THE STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

BY

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DECLARATION

I, XOLILE PATIENCE COETZER, declare that **THE STATUS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND** is my own work, and that all sources used in this dissertation have been properly acknowledged through referencing.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the Trinity of Heaven (God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), without whom this work wouldn't have been accomplished.

Looking unto Jesus who is the author

and the finisher of our faith.

Hebrews 12:2

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ABSTRACT

Records management seeks to efficiently and systematically control the lifecycle of records that are routinely generated as a result of activities and transactions. Records are a vital asset in ensuring that the institution is governed effectively and efficiently, and is accountable to its staff, students and the community that it serves. Records support decision-making, organize documents, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation. There have been many instances at the University of Zululand whereby records were reported to be misplaced or missing thus raising a question on how are records managed and what system and policies are used in terms of records management. This Master's dissertation sought to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The study used the survey research method, with the questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The study targeted both administrative and academic (Heads of Departments) employees at the University of Zululand. Purposive sampling was used to select 26 academic Heads of Departments and 24 administrative employees, resulting in a total of 50 respondents.

The findings revealed that the University of Zululand still has a long way to go with respect to day-today records management. Apart from the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) which is an Enterprise Management System, no formal records management system was identified at the University of Zululand that deals with either paper-based or electronic records such as emails. There also appeared to be no specific policy for records management. There were no qualified records management practitioners at the University of Zululand, even though there are employees who are hired by the university as so-called 'records officers'. Proper training, workshops and skills in records management are therefore lacking amongst academic and administrative practitioners at the University of Zululand.

The study recommends the development and adoption of an official records management policy, the appointment of a records manager, and the establishment of a records management training program for staff. Furthermore, the study recommends the acquisition and implementation of a suitable campus-wide records management model such as Windows SharePoint Server (WSPS) or other relevant system, and the establishment of a formal records department for recordkeeping.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DUC   -   Durban Umlazi Campus

DUT   -   Durban University of Technology

ERMP   -   Enterprise Resource Management Program

HOD   -   Head of Department

ISO   -   International Standard Organization

ITS   -   Integrated Tertiary Software

NARSSA   -   National Archives Records Service of South Africa

NARS   -   National Archives and Records Service

NASA   -   National Archives of South Africa

PRO   -   Public Records Office

RCM   -   Records Continuum Model

RLCM   -   Records Life Cycle Model

RM   -   Records Management

SAS   -   State Archives Services

SARMM	-	South African Records Management Model
SWOT	-	Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats
UM	-	University Of Manchester
UNISA	-	University Of South Africa
UZ	-	University Of Zululand
USA	-	United States of America
WSPS	-	Windows Share Point Server
WB	-	World Bank

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

Like all higher education institutions in South Africa, the University of Zululand is semi-autonomous in that it receives a portion of its funding from the state, students' fees and stakeholders. Through its activities, the university generates large volumes of physical and electronic data and documents on a daily basis. These documents and data are important and need to be preserved. Universities, like other semi-government or government institutions, are legally bound to retain and preserve documents as a record of their activities and proceedings.

The study was prompted by the fact that in South Africa, government departments and universities are required by law to adopt a systematic and organised approach to the management of records. For example, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) provides the legislative and legal framework according to which records management practices in governmental bodies are regulated. In accordance with section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, 1996, the National Archivist:

(i) Determines classification systems to be applied by governmental bodies;

(ii) Examines public records with a view to issuing disposal authorities on all public records to enable governmental bodies to dispose of records no longer required for functional purposes;

(iii) Determines the conditions subject to which records can be microfilmed or electronically reproduced to ensure that the requirements for archival preservation are addressed timeously; (iv) Determines the conditions subject to which electronic records systems should be managed to ensure that sound records

management practices are applied to electronic records systems from the design phase onwards;

(v) Inspects public records to ensure that governmental bodies comply with the requirements of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act;

(vi)Issues directives and instructions for the management and care of public records in the custody of governmental bodies; and

(vii) Provides training to records managers, senior administrative officials, training officials, work study officials and registry heads with a view to teaching the basics of records management and explaining the National Archives and Records Service's role in promoting efficient records management.

The focus of this study was the status of records management at the University of Zululand.

1.1 Conceptual setting

The research project covered the following themes as stated below;

a)   The Records Life Cycle

b)   The Records Continuum Model

c)   The South African Records Management Model

d)   Records and its characteristics

e)   Records Management

f)   The Management of Records

g)   Related Literature

1.1.1 Defining a record

Records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset. A systematic approach to the management of records is essential for

organizations to protect and preserve records as evidence of activities and transactions. The University of Pretoria (2010:n.p) states that a record is information that is recorded in any form; created or received routinely in the course of the university's business or correspondence; and retained by the university as evidence of such activity. The International Standards Organization [ISO 15489] (2001:3) defines a record as: "Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in transaction of business."

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2005:n.p.) supports by defining a record as "recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business and kept as evidence of such activity". The University of Manchester (2010:n.p) concurs that a record is any piece of recorded information that is produced, received or kept by the university as part of its business processes and which provides evidence of a specific activity can be defined as a record. The University of South Africa (2007:1) likewise defines a record as recorded information, regardless of format or medium, which has been created, received, used, accessed and maintained by the university at large (and/or by its predecessors) as evidence and information in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of business, and this includes e-mails, records in electronic form, and records other than correspondence.

A record is therefore any recorded information that is created, received and maintained as evidence of what happened and when it happened in pursuance of legal and regulatory obligations, regardless of the format in which it was created as stated by the University of South Africa.Records can either be electronic (e.g. emails, internet content, documents, databases, digitally recorded images, etc.) or

physical/printed (any information that is paper-based, e.g. books, newsletters, etc.).

1.1.2 Defining records management

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2009:n.p) defines records management as the management of information resources in a manner that makes information easily accessible, securely protected and stored, and correctly disposed of when necessary. Thus records management controls and oversees the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records. Records management is the process by which internally or externally generated physical or electronic records are managed from their inception, receipt and storage, all the way through to their disposal Ngulube (2000:164); Wallace (1987:2); Yusuf & Chell (1999:10). Place and Hyslop (1982:4) summarize records management as the "process of controlling information from creation through to its final disposition".

