



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

Policy Title	Policy on Record Management (Physical & Digital)
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/HR/009
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	University Senate
Manager/ Driver:	Registry
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1.0 Introduction

Policy on Records Management Policy (physical and digital)

This Policy is necessary to inform NOUN employees **about** understanding and meeting the University's requirements for the creation, maintenance, use, storage and disposal of NOUN records.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy on Record and Management (physical and digital) is to establish guidelines and procedures for the creation, maintenance, storage, retrieval, and disposal of records within the University. Records can include both physical documents and digital information, such as electronic files and databases. This policy is essential for ensuring that an institution effectively manages its information assets in a consistent, secure, and compliant manner. Here are some key purposes of such policy:

2.1 **Compliance:**

Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and standards governing the management and retention of records. Different directorates and units may have specific requirements regarding data retention and privacy.

2.2 **Efficiency**

Streamline the process of creating, accessing, and managing records to enhance overall operational efficiency. A well-defined policy helps in organizing information, reducing redundancy, and improving workflow.

2.3 Security:

Establish security measures for both physical and digital records to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access, disclosure, or loss. This includes protocols for access controls, encryption, and regular security audits.

2.4 Consistency

Provide guidelines to ensure consistency in the way records are created, classified, and stored. This consistency facilitates easier retrieval and promotes a standardized approach across the university.

2.5 Risk Management

Identify and mitigate risks associated with record management, such as data breaches, loss of critical information, or legal disputes. Implement strategies to minimize the impact of potential risks in the University.

2.6 Retention and Disposal

Define policies for the retention and timely disposal of records based on their lifecycle and legal requirements. This helps prevent the accumulation of unnecessary data, reducing storage costs and potential legal liabilities.

2.7 Audit Trails

Establish mechanisms for creating and maintaining audit trails to track changes made to records. This enhances accountability, transparency, and the ability to reconstruct events in case of disputes or investigations.

2.8 Training and Awareness

Provide guidelines for training employees on proper record management practices. Promote awareness about the importance of record management and the role each individual plays in maintaining the integrity and security of Institutional records.

2.9 Technology Standards

Define standards for the use of technology tools and systems that support record management, ensuring compatibility, interoperability, and future-proofing NOUN information infrastructure.

2.10 Continuous Improvement

Establish a framework for periodic reviews and updates to the record management policy to adapt to evolving technologies, regulatory changes, and organizational needs.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all permanent and temporary staff working in NOUN. Except were the terms of funding take precedence, this policy shall also apply to all records of research generated by NOUN staff.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 policy

A set of documented principles and guidelines or a written statement which defines the position or strategy regarding the matter(s) the policy addresses. It provides direction, defines parameters' and expected practices and drives processes and procedures in the institution.

4.2 Record

A thing constituting a piece of evidence about the past, especially an account or document kept in writing or some other permanent form.

4.3 Management

In this policy management shall constitute the act or art of managing: the generating, conducting or supervising and storage of a thing such as documents, data or accounts weather internal and external.

4.4 Policy on Record Management (physical and digital) in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) shall be refers to the systematic control of a University's records throughout its lifecycle. This includes the creation, storage, retrieval, maintenance, and eventual disposition or destruction of records. The goal is to ensure that information is organized, accessible when needed, and compliant with legal and regulatory requirements.

4.5 Physical Records

Physical records are tangible, hard-copy documents and materials that are typically stored in a physical form, such as paper files, books, or other physical artifacts. Managing physical records involves organizing and safeguarding these documents throughout its lifecycle.

4.6 Digital Records

Digital records refer to electronic information stored in digital formats, including text documents, spreadsheets, databases, emails, and multimedia files. Managing digital records involves organizing, securing, and preserving electronic information in a structured and accessible manner.

These definitions provide a foundation for understanding the key terms associated with **this** policy on record management, encompassing both physical and digital records in NOUN.

Note: Oath of secrecy shall apply to all staff and anyone who violates shall be found culpable.

