

**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**

**GOVERNANCE OFFICE**

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT 'SPOT CHECK' REPORT**

This report is issued under section 3.3 of the University's Records Management Policy and in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Procedural Note on the Oversight of the University's Records Management Policy by the Governance Office.

<b>School or Division</b> School of Psychology	<b>Dates of meeting and visit</b> Meeting: 9 Sep 2010 Visit: 24 Sep 2010	<b>Date of report</b> 5 Oct 2010
<b>Responsible Individual</b> Pippa Robinson, School Administrator		<b>Governance Office Lead</b> James Knapton, Governance Officer

**Governance Office Report and Recommendations**

*(Recommendations are shown in italic font.)*

**A. Location and security**

The School maintains its master records in five key locations: the School Office, the School Administrator's office, the Head of School Coordinator's office, an Archive Room, and a shared electronic drive (some contents of which are uploaded to a School-wide intranet). The School Office and Archive Room are keypad protected and all of the other rooms are locked when unoccupied; sensitive materials additionally are locked within filing cabinets. The intranet requires a password for access.

**B. Responsibility**

The School Administrator maintains overall responsibility for records management matters within the School though her team of administrative staff carry out many of the functions surrounding the regular disposal of old papers.

**C. Disposal cycles**

The School conducts regular appraisals and destructions of its old records, notably in the summer vacation. Most older records are held within the Archive Room and are labelled appropriately for destruction. Some manual handling problems surrounding the removal of large quantities of paper for secure destruction were reported and it was suggested that improvements could be made to ensure that EFM colleagues were fully apprised of their role in this. Working files held within the School Office, often containing duplicate rather than master records, are assessed annually for their ongoing utility and destroyed if no longer required.

**D. Assessment against the Master Records Retention Schedule**

The following entries from the Schedule were assessed.

2.4.1 Agendas, minutes and papers of formal School-level committees. Due to the high turnover in committee support staffing, the School has chosen to treat electronic versions of committee papers (stored on a shared drive and made available via the intranet) as the

master record. This is not strictly in line with the terms of the Schedule (wherein the hard copy is by default regarded as the master record) but it works effectively and is well managed. Copies are held for the appropriate retention period as stated in the Schedule. There are a number of duplicate hard copies held in both the School Office and in the Archive Room. *We would recommend that these duplicate hard copies are rationalised and, where appropriate, destroyed.*

3.1.1 Core electronic and paper record of individual students. In common with the rest of the University the School maintains some aspects of a student's core electronic record on the central University database. It receives paper files for each new student at the start of their registration and these are returned to the central administration on the student's graduation or departure. These files are stored in locked cabinets in the Archive Room while held within the School. This is all in accordance with the Schedule.

3.3.1 Formal academic feedback to individual students. Hard copy feedback provided to students on their assessed work is kept together with that work and stored and destroyed accordingly (see 3.4.6 below). Electronic feedback via Sussex Direct is maintained as part of the core student record. *The storage of hard copy feedback is not in line with the requirements of the Schedule and we would recommend that consideration is given to the feasibility of placing this onto the student's core paper record. However, the Governance Office is mindful in this case that the Schedule may not suggest the most appropriate course of action and we will give due consideration to this.*

3.4.6 Examination scripts, submitted assessments, dissertations and theses: undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. First year submissions (which do not count towards a student's final degree classification) are returned to students once the work has been marked and the School retains just the accompanying cover sheet. All other assessed work, along with exam scripts, is retained in line with the Schedule's requirements and in clearly labelled boxes either in the School Office or (for older work) in the Archive Room. *While the School is operating well in this regard and boxes are clearly marked, we would recommend that the disposal process of old scripts and assessed work from the Archive Room is brought fully up-to-date.*

3.4.8 Examination Board minutes. The School maintains these in line with its other committee papers (see 2.4.1 above). A hard copy is retained in the School Office for reference and an electronic copy is placed on the shared drive. Records go back to 2004/05 which is deemed to be a sensible retention period and in line with the Schedule's requirements.

4.2.4 Anonymised summaries and analyses of student feedback on individual taught programmes. The School does not conduct formal feedback surveys on its degree programmes because such matters are covered by the National Student Survey. This entry is therefore not applicable.

4.4.2 Course Handbooks and readings lists produced before the taught course begins for a new cohort of students. A template for Course Handbooks has been produced and is published on the School intranet. Individual course Convenors write the Handbooks which are then uploaded to Study Direct and the intranet. Approximately 5 years' worth of old Handbooks are stored on the shared drive; this retention period is lengthier than the Schedule requirement but it is noted that these are required for accreditation visits by the British Psychological Society.

4.4.4 Anonymised summaries and analyses of student feedback on individual taught courses. For the past couple of years this has been done electronically on Sussex Direct through Course Evaluation Questionnaires. All CEQs are completed and submitted

anonymously. Hard copy summaries of feedback on individual courses are held from 2004/05 to date and are due for future destruction in line with the Schedule.

### **E. Conclusion**

The Governance Office considers that good systems are in place within the School to enable the management of its records in line with the Policy and Schedule. The process improvements we have recommended should be regarded as minor suggestions to help the School achieve an even greater degree of compliance. We have noted the very comprehensive maintenance of the Schools' records on its intranet and consider this to be a good approach to the storage of records.

### **Response by the Responsible Individual**

The School of Psychology relies heavily on a shared electronic drive and intranet for data storage. In most cases the electronic copy is seen as the master record.

The School will review holding duplicate committee and exam papers.

The School will ensure a regular schedule of destruction in the Archive Room using the Support of Estates Staff.

Due to the volume of students in Psychology it is assessed that it is not feasible to store CWK feedback sheets in the student's file. These are stored with the work and are clearly labelled.