RECORD KEEPING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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RECORD KEEPING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

This policy seeks to ensure that the company business is adequately documented through the generation and capture of records, that those records are managed in accordance with best practice and that they are disposed of in an orderly and accountable way. It provides the context for the development of strategy, policy, systems and procedures on recordkeeping.

DEFINITION

Recordkeeping is the making and maintaining of complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. It is a critical function that is performed through the collective action of employees and systems throughout all organizations.

2. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all staff employed as permanent, contract and/or temporary.

3. POLICY APPLICATION

The company must have a recordkeeping program which establishes recordkeeping policies, standards, guidelines and procedures.

The records management program should:

- be identifiable from all other existing programs
- be supported by corporate policy
- be planned
- ensure formal responsibility for all aspects of the records management program is appropriately assigned
- Be positioned at the most effective level within the organizational structure.
- ensure that records management operations and systems are organized according to the needs and structure of the public office, the nature of its business and the prevailing technological and regulatory environments
- be staffed by personnel with appropriate skills
- be implemented throughout the organization
- be audited regularly

Outcomes to be achieved through the implementation of the records management program include:

- better management of the risks associated with the existence or lack of evidence of organizational activity

- recordkeeping infrastructures which help minimize the risk of mismanagement or corruption
- support for the objectives archival policies and procedures
- minimum performance standards for recordkeeping
- the provision of records management services directly to units and assistance for units to manage their records on a devolved basis
- education for staff at all levels about recordkeeping practices and responsibilities
- the retention of information as records where required and the disposal of duplicate or unnecessary material from recordkeeping systems
- improved access to records and improved decision making
- better performance of business activities
- better organizational accountability

4.1 RECORD KEEPING PROGRAMME

The centre will establish a recordkeeping program to ensure that the records are adequately created, managed and archived in the course of business.

The program will comply and other relevant standards, legislative and recordkeeping requirements and other organizations policies.

4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

Formal responsibility for the records management program will be delegated to an appropriate manager. The role of the Manager is to:

- establish records management policies for the organization as a whole
- establish corporate standards for recordkeeping and records management
- measure performance of business units and workgroups against those standards
- provide consulting services to business units
- develop corporate electronic records management strategies
- work with other managers of information resources to develop a coherent information architecture across the organization, and
- work with other accountability stakeholders, including auditors, and executive management, to ensure that recordkeeping systems support organizational and public accountability

Recordkeeping is not the province of archivists, records managers or systems administrators alone, but is an essential role of all employees. Users and stakeholders of the recordkeeping system must be aware of legal constraints as well as the need to comply with other policies and guidelines affecting recordkeeping, particularly those concerning misconduct and maladministration. Responsibility for the effectiveness of the program rests with nominated individuals at all levels of staff must be aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities within the program and related best practice guidelines.

Maintaining awareness and knowledge of policies and guidelines is the responsibility of all staff members.

4.3 ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Electronic records are records which are communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment and as such are a part of the recordkeeping program. These records are subject to a separate policy on electronic recordkeeping. Best practice guidelines on the management of electronic records including email will be issued periodically.

4.4 ARCHIVAL RECORDS

Records of a continuing value to the company and which have been determined to have administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential or historic value will be retained in the centres Archives.

4.5 POLICY MANAGEMENT

An integral part of the recordkeeping program will be the development of systems to create, capture, codify and disseminate the policy.

4.6 STANDARDS, LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The recordkeeping program is subject to a full range of laws applying that include occupational health and safety, financial and company, copyright, breach of confidence, defamation, privacy, contempt of court, harassment, vilification and anti-discrimination legislation, the creation of contractual obligations, and criminal laws.

Some laws and agreements require access to records or the information contained therein to parties outside. These include telecommunications legislation, freedom of information legislation, Evidence Act, other legal rules (e.g. concerning subpoenas), agreements with external internet suppliers that govern the transmission of e-mail and publication by electronic means.