5.0 Principles

Policy on Record Management (physical and digital) in NOUN. These principles provide a philosophical foundation for the development and implementation of a comprehensive record management policy that aligns with the values and goals of NOUN. They help guide decision-making and actions to ensure the responsible and effective management of both physical and digital records. Here are some principles that shall guide such Policy.

5.1 Academic Excellence

Upholding the highest standards of academic achievement.

Policy Implication: Ensuring that records accurately reflect academic accomplishments, research outputs, and scholarly activities while preventing any form of academic misconduct or fraud.

5.2 Transparency and Accountability

Commitment to openness, transparency, and accountability.

Policy Implication: Establishing clear guidelines for record creation, maintenance, disposal, and promoting transparency in record management

processes. Holding individuals and Departments accountable for their roles and actions in managing records.

5.3 Data Privacy and Confidentiality

- Respecting and safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of individuals and sensitive information.
- Policy Implication: Implementing robust security measures to protect both physical and digital records, ensuring compliance with data protection laws, and establishing clear guidelines for handling confidential information.

5.4 Historical Preservation and Institutional Memory

- Preserving the historical and institutional legacy of the university.
- Policy Implication: Implementing archival practices for historical records, ensuring the long-term preservation of significant academic and administrative documents, and considering the transfer of relevant records to institutional archives.

5.5 Efficiency and Innovation

- Embracing efficiency and innovation in operations.
- Adopting modern technologies for digital record management, optimizing workflows, and promoting efficient processes to enhance accessibility and reduce administrative burdens.

5.6 Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Fostering an inclusive academic community and ensuring accessibility for all.
- Designing record management practices that consider the diverse needs of the university community, provide equitable access to records, and accommodate individuals with different abilities.

5.7 Environmental Responsibility

- Demonstrating environmental responsibility.

- Implementing sustainable practices in record management, such as reducing paper usage, promoting electronic document storage, and adopting energy-efficient technologies.

5.8 Continuous Improvement

- Commitment to continuous improvement and adaptability.
- Policy Implication: Regularly reviewing and updating record management policies and procedures to align with evolving technologies, legal requirements, and the changing needs of the university.

5.9 Education and Training

- Investing in education and training for all stakeholders.
- Providing training programs and resources to educate staff, and students on record management practices, ensuring a shared understanding of the importance of responsible information stewardship.

5.10 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Adhering to all applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards.
- Establishing policies that ensure compliance with data protection laws, privacy regulations, and any other legal requirements related to record management.

6.0 Policy on Statements

policy statements for record management (physical and digital) would involve tailoring the language to the specific needs, goals, and context of the University. Below are some generalized policy statements that shall serve as a starting point. These statements cover key aspects of record management:

6.1 Policy Statement on Compliance

NOUN is committed to compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards governing the management of physical and digital records. This includes adherence to data protection, privacy, and retention requirements.

6.2 **Policy Statement on Record Creation and Classification**

Records must be systematically created and classified to ensure accuracy, consistency, and relevance. All records shall be appropriately labeled, and their classification shall align with the University needs and regulatory standards.

6.3 **Policy Statement on Accessibility**

NOUN is dedicated to providing authorized personnel with timely and efficient access to records. Access controls will be implemented to protect sensitive information, and measures shall be taken to ensure accessibility for individuals with diverse needs.

6.4 **Policy Statement on Security**

Both physical and digital records will be secured to prevent unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. Security protocols will be regularly reviewed and updated to address emerging threats.

6.5 **Policy Statement on Record Retention and Disposal**

A systematic approach to record retention and disposal will be maintained. Records will be retained for the required period **at the university's management discretion** and their disposal will be carried out in accordance with legal and regulatory obligations.

6.6 **Policy Statement on Integrity and Authenticity**

The institution is committed to preserving the integrity and authenticity of records. Measures will be implemented to prevent unauthorized alterations, and audit trails will be maintained to trace changes made to records

6.7 **Policy Statement on Training and Awareness**

Employees and relevant stakeholders will receive training on record management practices. Awareness campaigns will be conducted to foster a shared understanding of the importance of responsible record management.

