Records Management Policy

Introduction

Information is a corporate asset and the records of the RVC are important sources of administrative, evidential and historical information. They are vital to the organisation in its current and future operations, for the purposes of accountability, and for an awareness and understanding of its history and procedures. This Policy was approved by the College's Senior Management Group (SMG) on 26th November 2007. It will be reviewed in September 2012.

Definition

Records are defined as all those documents, regardless of format, which facilitate the business carried out by the University and which are thereafter retained to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

Records management is defined as a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, distribution, storage and disposal of records.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff in the course of carrying out their responsibilities as RVC employees. Records and documentation created in the course of research, whether internally or externally-funded, are also subject to contractual record-keeping requirements.

A small percentage of the University's records will be selected for permanent preservation, as part of the institution's archives, for historical research and as an enduring record of the conduct of business.

The Policy has been developed with other RVC Policies in mind, and with reference to the International Records Management and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Freedom of Information. It will be subject to any changes in Government legislation, the College strategies and developments in records management standards and practice, with the approval of SMG.

Policy Statement

The RVC is committed to creating, keeping and managing its records in a manner that accurately documents its activities and that meet its statutory obligations.

The aim of the Policy is to define and provide a framework for managing the College's records and to establish accountabilities to ensure the College:

- creates and captures authentic and reliable records to demonstrate evidence, accountability and information about its decisions and activities
- maintains securely and preserves access to those records as long as they are required to support College operations
- confidentially destroys those records as soon as they are no longer required
- meets legal record-keeping requirements, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- identifies and preserves securely those records deemed worthy of permanent preservation
- protects vital records, which the College needs in order to function effectively

Implementation

The Policy will be realised by the development of the following:

- a retention schedule to regulate how long records are retained by the College
- a vital records policy to protect those records that are essential to the smooth operation of the institution
- an archive to house those administrative records that need to be retained beyond the immediate operational needs, in a cost-effective manner but from which records can still be retrieved when necessary
- a classification scheme to ensure records that demonstrate College decisions and actions are created and/or captured
- a disposal policy to show the procedures for destroying records so they are disposed of in a consistent manner, by confidential shredding, with documented authorisation,
- a disaster plan to document actions, which need to be taken if a disaster was to occur affecting the archive

Staff Guidance

The Records Manager will provide guide notes for Good Practice in hard copy, and on the intranet for College staff. In particular, guidelines will be supplied in the form of:

- a retention schedule to show staff how long to keep certain types of records in their care so they are not retained longer than is necessary or destroyed before they should be
- guidelines to show staff how to create, capture and record metadata for records in their care to ensure a consistent method is employed across the University that will enable information to be searched easily
- step by step guidelines to show staff how to transfer records to the archive, retrieve transferred records and how to confidentially dispose of records

The College Records Manager will develop and implement, with the help of appropriate staff and resources, a training programme for all members of staff to understand and use the methods for managing information, which are developed as part of this Policy.

Responsibilities

The Records Manager will be responsible for developing the Policy with Heads of Department and other managers, and will be responsible for promoting, implementation, maintaining and monitoring records management in conjunction with academic and non-academic departments.

The Records Manager with the assistance of Heads of Departments will:

- ensure records are held on the most appropriate medium for the task they perform
- transfer records to the Archive
- identify those records that are vital to the operation of the University, and ensure they are preserved appropriately
- preserve appropriately those records identified as worthy of permanent preservation
- review records that have reached their retention period
- confidentially destroy with appropriate documentation those records that have reached the end of their retention period

All employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable.