



## **POLICY AND RULES ON RECORDS, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT**

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# POLICY AND RULES ON RECORDS, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM MANAGEMENT

## Preamble

Against the background of the vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, advancing our relevance and impact, the Council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “the university”) has adopted this policy on 19 November 2025.

## 1 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with–

- 1.1 the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 1.2 the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997;
- 1.3 the Statute of the North-West University;
- 1.4 the National Archives and Records Services Act, 43 of 1996 (NARS);
- 1.5 the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000 (PAIA);
- 1.6 the Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013 (POPIA);
- 1.7 the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 36 of 2005;
- 1.8 the following international standards applicable to records and archives management:
  - ISO 15489 (Records management)
  - ISO 30301 (Management systems for records)
  - ISO 16175 (Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments)
  - ISO 27001 (Information security management)
- 1.9 King IV, principle 12 (“the governing body should govern technology and information in a way that supports the organisation setting and achieving its strategic objectives”);
- 1.10 any other legislation and amendments to legislation relating to archives-, and records management and electronic transactions and communication and information management as promulgated and updated or published from time to time;
- 1.11 all other policies, guidelines, processes, and standard operating procedures relating to records, archives and museum management of the NWU, including the –
  - 1.12 Policy and Rules on Data and Information Security
  - 1.13 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance Policy
  - 1.14 Personal Information Privacy Policy
  - 1.15 Risk and Compliance Policy
  - 1.16 Business Continuity Policy
- 1.17 the NWU Information Strategy and Framework for Information Governance.

## 2 Definitions

In this policy –

**“archives”** refers to those records, as indicated in the NWU File Plan and Disposal Schedule, as having continuing and historical value for the NWU and that are kept permanently for future reference, research and institutional memory. It can also refer to the physical facility in which these are located;

**“artefact”** refers to an object as being a man-made, physical object often of historical significance that helps to illustrate or understand the past, including tools, clothing, equipment or artwork that are preserved because of their connection to events or people;

**“business continuity”** means the capability of the NWU to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption;

**“business entity”** refers to all faculties, schools, units, and departments of the NWU;

**“data”** means the representation of facts, concepts or instructions in a formal manner, suitable for communication, interpretation or processing by human or by automatic means;

**“digitisation”** is the process of converting records and information into a digital format;

**“digitalisation”** means the process of using digital technologies to change how work is done, improve efficiency, and create new opportunities by moving from traditional manual processes to smarter, technology-driven ones;

**“disposal”** means that records and information are either destroyed or archived in accordance with an approved procedure after the expiry of the retention period indicated in the NWU File Plan and Disposal Schedule;

**“information”** means knowledge concerning objects such as facts, events, things, processes or ideas, including concepts that have a particular meaning within a certain context;

**“museum management”** refers to the area of management concerned with the running of the museum's administrative business, being concerned with the acquisition, care, and maintenance of museum objects and historical artefacts;

**“NWU File Plan and Disposal Schedule”** refers to a pre-determined and logical structure into which NWU records are arranged and stored according to subjects to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records;

**“records management”** refers to a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance. Sound records management requires that records are managed in terms of an organisational records management programme governed by an organisational records management policy;

**“record”** refers to anything in any medium or format that is produced due to the undertaking of a business activity or legislative requirement, including electronic documents, emails, texts, and social media channels, and is evidence of the fact that a process or procedure has taken place in support of the activity or requirement;

**“retention”** refers to the period an official NWU record has administrative or operational value to the NWU and should be kept in safe and secure custody in records storage areas or on the network drive, approved electronic system, or space by the relevant record owner until a disposal action is undertaken;

**“special collection”** refers to a set of rare, unique, or valuable materials kept separately from general archives due to their historical, cultural, or research importance including items such as manuscripts, photographs or artefacts requiring special care, storage, and access conditions, and

**“student leadership”** refers to all leadership and management structures to which students may be elected or appointed including the Student Representative Council (SRC), Student Campus Councils (SCC), academic student societies, house committees, sports committees, and any other subordinate student leadership structure(s).

## 3 Scope of the application

This policy applies to all NWU records in the complete lifecycle (capture, create, access, distribute, use, store, secure, retrieve, and disposal) by all NWU employees or members of student leadership in the course of carrying out business activities, which requires taking appropriate action to protect the authenticity, reliability and continued useability of such records.

## **4 Policy statement**

The NWU recognises that information contained in records is a strategic asset that supports operational efficiency, decision-making, and the university's competitive advantage.

It is therefore the policy of the NWU to –

- 4.1 value records as strategic assets by treating all records generated by the NWU as vital assets;
- 4.2 implement sound record-and-archive-management practices that support good decision-making, integrity, accountability, and transparency in an integrated manner across the university, while enhancing the operational impact and efficiency of business-processes;
- 4.3 ensure quality and accessibility by maintaining records that are authentic, reliable, usable, accurate, relevant, and of high quality, supported by appropriate technical and administrative systems;
- 4.4 promote diversity and inclusion by ensuring that heritage and information from all NWU campuses are collected and preserved to ensure diverse and inclusive representation in archives and museum collections, and
- 4.5 support digital transformation by establishing and maintaining an environment facilitated by digital platforms and AI-enabled tools towards efficient digitisation, digitalisation, automation, and the optimal functioning of RAM processes and systems in alignment with the university's digital transformation strategy.

## **5 Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 Council**

The NWU Council as governing body must ensure the appropriateness of a policy framework for the recognition of records as a strategic asset of the university.

### **5.2 Technology and Information Governance Committee (TI Gov)**

The TI Gov, as a committee of the council, is responsible for technology and information governance and management aimed at realising the following objectives:

- 5.2.1 leveraging information as a strategic asset to sustain and enhance the university's intellectual capital which includes proper classification, retention and accessibility of records for institutional memory and research purposes;
- 5.2.2 establishing an information architecture that supports confidentiality, integrity and availability of information, thereby supporting reliable recordkeeping systems and safeguarding archival records against unauthorised alteration or loss;
- 5.2.3 protecting the privacy of information, particularly within records and archives to comply with legislation (such as POPIA) and to uphold the ethical handling of personal and sensitive information;
- 5.2.4 continually monitoring security measures to safeguard information, which includes the long-term preservation of digital archives and ensuring that both current and historical records remain authentic and tamper-proof;
- 5.2.5 implementing risk-mitigation measures to manage information risks, ensuring that records are protected against threats such as data breaches and system failures, and
- 5.2.6 ensuring compliance with relevant rules and regulations, including governing records retention, legal admissibility and archival preservation standards, to maintain accountability and legal defensibility of the university's records.

### **5.3 University Management Committee (UMC)**

The UMC plays a management role in accordance with the council's direction. It oversees the integration of the Information Strategy into the university's strategic priorities and business processes to ensure compliance, sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and clear role definition.

## **5.4 Information Management Committee (IMCom)**

The IMCom as a sub-committee of the UMC must advise the UMC on the implementation of matters relevant to information management at the university by –

- 5.4.1 ensuring adherence to legislation and directives governing records and archives and other applicable NWU policies;
- 5.4.2 implementing the NWU Information Governance Framework and related policies, rules and procedures that govern the creation, classification, retention, storage and disposal of records throughout their lifecycle;
- 5.4.3 managing the university's records as strategic assets, ensuring their confidentiality, integrity, authenticity and availability to support the university's accountability and long-term preservation of intellectual capital;
- 5.4.4 applying appropriate measures to protect personal, sensitive and confidential information within records in compliance with legislation and records management standards;
- 5.4.5 clarifying roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in the creation, use, storage, sharing, transfer and disposal of records;
- 5.4.6 overseeing the implementation of standardised and aligned procedures for managing throughout the records' lifecycle;
- 5.4.7 identifying and mitigating risks associated with records and archives, including risks of unauthorized access, loss or destruction of records, and
- 5.4.8 providing training to ensure compliance with the records management policy and procedures to promote best practices.

## **5.5 Information officer and deputy information officers**

The vice-chancellor is in terms of section 1 of PAIA the information officer of the NWU, and the registrar and deputy vice-chancellor: research and innovation, community engagement and postgraduate studies are in terms of section 17 of PAIA the deputy information officers of the university.

## **5.6 Line managers**

All line managers must –

- 5.6.1 take overall responsibility for all records management aspects in the business entity for which they are responsible to adhere to the rules contemplated in paragraph 9 and the applicable standard operating procedures, and
- 5.6.2 ensure that all employees in the business entity concerned attend the compulsory records management training within three months of being appointed, and to repeat such training every three years.

## **5.7 Employees**

- 5.7.1 Employees who create documents during the performance of their functions are the record owners responsible for the daily administration and proper management thereof.
- 5.7.2 Anyone who creates, stores, shares, or disposes of records must follow the applicable rules on classification, retention, and disposal contemplated in paragraphs 9 and 10.

## **5.8 Student leadership**

All levels of student leadership who create, store, share and dispose of records are responsible to adhere to the relevant rules as contemplated in the rules contemplated in paragraphs 9 and 10.

## **5.9 Records management representatives**

Records management representatives in each business entity of the university are responsible for assisting the record owners with the implementation of the records, archives and museum management practices as contemplated in the rules in paragraphs 9 and 10.

