellectual property
- Infrastructure plans
- Insurance records
- Licences
- Policy records
- Share certificates
- Other records documenting the legal authority or rights of the University and/or of continuing value to the University or the community.

A Vital Records Register for Griffith University, detailing a full list of vital records, is maintained by the University. This register is reviewed annually.

3. MANAGEMENT OF VITAL RECORDS

Management of vital records is integral to the University's Disaster Recovery Plan for University Records. Original vital records, whether physical or digital, which are required to be lodged with Records Services as per the Vital Records Register, should be lodged using the Vital Records Lodgement Form. These records are registered in the University's records management system, capturing defined metadata about the record.

For original hardcopy vital records, a digital copy of the original hardcopy is made and maintained in the University's records management system with a physical copy of the original maintained on the related business file, along with any supporting documentation. It is these two versions which are accessed for the day-to-day business of the University. The original hardcopy is only accessed under exceptional circumstance. This access is facilitated through Records Services.

4. FORMAT AND STORAGE

4.1 Physical Vital Records

To assist in protecting physical vital records from unauthorised access and/or physical harm the hardcopy should be stored:

- a) In conditions that are clean, with low risk of damage from fire, water, dampness, mould, insects and rodents.
- b) In conditions that are secure from unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal.
- c) Away from direct sunlight and other sources of heat and light.
- d) Preferably in an area that is well ventilated and maintained at stable temperature and humidity.

4.2 Digital Vital Records

To assist in protecting digital vital records the following guidelines should be followed:

- a) Records should contain appropriate metadata as defined in the Information Standard 34: Metadata (IS34) and when migrating records between systems, associated metadata, including the connections between a record and its metadata, are persistently maintained.

- b) Records, and the Enterprise Information System in which they are located, should be secure and appropriately managed and protected in line with Griffith's Information Security Policy to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal of records.
 - c) When migrating or updating electronic systems, steps need to be taken to ensure the record remains intact, secure and accessible.
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5. RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF VITAL RECORDS

The University is legally obliged to retain all vital records for the minimum retention period specified in Retention and Disposal Schedules issued by Queensland State Archives. No official records are to be destroyed without the appropriate authorisation via a Disposal Authorisation Form. These Forms are retained by Records Services for the prescribed retention period.