Records management therefore seeks to efficiently and systematically control the lifecycle (creation, use, maintenance, archive or disposal) of records that are routinely generated as a result of activities and transactions. This means that records management is also based on the principles of regular review and controlled retention or destruction with the general aim of ensuring cost-effective business processes, legal and regulatory compliance, and corporate accountability. According to Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005:n.p.) "Proper records management involves establishing systematic controls at every stage of the record's lifecycle in accordance with established principles and accepted models of records management." This therefore means that practicing proper records management leads to good management because a university's activities are based on access to the information contained in records.

The International Standard Organisation (ISO15489-1) provides a framework for records management in terms of identifying the regulatory operations of an

organization and how responsibilities for records management are allocated. The IRMT (1999b) stated that records management was that area of general administrative management concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of the records of an organisation throughout their entire life-cycle and in making the information they contain available in support of the business of that organisation.

The IRMT (1999b) definition emphasized the need for efficiency and economy in recordkeeping and records management activities took place within the records life-cycle context. The ISO 15489 Standard on Records Management (2001) defines records management as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. The definition contextualises records management within the records life-cycle concept and emphasizes the evidential nature of records.

Records management in overall aims at underpinning an organizations efficiency, effectiveness and good governance. Efficient record management provides the basis for accountability, protection of rights and entitlements, anti-corruption strategies, poverty reduction and effective management of resources. Competent recordkeeping is the key to attainment of university vision and mission namely; teaching, research, consultancy, innovation, enterprise and services to the community.

1.2 Contextual setting

The University of Zululand was established in 1960 as a fully-fledged university and graduated into a comprehensive institution of higher learning in 2004 (University of Zululand website, 2010:n.p). A comprehensive institution is a public institution that is highly diversified, from acting as a research institution to

teaching the liberal arts. The university is currently the only such institution in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The university has two campuses, the main campus situated in Kwa-Dlangezwa, and the satellite campus of Richards Bay which is based in the port city of the same name (30km to the east). During the mergers of 2004, institutions of higher learning were transformed and re-structured through a proposal released by the then Ministry of Education. The number of universities and technikons was reduced from 35 to 23, with six (6) comprehensive institutions, eleven (11) conventional institutions, and five (5) universities of technology. Prior to this, the University of Zululand had a satellite campus in Umlazi in Durban. The Durban-Umlazi Campus (DUC), as it became known, was transferred to the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in 2004 University of Zululand website (2010, n.p.).

The vision and mission of the University of Zululand is to:

· Provide students from diverse backgrounds with access to an enabling and caring learning and teaching environment;

· Offer relevant programmes that are responsive to the development needs of society; and

· Generate knowledge through research and disseminate this knowledge through publications, teaching, and development in partnership with the community.

Both academic and non-academic departments generate records at the University of Zululand. The academic section consists of four faculties, namely Arts, Education, Science and Agriculture, and Commerce, Administration and Law. These four (4) faculties have a total of 51 departments. 21 departments in the Arts, 7 in Education, 15 in Science and Agriculture, and 8 in Commerce, Administration and Law.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Records are a vital asset in ensuring that the institution is governed effectively and efficiently, and is accountable to its staff, students and the community that it serves. Records support decision-making, organize documents, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation. Searching for a document or record that cannot be easily retrieved is one problem that affects many organizations and also consumes time for the individual searching for that particular document. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) state that, poor records management is guaranteed to result in information gaps that lead to inadequate records and the loss of document heritage. On the other hand, proper records management plays a vital role in making sure that records are kept in a favorable environment and can be retrieved easily and anytime.

Without proper records management, it is very difficult to account for any decision taken. Fraud and dishonesty cannot be easily spotted and be dealt with accordingly if there is no recorded proof. In the case of the University of Zululand, the researcher has observed that there is a challenge in the management of records such that it is not clear how records are managed both physical and electronic. Furthermore there have been many instances whereby records were reported to be misplaced or missing thus raising questions as to what kinds of records are kept by the University of Zululand; how are records managed, what system and policies are used in terms of records management at the University of Zululand? These questions motivated the researcher to research on the status of records management at the University of Zululand since there is no reference of any study that has been done in regard to records management at the University of Zululand.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand and propose recommendations to enhance records management at the intended institution and other institutions if need be.

1.5 Objectives of the study

a) To determine what types of records are kept in the records management system

b) To find out whether the University of Zululand has a formal records management system besides the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which is not a records management system but an Enterprise Resource Management Program.

c) To determine whether or not the university has a formal policy, procedures and/or filing system for records

d) To find out if the policy (if it exists) and the procedures forms part of the university's regulatory structures

e) To find out whether or not the policy (if it exists) and the procedures complies with the government's records management regulations

1.6 Research questions

The research questions of the study were as follows:

    a) What types of records are kept in the records management system?

    b) Does the University of Zululand have a formal records management system besides the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which is not a records management system but an Enterprise Resource Management Program?

    c) Does the university have a formal policy and procedure for managing its records?

    d) Does the policy (if it exists) and procedures form part of the university's regulatory structures?

    e) Does the policy (if it exists) and procedures comply with the government's records management regulations?

1.7 Significance of the study

The study is deemed to be significant to the University of Zululand because it provides a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of records management and demonstrates the shortcomings of current recordkeeping practices at the university. Ngulube (2003:21) states that, "Research into records management trends and practices can lead to a better understanding of records management problems and challenges, as well as providing solutions to what is to be done, and how resources should be used." Moreover, if the recommendations of the study are implemented, they are likely to lead to the improvement of records management practices and also serve as a catalyst for the modification and formulation of records management strategies and policies in the University of Zululand and in other institutions that face similar problems.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

Bak (2004:23) states that all research projects need to have a starting and end point. These necessarily mean that one set distinct boundaries to orient readers and make the study manageable. A research proposal need to demonstrate that one had been able to demarcate or delimit the study. The scope of the study was limited to an examination/ investigation into the status of records management at the University of Zululand Kwa-Dlangezwa Campus. The study looked at records that are generated by the university in both the administrative section and academic departments. The research used quantitative research method. The study used a survey method to assess the status of records management at Unizulu. Purposive sampling was used with a sampling frame of twenty four administrative staff and twenty six academic heads of department.

1.9. Methodology

The study used the survey research method to determine the status of records management at the University of Zululand. Questionnaires were used as primary data collection instruments. The study targeted both administrative and academic

(Heads of Departments) employees at the University of Zululand. Purposive sampling was used to select 26 academic Heads of Departments and 24 administrative employees, producing a total of 50 respondents.

1.10 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters as stated below;

Chapter one

This chapter provides the introduction, conceptual and contextual settings, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, literature review approaches.The chapter was vital, as it set the foundation for other chapters, by narrowing down the issues to be investigated.

