



Information and Records Management Framework

Created by the Governance Office

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1. Introduction

Abertay University is a diverse organisation that creates, receives and uses recorded information in a wide variety of formats. The increased emphasis on good information governance and security brought about by the General Data Protection Regulation and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) requires that the University manages its information effectively to achieve compliance. This is made more crucial by the technological transformation that has been initiated at Abertay University by the Digital Strategy and Information Security project.

Aside from better governance, security and compliance, developing a good information and records management (IRM) culture at Abertay brings benefits in relation to more efficient work practices and resource savings that in turn will lead to a better environment for our staff to work in. More efficient use of our storage resources also helps contribute to our climate change agenda.

Implementation of information and records management requires key framework documents to provide overarching guidance on how this will be done. This Information and Records Management Framework (IRM) provides information on the key components of the system needed to implement successful information and records management at Abertay University.

It should be read in conjunction with the:

- Information and Records Management (IRM) Policy – which sets out the University's commitment and authority for the development and implementation of information and records management at the University along with a hierarchy of responsibility for the monitoring and continued support for IRM.
- Information and Records Management (IRM) Outline Project Plan that provides information on the project implementation that will develop the system in the Framework.

2. Policy and Legislation

Successful implementation of the system depends upon the existence of two key documents to provide the authority, and guiding framework for development and implementation of information and records management at Abertay University. They are the:

- Information and Records Management (IRM) Framework – which documents the future overarching framework for the implementation of information and records management at the University, and the components and functions of the system that the project will put in place. The IRM Outline Project Plan provides a summary of how the aims of the Framework will be achieved.
- Information and Records Management (IRM) Policy – which sets out the University's commitment and authority for the development and implementation of information and records management at the University along with a hierarchy of responsibility for the monitoring and continued support for IRM.

Alongside the policy framework, the system must also operate and be developed within relevant related policies, legislation, and standards. These are recognised in detail within the IRM Policy, with the most important being:

- The [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#), and the UK [General Data Protection Regulation](#)
- The [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(FOISA\)](#)
- The [Environmental Information \(Scotland\) Regulations 2004](#)
- Related University Information Governance policies and strategies (e.g., FOISA Strategy, the Data Protection Policy)
- Related University IT Security Strategies
- The University's Archive Policy
- The University's Strategic Plan
- The International Standard for IRM - ISO BS 15489:1 2016 (Information and Documentation – Records Management)

3. Aims and Objectives of the System

The information and records management system constitutes an approach for realising the benefits of effective IRM at the University.

These benefits include:

- Effective management of information and records
- Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Efficient use of staff time
- Space savings
- Increased accountability
- Cost reduction
- Reduction of risk
- Improved working environment

The ultimate aim of the system is to provide the functions of information and record-keeping across the University to support the implementation of the IRM Policy, with devolved practices in the Schools / Services being supported by the Governance Office's guidance and training for staff. This approach will ensure effective use of all resources whilst allowing the needs of different departments to shape the nature of the implementation of information and records management in their areas.

The system aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- All university information and records are captured and managed effectively.
- All recorded information is readily accessible to staff, with appropriate levels of access control applied where necessary.
- Retention policies exist for all information and records, and the policies are regularly applied as appropriate, according to the policies.
- Provision for long-term storage of information and records where applicable, and risk mitigation of vital and other important records.

- The development and maintenance of a “light touch” information and records management system to manage all of the University’s recorded information assets, with the majority of functions being achieved through existing or procured technology and automation.
- Relevant training programmes for all University staff to ensure communication of information and records management principles, practical advice for implementation, and training in the new system.
- Establishment of an appropriate body to oversee implementation of information and records management at the University providing staff support, and ongoing monitoring and audit of the system to identify and address issues and problems.
- Clearly defined oversight and responsibility for information and records management across all areas of the University as set out in the IRM Policy.

4. Implementation of Effective Information and Records Management

Effective information and records management at Abertay University will operate on a devolved basis. The IRM Policy describes the various levels of responsibility for oversight and implementation. In practice the policy will be implemented as follows:

- The Governance Office has overall responsibility for information and records management at Abertay University. It has two members of staff dedicated to it – the Records Manager and Information Governance Officer, and the Archivist and Records Manager. They will be responsible for the overarching implementation of the Project, running the system on completion, carrying out periodic reviews of key documentation, and will also provide support and guidance on information and records management to staff throughout.
- The work will also be overseen and supported by an Information and Records Management (IRM) Group (currently the Project Board). It will help to steer the strategic direction of IRM and assist the Governance Office in its work where required. Its core membership will consist of Governance Office staff and members from other Schools / Services affected by IRM or involved in its work.
- The University IRM Policy places responsibilities on all staff for the effective management of information and records in their own areas. It also places responsibilities on Information Asset Owners (IAOs) and Information Asset Managers (IAMs), as set out in the IAO and IAM Role Specification document, to ensure that the policy is implemented and that staff in their area are aware of the requirements and receive appropriate training.
- The Governance Office will produce high-level guidance and training to allow the Schools / Services to manage the information and records that they create and receive. This will include training on use of the information and records management system.