The electronic recordkeeping system operating the company computers and related telecommunications systems are protected by criminal law provisions in computer crime laws and telecommunications interception laws.

3.7 CODES OF BEST PRACTICE

A good recordkeeping program enables to account for decisions and actions by providing essential evidence in the form of records. Sound recordkeeping practices are a fundamental basis for accountable and efficient business, effective service delivery and the preservation of the collective memory.

The policy will be supported by codes of best practice and operational guidelines. A range of training, bulk records storage and consultancy services offered will provide further guidance and assistance to staff at the practical level.

The company is required to keep records and is aware of the associated benefits of good recordkeeping practices, including:

- support for policy formulation and managerial decision-making;
- meeting legislative and regulatory requirements;
- protection of the rights of members and the interests.
- better performance of business activities;
- protection and support when involved in litigation, including the better management of risks associated with the existence or lack of evidence activity;
- support for consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration;
- documentation of activities, development and achievements; and
- support for research and development activities.
- aware of poor recordkeeping practices including:
- failure of employees or systems to make records in the first place;

- making records that are inadequate to meet accountability and other requirements;
- failure to capture records into recordkeeping systems so that they are subject to arbitrary destruction or cannot be found when required;
- failure to identify and retrieve the authoritative version of a record where multiple versions exist;
- failure to maintain records during the time necessary to meet specific accountability requirements;
- failure to assign responsibility for different aspects of recordkeeping at appropriate levels in the organization;

3.8 PROTECTION OF RECORDS

Records will be preserved and maintained over time for as long as required to meet administrative, legal, fiscal and archival requirements;

3.9 ACCESS TO RECORDS

- All records received or created by staff in the course of their work for filing are official records that belong and are to be available and accessible to any authorized staff member;
- A staff member's right to access records will be determined by the relevance of the records to the performance of their duties, their level of delegated authority, privacy considerations, legal professional privilege, commercial-sensitivity and other specific considerations where confidentiality restricts the normal right of access

to records. Authorization from a member of the administrative staff may be required before access is granted;

- Staff are not permitted to give access to records to unauthorized persons or agencies;
- The company is required to comply with legislation that permits access to its records by members of the public and authorized external agencies, or as part of a legal process such as discovery or subpoena. Applications for access to university records must be in writing, and access is subject to exemptions permitted by specific legislation and to privacy, legal and commercial considerations;
- The transfer of original central files and official records to any outside person or agency, in the first instance, requires the express approval of the Manager, Records Management & Archives or the General Counsel & University Secretary;
- The company records must remain available and accessible while they are required to meet administrative needs and external accountability requirements.

3.10 RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

- Staff are required to retain and dispose records in accordance with retention and disposal authorities;
- Staff are required to comply with the retention and disposal standards
- The records must be appraised for possible continuing archival value. That is, records with historical significance as well as interest to the community must be retained permanently archives;
- Any records subject to legal processes such as discovery and subpoena or required for internal or external review or investigation or relevant to an application made under the *Freedom of Information* must be protected and not destroyed even if the retention period has passed;
- Records with no value to the centre may be destroyed at any time without reference to the disposal authorities. These records only need to be retained for a very limited period of time and include announcements of social events, leaflets, flyers, and copies or extracts of documents sent only for reference;
- Where the official version of a record is verified as being already maintained in recordkeeping system a copy may be destroyed at any time without reference to the disposal authorities.

4. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy will be circulated to all employees and a workshop for all staff will be conducted to familiarize them with the policy.

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Policy will be evaluated on a regular basis and reviewed once a year.

All key Stakeholders will be consulted as part of the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria will include:

- The degree of compliance with the Policy.
- The degree of compliance of the records management program with ETDPSETA ETQA requirements.
- The extent to which the recordkeeping program has reduced risk.

6. DOCUMENTATION

- An approved master copy (hard-copy) of the Record Keeping Policy
- An electronic copy of the Record Keeping Policy
- A signed circulation list of employees that received the Policy.