

# Record Retention Guidance



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University Secretary's Office

## What is a Retention Schedule?

The records retention schedule documents the length of time York St John University should retain records to comply with legal, regulatory and operational requirements (including compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000).

Retention periods outlined in the schedule are applied to records in whatever medium they are held (paper, electronic etc).

A retention and disposal schedule promotes consistency by ensuring that the same type of record is kept for the same amount of time no matter where the record is held. The schedule:

- promotes control over the University's records;
- ensures information is not kept unnecessarily;
- prevents records from being discarded prematurely;
- enables staff to confidently dispose of records that are no longer needed;
- ensures the retention of the minimum volume of records is consistent with economy and efficiency;

## How is the Retention Schedule used?

The retention periods on the schedule specify how long records need to be retained either in academic, financial or calendar years starting from a trigger point.

The schedule is structured so that records become due for a review at the end of the academic/financial year. This allows one destruction exercise to be conducted per year.

The schedule identifies the relevant functions of the university and the categories of records they hold in a downloadable spread sheet available on the University's website. The schedule describes:

- The record, e.g. examination scripts
- The minimum retention period (e.g. 3 years, 6 years) and supporting rationale where appropriate
- Lead and local responsibility
- Location and storage of records
- Disposal of records

## How are retention periods decided?

Minimum retention periods may be stated in Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments, or recommended in codes of practice and business regulations.

Where there are specific requirements from a funding or other body these will be incorporated into the schedule. The University Secretary and the Governance Officer should be notified of any omissions and queries.

## How are records disposed of?

At the end of a designated retention period, appropriate action should be taken against the record as outlined in the retention schedule. These will be:

- **Disposal:** Records should be disposed of using an appropriate method. This may be:
  - Deleting of electronic records;
  - Disposal of in the appropriate waste-bin for non-confidential records;
  - Confidential records, including those containing personal or financial information should be shredded where possible. A record should be kept of the disposal.
- **Review:** Documents marked for review at the end of their retention period may be required for a longer period. Their status should be checked before any action is taken.

## York St John Universities Records Retention Schedule

The Retention Schedule is split into the following categories:

- Corporate Information
- Staff Records
- Applicant Records
- Student Records
- Alumni Records
- Programme Information
- Research Activity
- Knowledge exchange/client data

The categories help to support the effective management of record retention and the implementation of local retention schedules. Each retention schedule identifies lead responsibility for co-ordinating maintenance and disposal and local responsibility for implementation.

The University Secretary and Governance Officer are able to provide further support and guidance where required.