Chapter two

This chapter used books, journal articles, government publications, and internet sources. It thus provides a literature review of records management, in particular its status, development, benefits and types. The Records Life Cycle model, South African Records Management model, and Mckemmish Records Continuum model are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three

Chapter three focuses on how the research was carried out and covers the research methodology, research method(s), target population, instruments of data collection, data collection techniques and procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter four

Chapter four presents and analyzes data that was collected from the questionnaires that were distributed to employees at the University of Zululand.

Chapter five

This chapter discusses and extrapolates on the research findings in chapter four.

Chapter six

Provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.11 Ethical considerations/issues

Ethical considerations refer to moral and ethical standards that should be followed in circumstances where there can be authentic or possible harm to an individual or a group, (Churchill 1992:68). Variables that form the basis of ethics include honesty, integrity, courtesy, and consideration. Ethics is a rational effort to systematize the rules, principles and ideas to which people appeal in justifying actions as right and their moral characters as good (Tong 1997:9). Ethics provides a number of methodical tools and action guides with which to pursue individual and collective goals "rightly", whether these goals were minimalist ones, such as personal survival, or maximalistic ones such as universal love.

Ethical issues in research revolve around the researcher's accountability and privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants (Grbich 2004:88). One of the key ethical problems that face researchers in institutions of higher learning is that of plagiarism, which is a great scourge. While the potential for plagiarism and other forms of malpractice had always been endemic to academia, the electronic age had given rise to unprecedented levels of abuse (Vadilevu 2004; Loughram2004; Bolowana 2005; Pearce 2005). Legal and ethical issues pertaining to this study were adhered to.

1.12 Definition of terms

Adequate Records Management Standard– a standard that outlines the outcomes for an adequate records management regime, which agencies need to satisfy if

their records management programs are to be considered adequate in accordance with section 16 of the State Records Act.

Electronic records: records that are in machine-readable form. They may be any combination of text, data, graphics, images, video, audio, e-mail, internet content, documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc., that are created, maintained, modified or transmitted in digital form by a computer or related system, (Government of South Africa 2006:1-5).

Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS):the ITS system is varyingly described as an Enterprise Resource Management Program or an Enterprise Resource Planning Management (ERPM) system that specializes in the provision of integrated software to support the administrative functions within the higher education and training sectors, (Integrated Tertiary Software 2005)

Preservation: Refers to the totality of processes and operations involved in the stabilization and protection of documents against damage or deterioration and in the treatment of damaged or deteriorated documents.

Records: Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in transaction of business (ISO 15489 2001:3)

Records management: Records management is the process by which internally or externally generated physical or electronic records are managed from their inception, receipt and storage, all the way through to their disposal (Ngulube 2000:164)

Recordkeeping: an integral part of records management that involves making and maintaining accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information (Yusuf & Chell1999:10)

Records creation and capturing: records creation and capturing involves developing consistent rules to ensure integrity and accessibility, deciding on systems to log and track records, and following specific procedures for registering, classifying and indexing (Yusuf & Chell1999:10)

1.13 Summary

This chapter reviewed the concepts of records and records management at the University of Zululand. The aim, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance and ethical issues were discussed in this chapter. The parameters of the study - scope and limitations - were also highlighted in this chapter. The next chapter provides an overview of literature on records management.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on records management. Oliver (2004:4), states that the word 'review' in 'literature review' means that one should summarize the broad content of the research study and also indicate clear ties to other studies in the field. The main purpose of a literature review is to establish the academic and research areas that are relevant to the subject under investigation. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001:120) define a literature review as a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting an existing body of recorded work that was produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners.

According to Stilwell (2000:173), "a good literature review needs to indicate the different views, agreements, disagreements, and trends of thought on the topic of research and be accurately portrayed and acknowledged in the text." She further states that: "A literature review needs to produce a conceptual framework, including philosophical stances and theoretical assumptions, key assumptions and theoretical problems or contradictions." Pickard (2007:26) confirms that a literature review is a critical discussion of all significant, publicly available literature that contributes to the understanding of a subject. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:29) concur with Oliver, Blaxter, Hughes, Tight, Stilwell and Pickard, in that a literature review involves the systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the problem under investigation.

Pickard (2007:34) further believes that the literature review not only informs the researcher on the "state of knowledge" of the subject, but also provides an insight into methodology. Thus the researcher can not only provide a summary of the study, but also an actual critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the

methodology. Summarily, a literature review can be referred to as a comprehensive analysis, combination and assessment of information sources in order to get an imminent and considerate view/ understanding of the predicament or problem under investigation.

Kaniki (2002:17-28) highlights the different types of literature review as follows:

- Historical reviews, which consider the chronological development of the literature and break the literature into stages or phases
- Thematic reviews, which are structured around different themes or perspectives and often focus on debates between different schools
- Theoretical reviews, which trace the theoretical developments in a particular area, often showing how each theory is supported by empirical evidence
- Empirical reviews, which attempt to summarize the empirical findings from different methodologies

The researcher opted for the thematic literature review which is structured around different themes or perspectives. The literature review centered on the following records management models and themes:

1. Synopsis of records management globally and in Africa
2. Synopsis of records management in South Africa
3. Purposes of Management
4. Importance of records management in a university environment'
5. Records Life Cycle model
6. The Records Continuum model
7. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (model)
8. Management of physical and electronic records
9. Requirements and challenges of electronic records

10. Standards and procedures for records management

11. Records management policies

12. Preservation of records

13. Preservation policies

14. Records management Implementation Plan

15. Review of related / Empirical studies

The literature review addressed the following research questions:

a) What types of records are kept in the records management system?

b) Does the University of Zululand have a formal records management system besides the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which is not a records management system but an Enterprise Resource Management Program?

c) Does the university have a formal policy and procedure for managing its records?

d) Does the policy (if it exists) and procedures form part of the university's regulatory structures?

e) Does the policy (if it exists) and procedures comply with the government's records management regulations?

2.1 A synopsis of records and records management globally and in Africa

To fully understand the enormity and significance of records management, both in its present context and what it purports for the future, the first thing to understand is its historical foundation. The concept of record keeping is not new. The records management profession is as old as the first societal groups, because the need of a memory arises naturally in any organisation. The most ancient forms of memory were oral and the most ancient keepers of records were the remembrances, i.e. individuals entrusted with the task of memorising rules, contracts, sentences and transmitting them by recitation to their juniors (Duranti

1993:30). The frailty of human memory and the growing complexity of administration gave birth to the graphic representations of events in pictorial form (Maedke, Robek & Brown 1974:19).

