

Guidance for managers on the retention of staff records

Purpose

This document provides guidance for managers on the retention of any records they hold which concern members of staff, for example records of annual leave, and records held which concern other individuals such as job applicants.

These guidelines are concerned with ensuring that we do not keep personal and/or special category data about individuals for longer than is necessary, in accordance with data protection legislation. This guidance supports the University's [Record Retention Schedule](#).

Personal data is defined as data which relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. Special category data concerns the subject's race, ethnicity, political views, religion or philosophical belief, trade union membership, genetic data, health, sex life or sexual orientation.

Principles

- Included in the core principles of the General Data Protection Regulations is a requirement that personal information is accurate, kept safe and secure and for no longer than is absolutely necessary.
- The University retention schedule requires any documentation relating to the employee's contract of employment (such as an offer letter, the contract of employment and other relevant documents) to be held for the lifetime of the employment plus six years or longer in some instances. This information is held in HR Services in a personnel file identified with the individual's name.
- HR Services are also the custodians of any special category data, which is collected for workforce monitoring purposes only and serves to measure the impact of our equality and diversity policies.

- The Occupational Health Service, DASS and the Counselling Service keep records of all health referrals and may do so for longer periods than for contractual documentation.
- Safety Services keep records of all accident reports forms, near miss information and accident investigations.
- Documents relating to job evaluation, including appeals, will be retained by the HERA team and on files in HR Services.
- Staff Learning and Development Unit (SLDU) keep records of any training undertaken through the University's training catalogue or where sponsorship has been secured through the University.
- Other documents need only be held from the date of the last action plus six years. This will apply to the type of document typically held by the line manager as listed below.
- If a manager is in doubt about whether certain records require retention for longer than six years they should seek advice from HR.
- Information regarding unsuccessful job applicants must only be kept for a period of six months following the decision to appoint, unless they applied as part of a recruitment exercise that resulted in the University sponsoring an employee's visa application. In this specific instance, records should be returned to HR Services who will retain the documents for the required period.
- Wherever possible, documents should be held electronically as opposed to paper copies.

Record Keeping

For simplicity of disposal, rather than storing the documents in individual files it is recommended that, as far as is possible, documents are stored in libraries, in date order, relevant to their topics. This should enable ease of pruning the data once the retention period has elapsed and will mean that information relating to leavers will also automatically filter out of the record system.

All libraries of paper and electronic records (including emails), should have restricted access so that they can only be visited by the line manager responsible and/or an appropriately designated person. Paper records must be kept in a secure, locked cabinet. Electronic records should only be stored on secure University network drives and must not be stored on portable media unless appropriately [encrypted](#).

At the end of the specified retention period, records must be disposed of in accordance with the [Guidance for Disposal of Confidential Records](#). Paper records must be shredded using a local shredding machine or using the services of Shred-it, the University's approved supplier for such services.

Where staff transfer internally to a new area, the only records that should be transferred to the new line manager are those relating to Absence and Attendance (see below). All other records should be retained by the original manager for the period stated below.

The following table sets out the employee records which should be held locally. All other records will be held by HR Services, or the departments stated overleaf. Managers may wish to keep these documents in the following libraries structure:

Library	Contents (examples)	Retention period
Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training and development undertaken • Details of courses and conferences attended • Induction checklist 	Current year plus 6 years.
Performance Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probation reviews • Teaching evaluations • P&DR record (held on system where in use) • Academic promotion records • Performance Improvement Plans • Rewarding exceptional performance and thank you scheme correspondence <p>Note: managers should not keep records of re-grading as these are maintained by the HERA team</p>	Retained to termination of employment plus 6 years.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References written by managers about individuals (e.g. to support promotion cases) or for former members of staff. • References received for new starters. 	<p>Written by UoM: current year plus 1 year.</p> <p>Received by UoM: not retained locally – sent to HR Services for retention. Retained to termination of employment plus 6 years.</p>
Absence and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work meetings following sickness, maternity, career break etc. • Self-certification forms / fit notes • Occupational health reports / DASS reports. • Return to work interviews 	Retained to termination of employment plus 6 years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self cert and fit notes 	
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual leave records • Special leave records • Communication relating to maternity/paternity /flexible working/academic leave, etc. 	Current year plus 6 years.
General personnel related documents (informal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails relating to member of staff. • Informal meeting notes / records relating to staff. 	<p>Retained locally. Not retained in general / current mailbox. Separate email or physical file should be created. As a guideline, retain for “Current plus six years” unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matter is potentially relevant to future litigation, in which case retain for “to termination of employment plus six years” or • matter is a discrete, one off issue that has been resolved and highly unlikely to arise again, in which case erasure may be sooner.
Formal Meeting Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters, reports and meeting notes relating to formal cases such as discipline, grievance, consultation for end of fixed term contract, flexible working applications etc. 	<p>Not retained locally by managers. Record held by HR Services.</p> <p>Retained in HR Services to termination of employment plus 6 years.</p>
Workforce Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts of employment, changes to terms and conditions letters, statement of terms, contract extension details. 	Retained to termination of employment plus 6 years.
Recruitment and Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate assessment /shortlisting notes • Interview notes • Unsuccessful applications <p>Note: Speculative CV’s that do not relate to any specific vacancy should be retained for 6 months.</p>	6 months from appointment of the successful candidate, unless the University sponsored a worker’s visa as a result of the exercise (see principle ix) and unless the University has been notified of litigation in connection with a recruitment exercise.