Document Title	**Code of Practice 2: Creating information and records**
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Relevant to	All academic and professional services staff

Staff should apply the following good practice when creating information and records:

1. Document naming and dating

- Name new documents meaningfully and consistently
  - E.g. Information Management Policy 2017-10-11, Information Access Committee Minutes 2018-05-29, NameofCompany Letter 2017-12-01.
- Keep names of documents descriptive but brief / concise.
- Include dates in names of documents
  - Year-month-date format allows for the dates to fall into chronological order.
- Avoid peoples’ names in document and folder names (it gives no indication of what is in the document).
- Avoid the automatic date field in documents as it changes each time a document is looked at, even with no changes made.
- Use acronyms with caution as they may be misunderstood / used differently in different contexts.
- Avoid peoples’ initials for the same reason.
  - Peoples’ initials in minutes are acceptable if there is a list of attendees.
- Words spelled in full are better than abbreviations (unless the abbreviations are understood by all who are using them).
- The name of the document can be added into the footer (automatic filename isn’t necessarily helpful as users of the document may not be able to access that link).
- Always date the document, in the body of the document, or manually in the footer / header.
- Always add the author or authoring department.

2. Folder / Directory structure and naming

- Folder names should be considered carefully – use subject-matter not peoples’ names
  - E.g. Course materials, Health and Safety, Marketing, Meetings, Policies.
- The maintenance of shared drives should be the responsibility of one or two people, adding new folders where necessary, deleting documents where necessary.
- The use of shared drives invites less duplication.

- Security can be applied to shared drives e.g. password-protection of documents, applying Read Only, folders being restricted to groups of people. Assistance should be requested from the IT Service Desk.

3. Drafts and versions

- Drafts are rough or unfinished documents which at some point will change to a final document.
- Versions may be "published" and exist for a time until a change is needed.
- Keep previous versions and drafts only if a record is needed of the previous document.
- Versions should be named as such e.g. V1, V2 etc.
- Incorporate dates into titles of documents.

4. Format / medium

- Think about the best format / medium for your information.
- How long do you need to keep the information?
    - The longer the retention, the more likely it should be kept in paper (for very long retention periods)
    - Electronic data is better for short retention periods
    - Remember that software may become out of date
    - CDs, DVDs, disks, tapes etc. all deteriorate over time, or become damaged
    - Memory sticks may only be useful for very short-term documents
    - Digital data kept for many years needs to be reviewed on a regular basis (this includes data held in databases)
- Authenticity needs to be maintained.
    - Be aware of which is the original document, if there is more than one copy of it
    - Who has access to it, and could it have been changed?
    - Who has responsibility for it?
    - When scanning hard copy to soft copy, authenticity should be maintained
- Refer to the Data Classification Policy and Information Handling Procedures for more information.

5. Filing Systems

- Paper / hard copy filing systems can be arranged: alphabetically by activity, or chronologically; they could be colour coded.
- Think about how close to you physical files need to be in order for you to access them easily if necessary, and to protect them.
    - How often do you need to access them?
    - Do they need to be locked away to protect them?
- Indexes can be created, these could be:
    - Lists of files held (you could produce a list of authorised headings)
    - Indexes of minutes of meetings (in order to find particular minutes more easily)
- Lists and indexes should be kept up to date.