6.8 **Policy Statement on Continuous Improvement**

The institution recognizes the dynamic nature of record management and is committed to continuous improvement. Policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated to incorporate best practices and emerging technologies.

6.9 Policy Statement on Archiving

Archival practices will be implemented for historical and significant records. The institution will establish criteria for the transfer of records to archives, ensuring the preservation of institutional memory.

6.10 Policy Statement on Environmental Responsibility

The institution is committed to be environmentally responsible on record management. Efforts will be made to reduce paper usage, promote electronic storage, and adopt sustainable practices in alignment with the institution's environmental goals.

These policy statements provide a foundation for NOUN comprehensive record management policy. Customization based on the University specific needs, legal requirements, and organizational culture is crucial for the successful implementation of such policies.

7.0 Policy Implementation

7.1 Implementation Statement for Record Management Policy

National Open University of Nigeria is committed to effective implementation of the Record Management Policy to ensure a responsible and secure handling of physical and digital records across all Departments and Units. The following key steps and strategies shall guide the implementation process:

7.2 Policy Communication and Training

The Record Management Policy will be communicated to all staff, faculty, and relevant stakeholders through official channels. Comprehensive training programs will be developed and conducted to ensure that individuals understand their roles and responsibilities in line with this policy.

7.2 Appointing Responsible Parties

Designated individuals within each department or unit will be appointed as Record Custodians. These custodians will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of record management practices within their respective areas.

7.4 Record Classification and Inventory

A systematic classification system for both physical and digital records will be established. Each department will conduct a thorough inventory of their records, identifying the types, locations, and access levels associated with each record category.

7.5 Access Controls and Security Measures

Access controls for digital records will be implemented based on roles and responsibilities. Physical records will be stored in secure locations with restricted access. Regular security assessments will be conducted to identify and address potential vulnerabilities.

7.6 Technological Infrastructure

The institution will invest in and maintain modern technological infrastructure to support digital record management. This includes the implementation of secure servers, backup systems, and record management software to facilitate efficient storage, retrieval, and security of digital records.

7.7 Retention and Disposal Procedures

Clear guidelines for record retention periods and disposal procedures will be established. Regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with these guidelines, and secure methods of disposal will be employed to protect sensitive information.

7.8 Continuous Monitoring and Auditing

Continuous monitoring and auditing mechanisms will be put in place to track record management activities. Regular internal and external audits will be conducted to assess compliance with the Record Management Policy and to identify areas for improvement.

7.9 Integration with Institutional Processes

Record management practices will be integrated into existing institutional processes to ensure seamless operations. This includes aligning record management with academic, administrative, and research activities.

7.10 Periodic Review and Updates

The Record Management Policy will undergo periodic reviews to assess its effectiveness and relevance. Updates will be made to reflect changes in technology, regulations, and institutional needs.

7.11 Stakeholder Feedback and Collaboration

Feedback from stakeholders will be actively sought and considered in the ongoing refinement of record management practices. Collaboration between departments and units will be encouraged to share best practices and address common challenges.

By implementing these strategies, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) aims to establish a culture of responsible record management, safeguarding the integrity, accessibility, and security of information while meeting legal and regulatory requirements.

8.0 Sanction of Violation this Policy

Sanctions for violating the policy on record management (physical and digital) are essential to ensure compliance, protect sensitive information, and maintain the integrity of record-keeping practices. The specific sanctions shall vary, depending on the severity and nature of the violation, as well as the University's policies. Here is a list of potential sanctions that shall be applied:

8.1 Verbal or Written Warning

For minor or unintentional violations, individuals shall receive a verbal or written warning outlining the specific breach and emphasizing the importance of compliance with record management rules.

8.2 Additional Training

Individuals found in violation shall be required to undergo additional training on record management practices to enhance their understanding and awareness of the policies and procedures.