People have kept records in some form since the earliest development of writing. However, simply recording information or having records is not the same as managing records. There have been major inventions that have had a significant impact on records management, e.g. writing, paper, typewriter, microfilming, computer, etc.

The first major invention occurred in ancient times when writing was conceived and detailed records were kept (Krevolin 1986:2; Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:6). Very little, if any, management of those records was done (or needed) because the volume of information did not require it (Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:59). Business records originated in ancient Mesopotamia, the land between the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. Priests, who were the administrators in the Mesopotamian economy, kept detailed records of royal activities, crops, stock and commercial transactions (Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:59). "Cuneiform writing, wedge-shaped characters impressed upon soft clay tablets, was used to record the activities of the time" (Krevolin 1986:2).

It is interesting to note that these unwieldy clay tablets were the forerunner of present-day, sophisticated electronic equipment used for managing records. These business records, predating the literature of the ancient world, facilitated business transactions and made the effective administration of this ancient civilisation possible. Written records were mandated by Babylonian law for all business transactions (Krevolin 1986:2). Written records eventually spread worldwide. The Phoenicians, the great traders of ancient world, kept detailed business records and developed a simple system of double-entry bookkeeping. The ancient Egyptians,

Greeks and Romans were also commercial traders who kept detailed records of transactions (Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:7). As business flourished in Europe during the Middle Ages, Italian merchants helped to develop accounting techniques that spread internationally (Feather 1990; Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:58).

In the seventeenth century, records were handwritten by clerks. So much time was required to make a record of a business transaction that merchants often kept mental notes. Other records, such as court records were kept well. As the population increased and geographical boundaries expanded, the scope of business activities increased. The population became industrialised and records moved from written to printed form. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg 550 years ago changed society in major way. The need to keep even more records and to manage them more efficiently became apparent as a result of the invention (Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:7). As records grew in volume, repositories for their safe keeping were established. Within these repositories records were preserved and arranged in order to facilitate their access and retrieval (Abbot 1999:2). Shortly after the French Revolution, the National Assembly in France established what was to become the first national archives repository in any country (Hare & McLeod 1997:1; Kirkwood 1996:13). This was in recognition that the protection of civil and personal rights is enshrined in public records and that public records define the relationship between the people and government.

In 1934, Theodore Schellenberg of the National Archives of the USA invented the life cycle concept (Shepherd & Yeo 2003:5). This concept provided the cornerstone on which modern records management is built. The huge logistical operations of the Second World War (WWII) were responsible for an explosion of paperwork, in both the private and public sectors. This resulted in an increased need for individuals who could establish the requirements and devise the policies,

strategies and systems so that information could be recorded and stored and made available when it was needed in an appropriate format. Widespread use of the computer for record keeping by governments worldwide developed in the 1950s (Kemoni & Wamukoya 2000). The proliferation of electronic records presents national archives around the globe with a unique opportunity for growth and development. For example, computers offer speed, precision, diversity, flexibility and a rich and comprehensive documentation of process, and it is no wonder that they have been so quickly embraced around the world as a critical information management and communication tool. However, ever since the 1950s, archivists, academics and records managers have been concerned about the fragility and impermanence of electronic records.

Research and development initiatives during the last two decades (1980s and 1990s) have contributed partial solutions to these challenges but much more remains to be done. By the 1980s most archivists, academics and records managers acknowledged that managing and preserving electronic records were among the most challenging problems facing their profession (Blouin 1996:1). For example, computer systems change rapidly and there is no guarantee that today's software will be readable by tomorrow's hardware (Mullon 2004:7; Ngoaketsi 2003:31). The other problem is that of 'media deterioration' (Cloonan & Sanett 2002:70). These records are by nature fragile and impermanent, for example, they can be written, rewritten, cut and pasted, send to the other end or deleted (Ngoepe 2003:47). The practice of using computers has grown tremendously with the norm now being for almost every worker to have a PC on his/her desk. Today the computer is performing all the traditional functions of records management and managing records in ways that were not feasible before the computer age.

The proliferation of information and communication technology and the perceived shortcomings of the records life cycle motivated scholars to suggest a

records continuum model in the field of records management in the 1990s (Upward 2005:84). Many archival and records management theorists such as Cook, Upward, Mckemmish and Reed favoured the records continuum theory because they argued that it combined records management and archival activities in the management of recorded information (Chachage & Ngulube 2006). It is clear that from the time records were preserved on the walls of caves and on earthenware jars to today's preservation and control of electronic records, there was an intervening period of tremendous progress. Throughout history, innovations and inventions have affected the way in which records were managed. On the other hand, the need for better records management encouraged innovation and the resulting inventions have altered the ways in which records were created and managed. As a result, today the vast majority of records are 'born electronic' or converted into electronic formats, for example, through imaging. These records, whether on paper or electronic, need to be managed properly for the value they have in organisations and the public at large.

A literature search revealed contrasting developments regarding the development of records management in Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada, Britain, Central America and Africa. An analysis of the literature review suggested that Australia leads Europe and North America in the development of records management programmes. The IRMT (1999c) pointed out that, even as recordkeeping had declined in many developing countries, there had been advances in the field of records management in other countries, particularly in Europe, North America and Australia, and these advances had made little impact on the countries in the developing world that most required good management of records. The literature review revealed that records management programmes in Africa were plagued by various problems, due to the inability of registries and national archival institutions to play their roles effectively. Studies of recordkeeping practices focused on the role played by registries and the support

they provided in managing records during the stages of records creation, distribution, storage, maintenance and disposition, to meet the information needs and business objectives of parent organizations.

Discussing the records management situation in Australia, David (1994) stated that records management was very nearly, if not absolutely, as advanced in Australia as it was in North America and, in some areas, it would be fair to point out that Australia leads the way. He argued that Australia had many characteristics which were favorable for the development of records management. The five major ones were:

· A large and sophisticated economic system:

· A government and legal system conducive to records management development:

· A long tradition of organizational support for recordkeeping systems;

· The fact that records management, to a considerable degree, had evolved from the archival profession into its own distinctive field of endeavor; and

· A relatively advanced and broad-based national records management infrastructure, including a substantial community of vendors of records management products and services.

