1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose
The purpose of this statement is to establish University-wide policy on the keeping of records in the electronic environment.

1.2 Background
A key element of the UNSW Corporate Plan is the increased use of information technology. UNSW 2000 promotes the use of information technology to enhance administrative systems.

Electronic records that meet the requirements of public accountability and satisfy national and international standards are an integral component of the application of that technology.

While paper is still the most common medium for records, it is a medium being increasingly replaced by the electronic medium as the preferred means of conducting business transactions. In this rapidly changing environment, there is a necessity to capture electronic records.

Good electronic recordkeeping:
- maximises business opportunities
- minimises the risks and liabilities associated with failure to capture and maintain the evidence needed to meet business and accountability requirements
- helps the University move from paper-based to electronic ways of working, bringing environmental benefits and cost savings
- secures maintenance of the integrity of electronic records.

There are also constraints and risks associated with electronic recordkeeping which include:
- risk of loss due to software facilities or poor backup/archiving practices
- effects of technological change (software & hardware changes and incompatibility)
- unsystematic and unregulated PC-based end user computing
- electronic business systems not designed to keep records.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions (based on Australian Standard AS4390, *Records Management*, issued February 1996) apply:
Capture
A deliberate action which results in the registration of a record into a recordkeeping system. For certain business activities, this action may be designed into electronic systems so that the capture of records is concurrent with the creation of records.

Electronic records
Records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.

Information systems
Organised collections of hardware, software, supplies, policies, procedures and people, which store, process and provide access to information.

Record
Recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Recordkeeping
Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

Recordkeeping systems
Information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time.

3. Policy Statement
Good electronic recordkeeping is essential for the creation and capture of electronic records as evidence of business activities.

Electronic records are a component of the total records management program at UNSW. This policy supports the UNSW Recordkeeping Policy (Draft) specifically in the context of the electronic medium.

Records will be managed in such a way that the relationships between non-electronic and electronic records are identified.

Responsibility for the management and maintenance of electronic records rests with individuals at all levels in the University.

UNSW staff who make use of electronic records will do so in accordance with guidelines to make that usage efficient, consistent and compliant.

To ensure that electronic business processes and tools incorporate recordkeeping, business system providers must liaise with the Policy Management Unit for advice on electronic recordkeeping.

3.1 UNSW business systems
The electronic business processes and systems at UNSW which capture records in electronic form must manage the content, context and structure of records as a whole. The systems must ensure that records are reliable and authentic and comply with national and international standards on electronic recordkeeping.

3.2 Retention of records
Where the electronic record is the only record of the business activity, it will be maintained in electronic form as long as required in accordance with relevant statutes, regulations, archival purposes and business needs.
3.3 Access to electronic records
When confidential material is held in electronic form, due diligence must be undertaken by creators and capturers to ensure that such confidentiality is maintained and appropriate access restrictions are assigned. Electronic records must be protected from inappropriate access by authorised levels of access being allocated to individual positions.

3.4 Legal and Policy Framework
Electronic records are subject to the full range of laws applying to electronic communications and to recordkeeping, including copyright, breach of confidence, defamation, privacy, contempt of court, harassment, vilification and anti-discrimination legislation, the creation of contractual obligations, telecommunications and criminal laws.

The management of electronic records must take into account UNSW policies and guidelines.

Certain laws and agreements require the University to give access to records or the information contained therein to parties outside the UNSW community. These include telecommunications legislation, freedom of information legislation, other legal rules (eg concerning subpoenas), agreements with external Internet suppliers that govern the transmission of e-mail and publication by electronic means.

4. Implementation
The Policy Management Unit and the University Archives are identifying those guidelines required to assist staff in the management of electronic records. Audits of business systems will be carried out by system administrators to determine compliance with UNSW policies on recordkeeping.

For information and assistance contact The Policy Management Unit on Extension 2860.

5. Evaluation
The Policy and its implementation will be evaluated regularly. The first review of the policy will take place 12 months from adoption. Academic and general University staff, Heads of Budget Units, Deans and the University Executive will be consulted as part of the evaluation. Evaluation criteria are the degree of compliance with the Policy and the extent to which electronic records are captured.

6. Acknowledgment
In developing this Policy the authors have drawn extensively upon the work of David Roberts, the Records Management Office of NSW and the Australian Council of Archives. Publications used included the draft Policy on Electronic Recordkeeping, Steering into the Future - electronic recordkeeping in New South Wales (1997), Corporate Memory in the Electronic Age - Statement of a Common Position on Electronic Recordkeeping 1996.
## Appendix A: History

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