## CORPORATE RECORDS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS - IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING EMAILS AS UNIVERSITY RECORDS[1]

*(Amendments to version **03.0**, Appendix IV, UPR IM11, are shown in italics.)*

"**Contents**

1    **INTRODUCTION**

Email is used to carry out a wide range of University business such as contract negotiations, policy development, employment matters, communication with students, University announcements and circulation of reports and meeting minutes. Email correspondence is routinely used to make and record decisions and is often the only record of such transactions, replacing traditional paper records. As a result, some emails and their attachments are potentially records of value and must be managed as such, under the terms of the University's Records Management Policy (UPR Records management and Archiving and Retention of Prime Documents and Business Records – IM11) to ensure their integrity and usability.

2    **PURPOSE**

This document provides guidance for managing those emails identified as being important University business records. It describes how such email messages should be identified, captured and stored as part of the University's corporate memory.

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[1]    The Corporate Records Managements Standards set out in this document were approved by the Chief Executive's Group on 5 June 2009.

3          **IDENTIFYING EMAILS AS RECORDS**

Emails can be categorised into two types; non-business emails which can be deleted regularly and important University business emails which need to be treated as records retained in line with this policy.

3.1       **Non-business emails**

Emails with the following content should be deleted on a regular basis once they have been read or dealt with:

- personal correspondence such as social arrangements, lunch etc.
- publications, promotional material, URLs and similar materials that are publicly available;
- meeting arrangements (catering, room allocation etc) and accept/ decline messages;
- internal communications such as 'staffq' or other informal distribution lists;
- notices of employee activities such as holiday, team-building days, invitations to work-related events (and responses), meetings etc.
- routine business activities such as thank-you messages and emails you have been copied (cc'd) into for information only;
- routine requests for information;
- spam email;
- out of Office messages;
- copies of circulated meeting minutes etc. where the original is held centrally.

3.2       **Important University Business records**

All email sent and received which has business value to the University must be retained in accordance with the agreed Records Management Policy and retention schedule
(UPR Records management and Archiving and Retention of Prime Documents and Business Records – IM11).

Important University business records include:

- authorisations and instructions;
- communications relating to official business;
- emails that add value or support to an existing record;
- submissions to and formal communications with external organisations (eg. HEFCE)
- formal correspondence with students;
- formal drafts of agreements and legal documents and associated correspondence;
- minutes and agendas of committees and working parties;
- formal correspondence with applicants, members of the university or other individuals or organisations that have business or legal value;
- negotiations and commitments on behalf of the University;
- where legal advice is involved;
- email which is part of the audit trail for a business process, investigation or decision.

The following records will be archived centrally and/ or by the originator so do not need to be archived by individuals and can, therefore, be destroyed after reading:

- published minutes and agendas of official University Committees, working parties and project boards;
- email distributed on the official UHQ email list.

4          **CAPTURING AND MANAGING EMAIL RECORDS**

4.1        **Who should capture an email?**

As email messages can be sent to multiple recipients, the following guidelines give an indication of who is responsible for capturing an email as a record. Following this guidance will enable duplication to be minimised and also reduce the risk of important emails not being captured.

- For internal email messages, the sender of an email message, or, for thread email messages, the initiator of an email dialogue (this includes requests for approval or authorisations and all subsequent responses).
- For messages sent externally (including to students) the sender of the email message.
- For incoming external messages (including from students) received by one person, the recipient.
- For incoming external messages received by more than more person, the person responsible for the area of work relating to the message. If this is not clear it may be necessary to clarify who this is with the other people who have received the message.

4.2        **Where should emails be saved?**

Any emails identified as an important business record as listed in 3.2 should be stored where they are accessible to all staff who need to see them. This is important for business continuity purposes and also to enable the University to meet its freedom of information and data protection obligations.

Emails that are identified as important business records must be saved alongside the relevant related documents and records in the relevant folder of work in the University Document Management system or the  appropriate agreed folder in the shared storage area (*X:*drive).

4.3        **How should emails be saved?**

Emails should be stored in the format in which they were created to protect their integrity and authenticity. The following briefly describes how emails created and received in MS Outlook should be saved.

To save an email:

- open the email you want to save;
- choose 'Save As' and save as an **.msg** file. This will ensure email is saved in its native format, along with all related metadata (sender, time/ date sent etc.) **or**
- click and drag email into an appropriate folder on your shared or personal electronic storage area or into EDRM;
- if necessary, rename the saved email appropriately and clearly to ensure it is easily identifiable in the future. Include subject or context, name of sender or recipient and date transmitted (using format YYYY-MM-DD). Adding time sent or received (hh:mm) for thread emails will ensure they are stored in chronological order;
- when saving attachments, save within the accompanying email if the email adds context. If not save the attachment as a separate file remembering to give it a meaningful subject title (eg. content description, date and version).

4.4        **How long should emails be kept for?**

The length of time for which an email needs to be kept is determined by its content. For example, email correspondence relating to contract negotiation should be kept alongside the contract for as long as is specified on the retention schedule (Records Management and Archiving and Retention of Prime Documents and Business Records – IM11), whereas an email relating to arrangements for a meeting can be deleted as soon as the meeting has taken place.

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5       **OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE EMAIL MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVING**

Managing emails identified as records effectively provides the following benefits:

- adds to the corporate memory of the University and aids better quality decision-making;
- ensures related records are held together in one system, rather than across a number of systems;
- ensures official records created by email are available and accessible to employees;
- provides evidence of decision-making and ability to defend decisions during litigation
- meets the requirements for legislative and external accountability (Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998) and avoids penalties for non-compliance;
- prevents the arbitrary or illegal destruction of University records;
- promotes sharing of information;
- minimises space used for storage of unnecessary or duplicate records.

6       **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any further queries please contact the Records Manager."

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Mrs S C Grant
Secretary and Registrar
Signed:  **11 December 2015**