

SOP Title Reference: **Vital Records Policy**

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St George's
University of London

GLAS Policies and Procedures

Vital Records Policy

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1. Introduction

As part of a robust records management program St George's University London (SGUL) will identify records that are required to keep SGUL running in absolute circumstances.

“Vital records are fundamental to an organisation’s ability to function.

Certain vital records contain information critical to the continued operation or survival of an organisation during or immediately following a crisis. Such records are necessary to continue operations without delay under abnormal conditions. They contain information necessary to recreate an organisation’s legal and financial status and preserve the rights and obligations of stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors and citizens.

Some vital records may be unique and difficult or prohibitively expensive to reproduce. However, they may be required in their original form to meet or fulfil evidential requirements.

Records should be classified as vital only for as long as they support critical business processes and fulfil the requirements described above. Once they have fulfilled this role, they should be reclassified”.¹

Most estimates put vital records as 5% of an organisations records and therefore all records produced by a department will not be classified as vital.

2. Purpose

The policy details what records may be classed as vital, how they should be registered, and how they should be stored.

3. Scope

This policy must be followed by all SGUL employees and contractors who create and handle records.

4. Policy

All records must be managed according to the Records Management Policy and Retention Schedules. However vital records play a unique role as in the event of an event occurring that activates the SGUL business continuity plan we need to understand what records are required in order to:

1. Identify and catalogue vital records leading to the creation of a vital records register.

¹ Source: Vital Records: Identifying, Managing, and Recovering Business Critical Records, ARMA International.

2. Duplicate and disperse vital records in order to ensure they are adequately protected.
3. Determine if it is best to store the original offsite.
4. If a record is stored onsite is it kept in a place of special security with limited access and in a controlled environment i.e. storage with humidity and temperature controls.
5. If a record is stored onsite plan how it will be retrieved from the premises.
6. Ensure robust disaster recovery planning i.e. if hardcopy vital records are stored onsite disaster recovery plans must include details on how the records will be retrieved from the site.

Examples of vital records include but are not limited to:

1. Payroll.
2. Contracts.
3. Articles of incorporation.
4. Student records.

5. Compliance

The Records Manager is responsible for monitoring University wide compliance with the vital records policy. Where departments cannot meet expectations this should be logged with the Records Manager.

Any departments wishing to assess their compliance with the policy should contact the Records Manager.

6. Policy Review Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Records Manager.

Document Information		
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