



Digital Preservation and Archiving Policy

Version Control

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0.8	23/06/2026	Assistant Archivist	References to legislation updated; role titles updated

Document Control

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Related documents

Archival Selection Criteria for GCU Institutional Archive; Archive Centre Mission and Collecting Policy; Information and Records Management Policy v2.2; Information Assurance Charter; Records Retention Schedules; Data Protection Guidelines; Information Classification and Handling Policy; edShare Policies

Acknowledgements

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Digital Preservation Policy, Heriot Watt University

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Glasgow Caledonian University recognises that information is a valuable corporate asset and that conservation of records¹ is essential to preserve the corporate memory. The University recognises the demanding and evolving legislative context in which it operates and its obligations under data protection legislation and as a public authority under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002². It is committed to good practice in records management, including its digital assets and resources, to sustain its core functions and meet its legislative and regulatory obligations. The University is committed to operating in line with international standards and the Scottish Government Code of Practice³.
- 1.2 The records of the University are the information created, received and maintained in pursuance of legal obligations or for business purposes. Some of the University's records are selected for permanent preservation as part of the University's corporate memory in the University Archive. The Archive contains a rich collection of records about the University and wider society which are of educational, cultural and research importance. This policy applies to all forms of digital assets, whether born digital or created from analogue records, which are of archival value to the University regardless of whether they were created within the University or received as a donation.
- 1.3 Digital Preservation is a corporate responsibility; this policy ensures the adoption of procedures and systems that allow the most efficient control of the digital assets of the University.
- 1.4 This policy will be published on the University website and any amendments or revisions will be noted within the document control section. A review will be undertaken on an annual basis with content being updated as appropriate. Policies and guidelines may be altered at any time if amendments are deemed necessary.
- 1.5 This policy should be applied in conjunction with the University's Information and Records Management Policy and retention schedules.
- 1.6 Training, guidance and procedures will be developed to support compliance with this policy.

¹ Appendix A provides a glossary of terms

² And any legislation which supersedes either the Data Protection Act 2018 or FOISA 2002

³ British Standards, ISO 15489:2001, Information and Documentation – records management, 2001; Scottish Ministers' Code of Practice on Records Management and Scottish Public Authorities; ISO 14721:2012 Open Archival Information System (OAIS)

2. Aims of the Policy

The aims of the University's Digital Preservation and Archiving Policy are to ensure:

- That University records, worthy of permanent preservation, are created and maintained in accordance with University Policies to ensure that there are no losses or degradation prior to transfer to the University Archive.
- That the permanently preserved digital assets of the University are secure and accessible in perpetuity.
- Improved awareness of the importance of digital preservation and archiving and the responsibilities of all staff.
- Compliance with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Improved information security.

3. Retaining records for permanent preservation

3.1 Archival records are those with enduring educational, cultural and historical value.

3.2 The University will identify a repository for its digital archive and develop operational procedures for managing digital records throughout the record lifecycle, ensuring the authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of the records.

3.3 The types of records which are of enduring value include:

- Vital records such as title deeds.
- Records which must be permanently preserved by law or regulation.
- Records of policies, structures and processes so that University activities may be understood by future generations.
- Records relating to major decisions, well-known public or international events, persons, or to major events which give rise to interest or controversy.
- Records containing matters of significant regional or local interest.
- Records relating to the origins and history of the University; its organisation and procedures; functions and dissolution.
- Core academic records of GCU students including academic transcripts and examination results.
- Copies of annual and other major University reports.

- 3.4 The authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of digital records will be maintained by staff in Schools and Departments from creation until disposal or transfer to the digital archive.
- 3.5 The Records Retention Schedule will identify records that will be transferred to the digital archive. Staff in Schools and Departments will adopt operational procedures to ensure that this transfer takes place.
- 3.6 The Archive Centre will accession records identified for permanent preservation at the time of transfer to the University Archive.

4. Maintaining and accessing digital assets over time

- 4.1 Digital assets, however created, will be recognised as corporate resources and will be accessible to appropriate colleagues and external partners and stakeholders.
- 4.2 When implementing and developing systems, Project Managers and specialist staff will consider issues such as file format, software requirements and the technology required to access systems which contain electronic records.

5. Transmission and communication of digital assets

- 5.1 To ensure that adequate protection is in place, the guidelines within the Information Classification and Handling Policy will be followed when sharing digital assets within and outside the University.
- 5.2 Where information is shared with partners or others, Information Sharing and Data Processing Agreements must be in place and will outline the overarching principles and arrangements.

6. Access to information

The University will ensure that digital assets are disclosed to individuals and organisations in compliance with the requirements of legislation including the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, the Data (Use and Access) Act, 2025, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004⁴.

⁴ And any legislation which supersedes either the Data Protection Act 2018 or FOISA 2002

7. Roles and responsibilities

The University recognises its corporate responsibilities relating to the preservation of digital assets.

- 7.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education has overall responsibility for, and ownership of, the Policy.
- 7.2 Members of the Executive are responsible for endorsing, implementing and supporting the Policy and any amendments.
- 7.3 Deans and Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that their School/Department adopt and conform to this Policy.
- 7.4 The Director of Library Services is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and the management of the digital archive.
- 7.5 The Director of Library Services and Senior Librarian – Collections and Discovery, and Assistant Archivists will recommend best practice for the creation, management and preservation of records of archival value.
- 7.6 The Senior Librarian – Collections and Discovery and Assistant Archivists are responsible for the selection of records of archival value and will liaise with staff in Records Management to ensure that Records Retention Schedules identify all records worthy of preservation.
- 7.7 The Information Compliance, Governance and Records Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Records Retention Schedule identifies archival records, held in any format, which require long term preservation.
- 7.8 The Director of Library Services and Assistant Archivists are responsible for the cataloguing and maintenance of the University Archive in accordance with professional best practice.
- 7.9 The Director of Information Services and the Director of Library Services are responsible for providing hardware and software solutions which ensure the storage, security and discoverability of archived digital assets.
- 7.10 Members of the Information Governance Committee and Information Management Forum, and

Information Co-ordinators will have key information governance roles.

- 7.11 Individual members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they create and manage digital assets in line with University policy and guidelines.

8. Related Policies and information

Collections Development Strategy

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/library/usingthelibrary/aboutthelibrary/collectionsdevelopmentstrategy>

Information and Records Management Policy

https://www.gcu.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/36317/inforecmanpolicyv2120final.20doc.pdf

Information Classification and Handling Policy

https://www.gcu.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/330990/01.1-POLICY-Information-Classification-and-Handling.pdf

edShare Policy

<http://edshare.gcu.ac.uk/EdSharePolicies.pdf>

Records Retention Schedules

<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/recordsmgmt/documents/>

Data Protection Guidelines

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/leadership/universitygovernance/data-protection>

Appendix A: Glossary

Term	Definition
Accession	The process of formally accepting material into the control of a repository or archive.
Archives	Records that are selected for permanent preservation as part of the University’s corporate memory and for research and heritage purposes.
Digital asset	All forms of digital material preserved in the University Archives.
Lifecycle	The lifecycle of record refers to the record’s lifespan from its creation to its permanent preservation or disposal.
Record	Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.
Records management	Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records.
Vital records	Records which are essential to the University’s operation which, if lost or destroyed, would seriously impair or disrupt operations and might place the University in legal or fiscal jeopardy (or might jeopardise the rights of individuals).