Although David's (1994) assertion, that records management in Australia was very nearly, if not absolutely, as advanced as it was in North America, was made in 1994, recent evidence suggested that his assertion was still valid and Australia had made more advances in the field of records management than the rest of the world. This was reflected in a recent book from Australia, published in the year 2005 and entitled "Archives: Recordkeeping in Society", edited by leading Australian recordkeeping theorists and practitioners, Sue McKemmish, M. Piggot, B. Reed and F. Upward. The various contributions in the volume by leading recordkeeping scholars and practitioners from within and outside Australia reflected the recordkeeping advancements the country had made. The records

management situation in Australia was described in the New South Wales (NSW) State Records Management Survey Report (2004). It stated that many offices in Australia continued to implement better records management practices and processes in order to improve performance and comply with the State Records Act. In spite of the noted improvements in records management practice, there were a few areas which posed a potential threat to government business. These areas included counter disaster planning, email management and technology dependent records. The survey did not store long-term archives in environmentally controlled storage conditions.

In New Zealand, Tucker (2003) points out that Archives New Zealand launched a new recordkeeping programme, "Continuum: Create and Maintain", which sought to assist government agencies to create and maintain full and accurate records and assist them reach best practice recordkeeping standards. It adopted a whole-of-government approach, which recognized that good recordkeeping would help all organizations to achieve their business aims and meet accountability requirements. According to Cox (2000), no coherent system of archives and records management existed in the United States of America (USA). The lack of a coherent system of archives and records management was a major barrier to the successful protection of the nation's documentary heritage and the scheme between archivists and records managers and between records managers and other information professionals. Furthermore, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) had not provided the required professional leadership in improving the records management situation in the USA and called for a new form of professional leadership.

The National Archives and Records Administration of the United States of America (2005a) observed that its records management programme was developed in the 20th century in a paper environment and had not kept up with a Federal

Government that created and used most of its records electronically. To improve the state of recordkeeping in federal agencies, NARA developed a strategic plan which laid out a redesigned records management programme. Some of the strategies and tactics by NARA (2005a) to achieve the goals outlined by the strategic plan relate to focusing resources on programme areas/work processes that were core to the functions of government, for example the electronic records management initiative, and expanding its advocacy role within the government. Others included providing guidance and training to federal agencies based on ISO 15489, including establishing a training, certification and monitoring programme, conducting inspections/evaluations of records management practices within and among federal agencies, conducting records management studies on techniques designed to save time and effort in records management and changing the scheduling and appraisal of records by developing appraisal criteria.

In Canada, Wilson (2004), Librarian and Archivist of Canada, presenting the institution's 2003/2004 performance report, pointed out that one of the challenges the institution faced related to facilitating information management in government institutions throughout their life-cycle. Citing a 2003 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons http://www.oaq-bvq.gc.ca , she observed that archival heritage was at risk, as federal government departments had given little attention to information management in recent years. The report recommended the need for the National Library and National Archives of Canada to develop a comprehensive plan to implement the New Management of Information Policy adopted by the government in 2003-2004. It was observed by Wilson (2004) that The Library and Archives Canada had started to implement the recommendations for improving the protection of Canada's heritage.

The challenge in supporting the implementation of the Management of Government Information Policy was to ensure that they had the capacity to

provide leadership and guidance on many information and knowledge management issues. These included metadata standards, records management, business activity and the structure of classification systems, content management, long-term access and preservation of information technologies. The other challenge related to the need to acquire resources, to develop a robust information technology infrastructure for the long-term preservation of, and access to, government records.

In the United Kingdom, the National Archives highlighted some of the achievements of the PRO, in the institution's Annual Report and Resource Accounts of the National Archives (the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscript Commission), for the financial year 2003/2004. Tyacke (2004) stated that the Public Records Office (PRO) continued to support recordkeeping professionals across government in putting in place digital records systems and improved work practices and chairing the cross-governmental group on electronic records management. A public consultation document on the possible provisions of new legislation for records management and archives had been issued, as the PRO Act, which was 40 years old, was deemed to need revision. Other measures taken included launching a Records Management Advisory Service in May 2003, for the wider public sector, based on experience in central government of digital records management issues and providing training, information and advice to archives staff.

In India, the Director General of Archives, Government of India (2005), in a letter to the researcher dated 3 August 2005, and whose subject was "Regarding Current State of Records Keeping", provided an overview of recordkeeping developments in the Indian public sector. The letter said that the Government of India had passed the Act in 1993, to be read with the Rules, 1997. The Act was applicable to all government offices, as its provisions covered records management systems, to

be followed by records-creating agencies. The Act (1993) Sections 5, 6 and 7, required every record-creating agency to nominate one of its officers as a records officer, whose duties included proper arrangement, maintenance and preservation of public records. Adoption of such standards, procedures and techniques, as may be recommended from time to time by the National Archives of India for improvement of records management system and maintenance of security of records, was also one of the records officer's duties.

The poor state of recordkeeping in the Jamaican public sector was described by Emmerson (2003). He felt that recordkeeping in Jamaica had been an arcane and often overlooked field and continued to be perceived as a low-level administrative/clerical function, largely focused on the management of records at the end of their life-cycle. In most Jamaican government ministries/departments/agencies, there had been difficulty in convincing senior management on the many benefits to be gained from a proper records management programme. Often, senior managers inflicted deductions in spending on the records department and did not factor training of records personnel into the overall budget of the organization, as records management was usually perceived not as a core business function. To reverse the situation, there was need for the professionalization of records management in Jamaica.

In many countries, particularly in developing countries such as in Africa, offices and corridors were piled high with closed files and filing cabinets were crammed with files that had ceased to be active (Thurston and Cain 1995). Classification systems were breaking down and unsatisfactory systems existed for managing the creation, use and storage of these records. This had serious consequences for officers who depended on files to define and implement policy, thus compromising public service delivery. The findings of Thurston and Cain regarding the poor state of recordkeeping in many developing countries, reported

in 1995, concurred with the observations made by the IRMT (1999d; 2002), and Mnjama (2004).

In many countries of the world, particularly in developing countries, recordkeeping systems were not just weak, but had actually collapsed and did not function at all (The IRMT 1999c). This collapse had been particularly evident in countries that had once been part of the European-dominated colonial regimes. The IRMT (1999c) observed that, following independence in these countries, this situation deteriorated progressively, as part of a general decline in public administration. People employed in the registries had limited training or experience with recordkeeping work and file classification and indexing systems originally designed to meet the recordkeeping requirements of the colonial period became unwieldy and ultimately unmanageable. Over the last several decades there had been deterioration in the management of official records in developing countries, with consequences for efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, the protection of human rights, provision of service to citizens, poverty reduction strategies and the rule of law (IRMT 2005).