8.3 Probation

For repeated violations or more serious breaches, individuals shall be placed on probation, during which their record management activities are closely monitored, and additional oversight is implemented.

8.4 Loss of Access Privileges

In cases where individuals have deliberately violated policies, their access privileges to certain records or record management systems shall be restricted or revoked as a disciplinary measure.

8.5 Corrective Action Plan

Individuals found in violation shall be required to develop and implement a corrective action plan outlining steps to address and rectify the consequences of the violation.

8.6 Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary actions, such as suspension or other employment-related consequences, shall be taken against employees or individuals who repeatedly or intentionally violate record management policies.

8.7 Legal Consequences

Serious violations that involve legal implications, such as unauthorized access, tampering, or destruction of records, shall result in legal action, including fines, civil liability, or criminal charges.

8.8 Termination of Employment or Enrollment

For severe or repeated violations, individuals shall face termination of employment (in the case of staff) or expulsion (in the case of students) from NOUN.

8.9 Loss of Research Funding or Grants

Researchers or Departments found in violation of record Management policies shall face consequences such as the loss of research funding or grants as a result of non-compliance.

8.10 Reputation Damage

Individuals found in violation may experience damage to their professional reputation within the institution, and the consequences of the violation shall be documented in personnel or academic records.

It is important for National Open University of Nigeria to clearly communicate these potential sanctions in its record management policies to serve as a deterrent and to ensure that individuals are aware of the consequences of non-compliance. The severity of the sanctions shall be proportionate to the nature and impact of the violation, and due process shall be followed in applying sanctions.

9.0 Policy Alignment

Policy alignment on record management involves ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices related to managing records are consistent, effective, and aligned with organizational goals, legal requirements, and industry standards. Here's how policy alignment can be approached in this context:

1. **Policy Development:** Develop a comprehensive records management policy that outlines the organization's approach to creating, storing, accessing, retaining, and disposing of records. This policy should be aligned with the organization's mission, objectives, and regulatory requirements.
2. **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Ensures that record management policies comply with relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards governing the retention, protection, and disclosure of records, such as data protection regulations, industry-specific compliance requirements, and retention schedules.
3. **Record Classification and Organization:** Establish policies for classifying records based on their content, importance, and sensitivity. Define procedures for organizing records in a systematic and consistent manner, including naming conventions, indexing, and metadata tagging.

4. **Access and Security Controls:** Implement policies and procedures to control access to records based on the principle of least privilege, ensuring that only authorized personnel can view, modify, or delete records. Establish security measures to protect records from unauthorized access, loss, or damage.
5. **Retention and Disposal:** Develop policies for determining the retention periods of records based on legal, regulatory, operational, and historical requirements. Establish procedures for securely disposing of records that have reached the end of their retention period, whether through destruction, archiving, or transfer to another party.
6. **Record Storage and Archiving:** Define policies for storing records in appropriate formats and locations, whether physical or electronic. Establish guidelines for managing archival records, including storage conditions, retrieval procedures, and preservation measures to ensure their long-term accessibility and integrity.
7. **Record Retrieval and Use:** Develop policies and procedures for retrieving records efficiently when needed for business operations, audits, legal proceedings, or other purposes. Ensure that authorized personnel have the necessary training and access privileges to retrieve and use records effectively.
8. **Training and Awareness:** Provide training and awareness programs to educate employees about record management policies, procedures, and best practices. Ensure that employees understand their roles and responsibilities in managing records and are aware of the importance of compliance with record management policies.
9. **Monitoring and Compliance:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring compliance with record management policies and procedures, such as regular audits, reviews, and assessments. Take corrective actions as needed to address non-compliance and improve record management practices.
10. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and update record management policies and procedures to reflect changes in organizational needs, technology, regulations, and best practices. Solicit feedback from

stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for innovation in record management practices.

By aligning policies on record management with organizational goals, legal requirements, and industry standards, organizations can ensure the effective management, protection, and use of records to support business operations, compliance, and decision-making processes.

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