

KEEPING THE RIGHT INFORMATION

As employees of Curtin University we all have a responsibility to create information that supports the work that we do. Another responsibility is to capture any information that we create, maintain or receive so that we can refer back to it as necessary.

Records support everything we do, and we need to ensure they are managed well so that we can:

- Make good decisions.
- Provide quality services.
- Be accountable.

Clearly not every single piece of information that we create or receive during the course of our work needs to be captured. This advice sheet has been designed to assist you with identifying what information needs to be kept.

University records.

A University record (*or otherwise known as a business or corporate record*) is information created or received by anyone acting on behalf of Curtin, that has been recorded in any format (*e.g. hard copy or electronic*), that provides evidence of business functions, activities and transactions. University records contain the information that we need to support our business operations, decisions, authorisations and future planning. They also provide evidence of organisational accountability and compliance, as well as capturing Curtin's corporate memory.

Ephemeral records.

An ephemeral record is information that we create or receive that has no continuing value to Curtin. These records are generally only needed for a short period of time, and once their usefulness or reference ceases they can be destroyed.

What type of information is it?

The following lists provide a guideline of what information belongs in these categories, however, they are by no means exhaustive. If you need help identifying what information needs to be captured, please contact Records & Information Management on 9266 7050 for advice.

UNIVERSITY RECORDS

- Committee minutes and agendas.
- Policies and procedures.
- Official reports.
- University publications.
- Research data.
- Significant drafts.
- Some external publications.
- Documented decisions/authorisations.
- Financial, legal & historical information.
- Original student records.
- Original staff records.
- Contracts/agreements.

EPHEMERAL RECORDS

- Exact duplicate copies.
- Advertising material.
- Trivial exchanges e.g. thank-you messages.
- Reference material.
- External publications – e.g. stationery catalogue.
- Routine or rough drafts.
- Documents that contain no ongoing value to the University.
- Personal information that is not work-related.

Points to remember.

- If you are unsure whether to create a University record or not, then ask yourself the following questions:
 - Has an activity, transaction or decision occurred which relates to a University activity?
 - Did this lead to a decision or action that might need to be justified or referred to again?
 - Will I need to keep evidence that a piece of advice or recommendation was given?
 - Will this information be needed again?
 - Will someone else need this information at some stage?

If you answered 'Yes' to any of them, then it is advisable to create a University record.

- Sometimes ephemeral records support the information contained in University records and therefore become University records themselves. **If an ephemeral record supports other information contained on a file / folder it should be retained and stored with that information.**
- Clearly identify ephemeral records by marking them as duplicates or reference material, to simplify their disposal. This material can then be destroyed once reference ceases. Additionally, we also suggest that:
 - Ephemeral paper documents: should be stored in 'Reference Only' folders, which can be ordered via our [website](#).
 - Ephemeral electronic documents: should be stored in folders that contain the words 'Reference Only' in the title.
- Capture any significant telephone conversations by sending a follow up email that summarises the conversation or create a detailed file note (*if it is not appropriate to send an email*). Ensure that the following key details are included: the date, parties involved, position titles, agreements / decisions made etc.
- Make sure meeting minutes are well documented and captured in a folder on your J Drive.
- Research information &/or data are University records. Apply for space on the [Research Drive \(R Drive\)](#) to store your electronic research data.
- Personal work that belongs to a student (*e.g. assignments*) should be returned to them.
- Information you create on behalf of Curtin, no matter where you are working, is owned by the University. Personal emails that are sent from a Curtin account are also owned by Curtin.

Further assistance and useful links

We also recommend that you read the following related advice sheets:

- [Managing Legacy Information](#).
- [Managing Information at Curtin](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact us on 9266 7050 or via email at: rim@curtin.edu.au, should you require additional support. For general information management advice, please visit our website at: rim.curtin.edu.au.

This advice sheet is made under and supports the [Information Management Policy](#) and associated [Procedures](#).