In recognition of the challenges faced by recordkeeping professionals in managing records in developing countries, including Africa, the World Bank (WB) and the IRMT in the year 2000, organized a programme entitled: Evidence Based Governance in the Electronic Age. It built upon effective partnerships between the WB and the IRMT. To achieve the stated objectives, the following were organized:

· A video conference workshop on current records management, poverty reduction, and corruption control was held in June 2001. It involved high-level civil servants from Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda;

· The Information for Accountability Workshops project, completed in June 2001, educated civil servants, records managers and archivists from Tanzania and Ghana on the importance of well-managed evidence; and

· The From Accounting to Accountability project, completed in March 2001, defined issues for managing financial records and created tools for evaluating and monitoring the performance of recordkeeping systems.

Poor management of records as a resource was evident in many African and Central American countries (Mnjama 2004). Based on some of the records management projects this author participated in, and which were funded by the IRMT and the WB, among other donors, in Kenya and Botswana and from visits to Tanzania, Ghana, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Guyana and Belize, Mnjama concluded that the management of records was plagued by many problems. These included poor layout of, and untidiness in, the records storage area, regular loss of files and information, lack of file indexes and registers and lack of control of file movements. Other problems were the lack of retention and disposal schedules, poor supervision of records staff and lack of knowledge of the importance of information.

Discussing the practice of records management in the public sector in Zimbabwe, and the extent to which records management within Zimbabwe could be regarded as a profession, Ngulube (2000), stated that records were mishandled and abused, suggesting a lack of ethics. Records managers did not have training in records management and lacked a code of ethics and Ngulube concluded that records management has not yet been professionalized in Zimbabwe. The author called for the development and adoption of a records management code of ethics. The recordkeeping situation in Namibia was far from satisfactory (Nengomasha 2003:68). This author pointed out that record surveys in government ministries confirmed a lack of records management systems in place, with absence of the use

of classification schemes, retention schedules and systematic disposal of records, resulting in heavy congestion of offices and poor retrieval of information. She called for the improvement of records management practices, as well the introduction of a legal and regulatory framework that supported records management, e-govemment and knowledge management.

Discoursing the recordkeeping situation in the Ghana, Akussah (1996) observed that the root of the problem of records management in Ghana could be traced to the lack of a comprehensive policy regarding an integrated holistic approach to the management of the whole cycle of records. Akotia (2003:114) felt that the revision of archival legislation had assisted in enhancing records management practices in the Ghanaian public sector. The new law acknowledged the life-cycle as the framework for records control. Systems and procedures had been put in place to provide a sound, systematic records management programme. The state of records management in Kenya was generally poor (Ombati 1999:35). Mnjama (2003:91-101) decried the inadequate state of recordkeeping in Kenya and emphasised that the factors contributing to the current state of recordkeeping included failure by senior management to establish acceptable records management goals and practices, as well as the non-implementation of various recommendations dealing with improvement of records management in the Kenya public sector. The inadequate state of recordkeeping in Kenya and its impact on public service delivery was admitted in the various records management circulars issued by the Office of the President and Directorate of Personnel Management.

2.2 A synopsis of ancient trends of record keeping in South Africa

The historical trends of records management in South Africa can be traced through the history of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. Harris (1997) gives a detailed account of the history of archives and records management in South Africa. He argues that there have been records in South Africa for as long as humans had inhabited the country. Indeed, South Africa can

brag about well-preserved records in the form of rock paintings by the Khoisan and signs patterned in dwellings going back thousands of years. However, this study was only concerned with recorded information that appears in four media, i.e. paper, electronic, audio-visual and microfilm.

It was during the colonisation of the Cape that traditional paper-based records became prevalent in what is today known as South Africa (Harris 2000:6; Ngulube 2003:152; Ngulube 2006:117). As a result, the Cape Archives Repository (CAR) contains the oldest record of the country generated by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC)/Verenigde Oost-Indiesche Compagnie (VOC) which governed the Cape from 1652 to 1795. The oldest record in the holdings is a resolution created on board Van Riebeeck's ship "the Dromedaries" dated 30 December 1651, therefore written a few months before arrival at the Cape (Van der Merwe 2006; Verster 2007:19). This consisted of the deliberations of Jan van Riebeeck and his advisors (Verster 2007:19). According to J van der Merwe (personal communication, 30 August 2006) the document is housed on the third floor of the eight-storey building of the Cape Archives Repository.

In the days of the DEIC (1652 – 1795) and the three years of the Batavian Republic (1803 – 1806), each of the government offices controlled its own records (State Archives Service 1987). During the second British rule of the Cape (1806 – 1901), the custody of records was a function of the Colonial Secretary, or the Secretary and Registrar of Records. In 1876 the Cape government appointed an ad hoc commission to investigate how the government records were managed (Technikon South Africa 1990). The most important of the five instructions to the Commission was to "collect, examine, classify, index and make accessible" the records of the Colony (State Archives Service 1987). Before the establishment of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, each of the four Colonies had made provision in some way or the other for the custody and care of records. The incorporation of

the four former colonies (Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal [ZAR]) in the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, amongst other things, also resulted in the establishment of a single archives service under the Department of Interior. This led to the incorporation of the four separate archives services under central control of a Chief Archivist (Harris 2000:6). In 1922 the Public Archives Act (Act No. 9 of 1922) was passed. The Act was brief and relatively simple. From the outset the State Archives Services (SAS) custodial mandate embraced the records of all central and provincial government offices (Harris 2000:6).

The period 1953 to 1969 was an era of rapid development and expansion – a distinctive tendency in government administration after the Second World War (WWII). Post-war expansion of government institutions and activities led to the formation of more records and a greater need for the destruction of ephemeral records. The result was that the work could no longer be managed on an ad hoc basis by the Archives Commission. Consequently, after the 1953 Archives Act became operative, staff of the Archives Service commenced to perform an appraisal of government records as it was required by the Act. This appraisal effort assumed a lot of proportions to the extent that on 1 October 1957 a special section known as the Liaison Section with a staff complement of three was created in the office of the Chief Archivist to manage the work (Harris 2002:70; SAS 1987). The State Archives was transferred to the Culture portfolio in the 1960s.

