

Vital Records Guideline

Section 1 - Introduction - What are Vital Records?

(1) Vital Records are critical business records which are essential to maintain the continuity of full operations during or following an emergency, and to protect the legal rights and interests of the University. Vital Records may be in electronic or physical formats.

(2) Vital Records are those which if destroyed would prevent the University from functioning effectively.

(3) Vital Records need to be stored with the appropriate classification, management and security controls so that they are available for retrieval whenever needed.

Section 2 - Major Characteristics of Vital Records

(4) The major characteristics of Vital Records are as follows:

- a. they allow ACU to operate during a disaster;
- b. they enable the organisation to re-establish its legal and financial functions and position after a disaster;
- c. they establish and protect the rights and interest of the organisation and its employees, customers and stakeholders;
- d. they are essential for the continuation or resumption of a mission-critical function, or to protect the legal and financial rights of the University, its employees, or the public;
- e. they are irreplaceable or extremely difficult to replace; and
- f. they may be in any format, including paper, electronic, and photographs. The electronic version is designated as the vital record unless retaining the record in paper form is mandated by a fiscal, administrative or legal requirement.

Section 3 - Protecting Vital Records

(5) Vital Records may be protected in various ways. This protection depends upon their record format, which could include:

- a. physical records that need to be secured and stored within ACU-controlled premises;
- b. physical records that might be duplicated and stored in a secure off-site location;
- c. physical records that may need to be copied and stored within an ACU Approved Business System or within the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Office of General Counsel or at additional specified locations across the various ACU campus locations;
- d. electronic records that need to be protected through the ACU IT system including comprehensive backup and recovery procedures.

(6) The Records and Information Management Services (RIMS) Team in the Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate must maintain an inventory of Vital Records which is used to easily identify, track and retrieve these

records. This inventory must be maintained in Content Manager or the equivalent Electronic Content Management (ECM) Approved Business System.

(7) Vital Records in physical formats should be stored in appropriately fire-rated equipment with appropriate temperature controls.

(8) Vital Records in electronic formats must be stored in approved ACU business systems.

Section 4 - Staff Responsibilities for Vital Records

(9) Faculties and business units are required to:

- a. work with the RIMS team to identify which business records should be designated as Vital and advise RIMS about any updates to these records;
- b. assist the RIMS team to determine the appropriate method(s) to identify and protect Vital Records;
- c. Maintain copies of transmittal forms and box labels for Vital Records stored off-site;
- d. facilitate the retrieval of Vital Records in an emergency or disaster; and
- e. ensure that any Vital Records stored off-site are identified and updated in the Vital Records Inventory maintained by the RIMS team.

Section 5 - Transferring Vital Records to Off-site Storage Locations

(10) If required, the RIMS team will be responsible for transferring Vital Records to the relevant off-site storage provider.

(11) For further details or advice about identifying and managing Vital Records, please contact the RIMS Team in the Legal, Assurance and Governance Directorate by logging a [Service Central](#) request.

Section 6 - Review

(12) Unless otherwise indicated, this Guideline will still apply beyond the review date.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st April 2024
Review Date	29th April 2024
Approval Authority	Director, Governance
Approval Date	1st April 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Diane Barker Director, Legal, Assurance and Governance
Responsible Manager	Matthew Charet National Manager, Governance
Enquiries Contact	Records and Information Management Services