

Records Management policy

Introduction: The importance of records management

1. The term 'record' can refer to any recorded information held by an organisation. The focus of records management is generally the longer term storage and management of information.
2. Good records management is essential to ensure that corporate information is:
 - 2.1 Kept for as long as required to meet our legal obligations and regulatory, financial and business needs;
 - 2.2 Stored in a way which prevents information being lost or destroyed,
 - 2.3 Organised in such a way that it can be retrieved when required (for example, in order to respond to a Freedom of Information request or to a public inquiry),
 - 2.4 Kept only as long as necessary, particularly if the information contains personal data.
- 3 We also have a duty to preserve some records in the long term for the benefit of those with an interest in the history of the NMC, the history of NMC's predecessor organisations and the history of the professions we regulate.

Scope of this policy

4. The focus of records management and the scope of this records management policy is the long term storage and management of information.
5. The policy applies to the management of all documents and corporate information in all formats or media held by the NMC.
6. Records management is one activity within the larger sphere of information management. Other aspects of information management such as data quality management, data protection and information security are out of the scope of this policy. However, this policy refers to areas where this overlap between records management and other relevant policies and areas of information management activity.

Aims of the policy

- 4 This policy sets out our commitment to achieving high standards in records management. It also:
 - 4.1 Sets out roles and responsibilities for records management;
 - 4.2 Sets out our policy on archiving and digital preservation for the long term storage of records kept for historical research purposes;
- 2 The policy is supported by procedures and guidance for the information and records management team. It is also supported by guidance and training for colleagues which explain the practical steps we all need to take to ensure good records management.

Roles and responsibilities

- 3 The Chief Executive and Registrar has overall accountability for records management.
- 4 The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) has overall responsibility for managing records management risk.
- 5 Directors are responsible for approving this policy and may delegate responsibility for approving this policy and any amendments to it to the Information Governance and Security Board (IGSB).
- 6 Information asset owners are responsible for making decisions about information assets including corporate records. For example, asset owners decide how long specific records will be kept. A list of information assets and their owners is recorded on the information asset register. The full responsibilities of information asset owners are set out the in our guide for Information asset owners.
- 7 The information and records team is responsible for managing the electronic document and records management system (Trim), providing training and guidance on records management and managing NMC's physical archived records including archived Fitness to Practise case material.
- 8 All colleagues have a responsibility for good records management and are expected to follow our records management training and guidance.

Compliance

- 9 All those working for us must comply with this policy.
- 10 Any alleged breach of this policy may result in an investigation which may result in action being taken by us up to and including dismissal; removal from office; or, termination of a contract for services. We'll cooperate with law enforcement authorities if a criminal violation is suspected, and reserve the right to claim compensation from individual(s) through normal lawful processes in the event that the NMC suffers damage.

Policy statements

Achieving good records management

- 11 We are committed to achieving high standards in records management. To achieve this colleagues are expected to follow the records management training and guidance provided by the information and records team.
- 12 The information and records management team provides training and guidance which explains the practical steps we all need to take to ensure good records management. This covers the appropriate use of our records management system, where and how to store records of different types, how to organise information, and document version control.

Records retention

- 13 Records will be kept for the retention periods set out in the corporate information retention schedule and in the formats and locations set out in the schedule. The retention schedule also sets out the rationale for keeping information for the stated timeframes.
- 14 The information retention schedule will be regularly reviewed. Significant changes to the retention schedule and approved by the Information Governance and Security Board.

Disposal and permanent deletion of records

- 15 Records will be permanently disposed of or deleted when they meet the end of their retention period as set out in the information retention schedule. Further authorisation for records disposal or deletion is not required from asset owners when the disposal or deletion is in line with the information retention schedule. Some IT systems automatically delete data when it reaches the end of its retention period.

16 Where the record type is not listed in the retention schedule, or there is an intention to dispose of or permanently delete records in a timeframe which is different from that set out in the retention schedule the information and records team will obtain approval from the asset owner or the appropriate director or assistant director before the records are permanently destroyed or deleted.

Information security and records management

17 All information assets, including our key repositories of corporate records, are listed on our information asset register which forms part of our information security management system.

18 Corporate records are given security classifications as set out in our Information Classification and Handling policy.

19 Electronic records will be backed up as set out in our data and systems back-up policy.

20 Control of access to records will comply with our Information access control policy

21 When confidential records are disposed of they will be disposed of in a way which is compliant with our confidential waste destruction policy.

Business continuity and records management: vital records

22 Vital records are records that are essential for the ongoing business of the NMC and which enable us to operate during a disaster.

23 As part of business continuity planning, each directorate will:

23.1 Identify and keep a list of its vital records.

23.2 Store vital records in a location and format which ensures they remain available to use in the event of a disaster.

23.3 List any vital records in their directorate business continuity plan.

Preservation of long term records and archives

24 Some of the records we hold are of long term historical value and need permanent preservation. This is in accordance with the duty we have to be an open, transparent and accountable organisation. Maintaining a record of our past actions and decisions also acts as our long term memory and provides research materials that will meet the needs of the academic and research communities as well as the general public in future years.

Examples of records to be selected for permanent archiving include committee papers, annual reports and documents about major changes within the organisation.

- 25 The information retention schedule lists those records that will be permanently kept for their long term historical value.
- 26 Digital records will be managed throughout their lifecycle to ensure their long term preservation and reliability. This will be achieved by capturing both the record content and record properties at the point when the record is created and ensuring that record properties are retained with the digital record.

Management of Fitness to Practise case material

The Guidance on the retention and archiving of Fitness to Practise case records supplements this corporate records management policy and sets out practical guidance for the storage, retention and destruction of case-related information.