Although initially attention was exclusively directed to appraisal, the officials also had to cope with investigating file plans. Because the maintenance of an effective file plan and the granting of standing disposal authority go hand in hand, the Section was increasingly approached for guidance and support when new file plans were compiled in government offices. The experience acquired by the Section in advising government offices in this regard led to the transfer of this

function from the offices of the Public Service Commission to the State Archives Service in 1960. At the same time the name of the Section was changed to Records Management Section, a name that is retained until today (2009) (National Archives and Records Service (NARS) 2006:3). Systematic inspections of archives still in the custody of government offices also commenced in 1966 and towards the end of 1969 considerable progress had been made in the achievement of efficient records management (Abbot 1999:71; Harris 2002:70). The SAS' involvement with records which are still in the custody of government offices (custody and care, file plans, disposal, etc.) gradually gave rise to a need for training of staff who are responsible for the handling of, and control over, records in such offices.

Abbot (2007:7) argues that while the SAS has a long historical role in managing government records, this role has not been without problems. "The work of SAS was adversely affected by the scarcity of funds, staff, and overall vision as well as its relatively low status within the Department of Arts and Culture" (Abbot 2007:7; Callinicos & Odendaal 1996:40). This has particularly been evidenced by the unauthorised destruction of records by, for example, the former South African Police, State Security Secretariat, etc. (Harris 2000:9; Harris 2002:72). This lack of resources and the low status of the SAS have continued with the change of the Service into the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. As a result, public servants view the NARS with little consideration as compared to other institutions which are independent, such as the Auditor-General of South Africa, South African Human Rights Commission, etc.

2.3 Records management principles and policies at the University of Zululand

Students, staff and management at the University of Zululand rely heavily on the records generated as a result of the university's core business, namely teaching, research and community work. These records are fundamental to the day-to-day

running and proper management of the university, both in terms of its service to staff and students and to the wider community. Because of the tangible and intangible value of university records, they have to be part of a comprehensive records management system that ensures that all university records are properly and securely managed, replaceable (in the case of vital records), preserved, archived and disposed of. A university records management system serves other purposes as well, such as improving office efficiency, facilitating administrative access to inactive as well as active records, ensuring the consistent maintenance of records, decreasing operational costs, increasing staff productivity, and assisting the university in meeting legal and regulatory standards. Pember (1998:64) states that records should be created to support all business, legal, fiscal, social and historical activities, correspondence and transactions in an organization.

Efficient and effective service provision, accountability, security and integrity, completeness, etc., are still core issues that need to be addressed, whether in electronic or paper-based environments. Proper records management assists with these issues and is therefore imperative. Records also need to be appropriately preserved in order to protect the legal and financial operation of the institution. This is also a function of records management. It is therefore important to ensure that those who work with records are familiarized with the necessities and procedures of records management. Employees need to understand the importance of records management and why it matters to the university.

The office of the registrar is responsible for taking charge of administrative functions more especially matters that concern policy making. It is very important to note that if the office of the registrar is not active enough to engage in such matters especially on the issues of policy making, the possibility could be the ineffectiveness of the staff. The latter will not operate according to set standards by the policy that they should be operating under. However they will operate

according to what they think would be best for the organization or else they would develop strategies they could work with.

2.4 Characteristics of a record

A record must meet several criteria that make it unique in relation to other types of information. Different researchers state the characteristics of a record as follows:

· Records are evidence of actions and transactions (Reed, 2005; Thomassen, 2001:374)

· Records are physical, have content, a structure or form, and are created in a context (Hofman, 1998)

· Records should support accountability, a "principle that individuals, organizations, and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others" (International Standards Organization, 2001:2)

· Records are process-bound information, i.e. "information that is generated by and linked to work processes" (Thomassen, 2001:374)

· Records must be preserved, some for a very short time and others permanently (McKemmish et al., 2005a)

In an organization, records are part of the organization's memory and are used to support management. Cox (2001:6) states that the evidential value of a record can only exist if the content, structure and context are preserved, meaning that without preservation, there won't be any record. The context is the link between different records that belong together and the process through which the record was created.

Records are essential in three levels namely; operational, tactical and strategic level for the directing of organizational activities (Ngoepe, 2003:18–19; Shepherd, 2006:6–7). Kemoni et al., 2007:6–16; Ngoepe, 2003:20; Shepherd, 2006:6–7) state that records form the basis upon which various plans such as; strategic,

management and budgets of an organization are compiled. This records support decisions and actions that are taken by an organization, to provide evidence of what has attained and relations that they have with other organizations, thus promoting transparency of processes in authority (Shepherd, 2006:6; Willis, 2005:89–91). Wamukoya (2000:26) states that records are kept for historical value and posterity. Records constitute a crucial resource in an organization and require proper management (King, 1997:656–659; Shepherd, 2006:6–12). According to Willis (2005:91) records keeping helps in making sure that organizations are responsible for what they do. Good record keeping is critical for well-organized procedures of an organization (King, 1997:7; Mnjama, 2004:45–47; Shepherd, 2006:6. Gunnlaugsdottir (2002:231) add that effective record keeping also includes the promotion of efficiency, and the protection of rights and obligations of employees. He further states that they contribute towards the reduction of fraud and corruption.

2.5 Records management

Records management, as stated by the ISO: 15489 (2001:3), is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records. This includes the processes of capturing and maintaining evidence and information relating to business activities and transactions in the form of records. Records management therefore plays a major role in the care of records that are created within an institution such as a university.

Records management may be viewed as a subdivision of information management and information management entails the management of all the information in an enterprise, as well as the management of the people, hardware, software and systems that provide the information (Makhura and Du Toit 2005:215). The definition emphasizes records management as being a component of information

management and stresses the link between records management and information management. The definition considers the various environments in which records would be created and managed, for example in paper and electronic environments.

2.6 Purposes of records management

There are various reasons for records management. Richmond (2010:n.p) highlights the following reasons for records management.

2.6.1 To preserve corporate memory

A proper records management program can ensure that the work, research, and information that is gathered by an employee during his or her tenure is captured and managed appropriately even after the employee is no longer there. The University of Zululand hires new employees from time to time, and this means that records can easily be lost once someone has left, especially if there is no records management system to help with recordkeeping, With a proper records management program in place, it would be easy for the university to store every kind of record that has been created over any given period of time. This would also help the university to retrieve any kind of records that had been captured during the former employee's tenure with ease.