- The Governance Office will work with the Schools / Services to support them in information and records management work, e.g., on information asset registers, file-plans etc and advise on procedures required for managing their information and records.
- The Governance Office will work with the Schools / Services to support them in developing and reviewing policies for the retention, disposal, and archiving of their information and records.
- The Governance Office will gather periodic feedback from users of the system, and carry out regular audits of it, addressing issues as they are identified.

The IRM Group will implement and oversee information and records management, continuing to support Schools / Services with this function, producing training and guidance on it, monitoring the system, and reporting on related matters to SMT on a regular basis.

5. Information and Records Management System Components

The Information and Records Management system at Abertay University will aim to conform to the specifications for IRM laid out in two standards –

- ISO BS 15489: 2016 (Information and Documentation – Records Management)
- ISO 16175: 2020 Processes and functional requirements for software for managing records

In summary, it will consist of the following components that will need to be maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose:

An **Information Asset and Risk Register** detailing the record series held by the Schools / Services, identifying their creators, location, members of staff responsible for their maintenance, vital records designations where appropriate, identification of risks to records, and mitigations for these.

A **Business Classification Scheme and File-Plan** providing a list of record series supporting the functions and activities carried out by the University.

A **Records Retention Schedule** providing retention periods for the University's records in the Business Classification Scheme and File-Plan, and disposal actions to be applied to the record series once the retention period has ended. The Schedule will help guide staff with disposing of records as part of the management process and be applied by the full system when it is developed.

The Retention Schedule is a core part of the information and records management system that realises benefits in the following ways:

- It ensures a uniform approach to the retention and disposal of records across the University
- Time savings in decision-making on record disposal
- Increasing confidence in accuracy of information
- Reduction in electronic and physical storage requirements
- Facilitates easier office moves
- Helps to ensure statutory compliance
- Reduction of liability issues
- Compliance with ICO Data Protection Guidance, and the FOISA s61 Code of Practice on Records Management
- Operational consistency across the University

Metadata Schema detailing the information that will need to be created and collected by the information and records management system for records that are added to it. This is “information about information” that is used to maintain records and keep them accessible during their lifecycle from creation to disposal. The metadata labels will include keywords to make the records discoverable through a search engine, as well as maintenance metadata such as names of creators, audit trail information, and records retention information.

Information Architecture providing the “light-touch” system for capturing records into the information and records management system, labelling them with manual and automated metadata to manage them through their lifecycle, e.g. keywords to make them discoverable to searches, file-plan and records retention metadata, audit trail and security metadata etc. The Information Architecture provides facilities for conducting searches for records, and other functions, such as producing operational statistics, reviewing audit trails, and carrying out automated disposal by applying the retention schedules.

Training and Guidance providing guidance and support to staff in basic information and records management, using the system, and details on individual procedures in order to give staff the confidence to carry out information and records management in the devolved way that is intended.

Audit Procedures will be carried out to provide full reviews of the system to ensure it is fit for purpose.

6. Monitoring, Audit, and Oversight

Overall oversight of information and records management at the University is carried out by the Vice Principal (Strategy and Governance) and University Secretary.

In practice, day-to-day monitoring of the Project and the ongoing development of the system after its completion will be implemented by the IRM Group. This body will monitor progress against an agreed action plan, as well as considering issues raised with it by the Schools / Services through the Information Asset Owners and

Managers network maintained by the Governance Office in the course of their routine work on the system. In addition to this, the IRM Group will be responsible for overseeing the development and running of regular audits of the information and records management system to identify and address any issues and ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The IRM Group will meet once a month and regularly report to the Senior Management Team. High level reporting on information and records management will be made to the Senior Management Team and as appropriate to Finance and Corporate Performance Committee (FCPC).

7. Communications

Regular and clear communications and training are crucial to the successful development and running of the System. The IRM Group will work with colleagues in Communications, People Services, and IT Services to maintain effective communications, training, and other activities (e.g. induction). The objective is to keep staff informed about information and records management issues, any changes that occur, and promote continued staff buy-in and usage of the system.

8. Measuring success – Information and Records Management Action Plan

As part of its work the IRM Group will produce an Information and Records Management Action Plan (initially an action plan for the Project) that will list the major activities and future projects initiated by the IRM Group. The Plan will include information about the project, including targets, proposed activities and indicators showing progress and successes.

The Action Plan will be created and updated on a proactive basis to ensure that it continues to support the IRM Framework. It will be reviewed regularly, and progress will be reported to the Senior Management Team.

9. Definitions

A list of definitions for technical language relating to information and records management is provided by the Governance Office's **Definitions of Common Information and Records Management Language**. Please consult this document if any of the unavoidable technical language used in this document is unclear.

10. Help and Advice

For additional help and support for anything related to this Framework, or an issue relating to information and records management more generally, please contact the Governance Office via email at infosmart@abertay.ac.uk