## **5.10 Information Technology (IT) department**

The IT department –

- 5.10.1 provides and maintains the technological infrastructure needed to store, secure and retrieve digital records efficiently, and
- 5.10.2 ensures data and information integrity through backups, manages access controls to protect sensitive information and supports the implementation of the electronic records management system and archival preservation system.

## **5.11 Records, Archives and Museums department**

The Records, Archives and Museums department is responsible to –

- 5.11.1 position records, archives and museum resources as strategic assets that support the “NWU 2024 and beyond” strategy;
- 5.11.2 lead the digitisation, digitilisation and automation of records, archives and museum processes to align with the NWU digital strategy and create smarter, more accessible services;
- 5.11.3 develop and implement consistent records, archives, and museum management practices across the university to ensure integrity, compliance, and efficiency, in accordance with the NWU’s 2024 and beyond strategy pursuing operational excellence;
- 5.11.4 safeguard the NWU’s intellectual, cultural and historical heritage to ensure continuity, accountability and strong institutional identity for future generations;
- 5.11.5 ensure that records and heritage resources are accessible, authentic and trustworthy, thereby supporting research, teaching and learning and governance, and
- 5.11.6 protect the NWU from legal, reputational and operational risks by ensuring compliance with legislative, regulatory and ethical requirements for records, archives and museum management.

## **6 Records management**

The NWU is committed to ensure that records management services are effective, efficient, and compliant, supporting operational excellence, legal compliance, and good governance. To achieve this, the university must –

- 6.1 ensure that an operational environment is established in which the policy, rules and SOPs are implemented in a consistent, standardised and aligned university environment;
- 6.2 drive and coordinate the migration towards a reliable and compliant digitalised records-management dispensation at the NWU;
- 6.3 develop and implement training programmes for employees and students regarding all aspects of records management;
- 6.4 establish and maintain records management processes;
- 6.5 ensure that all electronic records, both new and legacy, have clearly defined retention periods in line with legal, regulatory, and operational requirements;
- 6.6 apply appropriate disposal processes to reduce risk, maintain consistent compliance, and support good information governance;
- 6.7 establish and maintain an electronic records management environment that supports digital transformation and enables automated classification, metadata management, secure storage, and easy retrieval of records, ensuring that both new and legacy records are efficiently managed, accessible, and compliant with retention policies, and
- 6.8 monitor and evaluate records management effectiveness, compliance, and alignment of the overall records management programme and university objectives.

## **7 Archives management**

The NWU is committed to ensure that its archival management environment is fully digitised, secure, accessible, and aligned with legal and organisational requirements. To achieve this, the university must –

- 7.1 ensure the establishment of an operational environment in which the policy, rules and SOPs are implemented in a consistent, standardised and aligned university environment;
- 7.2 establish a fully digitised and accessible environment for all archival records, including images, heritage collections, and special donated collections, to enhance preservation and accessibility;
- 7.3 develop and maintain archival management processes to ensure sustainability, consistency, and proper management of records;
- 7.4 implement systems and modern technologies to support long-term preservation, accurate classification, and easy retrieval of archival records, with special attention to photo archives and selected special collections, and
- 7.5 monitor and evaluate archival services to ensure compliance, effectiveness, and alignment with the university's strategic objectives.

## **8 Museum management**

The NWU is committed to provide accessible, engaging, and sustainable museum services across all campuses, integrating both physical and digital platforms. The university must achieve this by –

- 8.1 ensuring an operational museum environment aligned with current legal requirements, best practices, and technological advancements;
- 8.2 establishing and maintaining both an e-museum and a physical museum environment to provide interactive, educational, and accessible experiences for internal and external stakeholders, and
- 8.3 maintaining museum management processes to ensure sustainability, consistency, and effective management of museum collections, including the use of digital tools and archive management software.

## **9 Rules for records, archives and museum management**

The implementation of this policy takes place in accordance with rules for records, archives and museum management approved by the UMC, which must include the following elements:

### **9.1 Records management**

- Records management representatives
- Creation of records
- Classification
- Records storage (paper-based and electronic)
- Electronic records management systems
- Digitalisation
- Retention
- Disposal
- Training and awareness

### **9.2 Archives management**

- Identification, acquisition and sourcing of archival records
- Description of the archival records
- Digitisation
- Preservation of the archival records
- Security and access

### **9.3 Museum management**

- Identification, acquisition and sourcing of museum objects and artefacts
- Description of the museum artefacts
- Maintenance and preservation of museum artefacts

- Display or use of the museum artefacts in the physical and e-museum environment

## **10 Standard operating procedures and guidelines**

Standard operating procedures and guidelines must be developed and made available by the Records, Archives and Museum department for all records, archives and museum management practices, intending to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity.

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