2.6.2 To support better decision-making

A proper records management program ensures that decisions are made with documented proof as opposed to often unreliable memory.

2.6.3 To control the creation and disposal of records

Policies and procedures must be put in place to control the creation, retention and disposal of records. A proper records management system would help to organize and identify records which must be retained for day-to-day business operations and systematically (and legally) dispose of the rest.

2.6.4 To reduce the costs of operation

A proper records management system would help to reduce unnecessary costs by improving the management of an organization's information resources so that less money is spent on supplies and equipment. The University of Zululand works with procurement and stores; keeping a record/database of prices, suppliers and supplies could cut expenditure in the long run.

2.6.5 To improve efficiency and productivity

A proper records management system improves efficiency and productivity by ensuring that information is available when it is required. Students always complain that some of their records cannot be found. Physical records are easily lost if they are stored in an ad hoc manner. It is important for an institution such as the University of Zululand to take note of the above mentioned reasons for records management and to understand the major role of records management in an organization.

2.7 Importance of records management in a university environment

The activities of a university are documented in the records that it produces. These records are a vital asset in ensuring that the institution is governed effectively and efficiently, and is accountable to its staff, students and the community that it serves. Records support decision-making, document general operational activities, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation. They are central to the university's operation, and managing them effectively is an important responsibility that involves all members of staff. Sound records management provides a route to ensuring that the university adheres to its legal, professional and ethical responsibilities. Records management improves efficiency by cutting down retrieval time and maintaining control over what is held, how and why. University costs are reduced because resources are not wasted on retaining unnecessary records. Records management

also ensures that information and records are not duplicated needlessly, which not only saves money, but also maintains version control and accuracy. Good records management ensures that historically significant records are preserved for permanent use. Since a record is any information created or received and maintained as evidence of transactions or correspondence by a person or organisation, records act as proof of what has been done by the organization or institution. Records operate in different ways, for instance some records are essential for on-going work (e.g. student records), while others have to be archived for a statutory period (e.g. financial records). For this reason, a university has to keep some records simply as evidence of what was done and why.

2.8 The Records Life Cycle model

Yusof and Chell (2000) state that the development of the Records Life Cycle concept began in the USA in the 1930s. It was invented by the National Archives of the USA in response to the ever-increasing volume of records produced by organisations. The Record's Life Cycle model has since been dynamically used in places like North America and indicates a separation amongst records management and archival management (Gilliland-Swetland, 2000; Shepard & Yeo, 2003; Ulfsparre, 1998).

The Records Life Cycle is an analogy of the life of a biological organism which is born, living, and then dies. Records are created and vigorously used in relation to their purpose (reason for their creation). In other words records that do not fulfil their purpose become irrelevant and unnecessary, while those that serve their purpose become active. When a record is no longer useful (i.e. it no longer serves its purpose), a decision is made as to whether the record should be preserved or disposed of. Thus a record is created, used as long as it has continuing value, and then transferred to national archives or destroyed.

Shepherd and Yeo (2003:10) observed that since the 1950s, many variants of the Records Life Cycle concept have been modelled, and most models aimed to show a progression of actions taken at different times in the life of a record, typically this involved the creation, capture, storage, use and disposal of a record. Some writers showed this as a linear progression, while others described it as a loop or circle. According to the model, the first step of a record's life cycle (Figure 2.1) begins with the creation of the record. The creation of a record can be achieved in many different ways, e.g. receipts, spread sheets, emails, minutes of meetings, etc. When a record has been used frequently it is implicitly described as active. After some time the record becomes less frequently used and enters the semi-active/inactive period. The last period occurs when the record is inactive and is no longer used. At this point the majority of the records are destroyed and a limited number are transferred to archival repositories for preservation. The appraisal of records is performed at the final disposal point within the model. The Records Life Cycle model was the first theory that provided the framework for the operation of a records management programme.
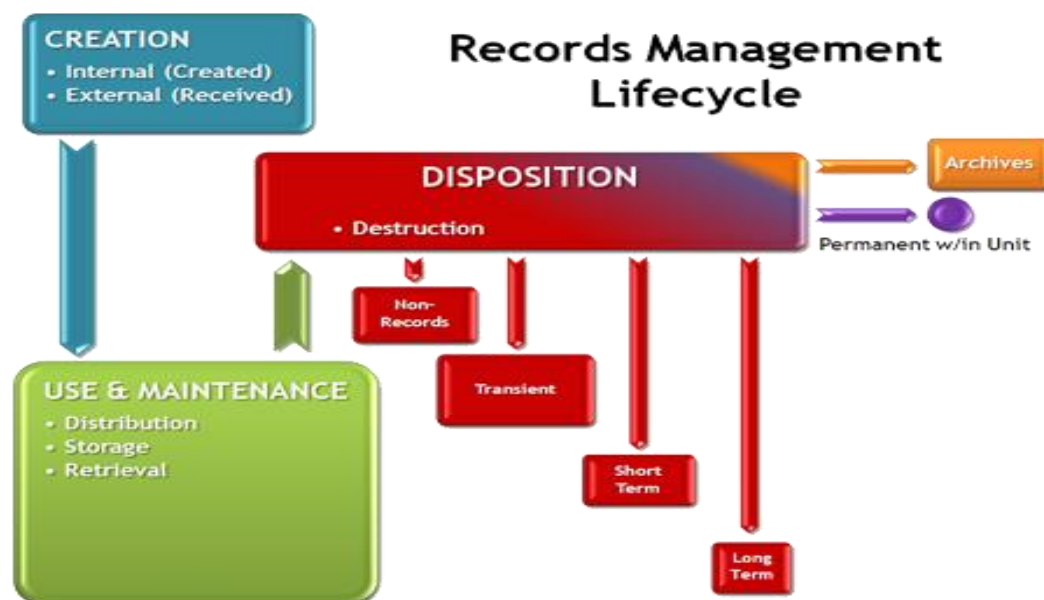
Figure 2. 1 Records Life Cycle model

Model by Daniel Noonan: e-resources/Digital Resources Archivist University of Ohio, (2012:np), retrieved 08 July 2012

Although the Records Life Cycle model has prejudiced the development of records and archives management in countless parts of the world, there are critics that emanate from other scholars. Had it been that the records life cycle model also included the creation, use, maintenance and storage of electronic records there wouldn't be critics as some authors reveal. Atherton (1985:44-48) stated that the theory created a distinction between the roles of records managers and archivists during the records life-cycle. She proposed that the Records Life Cycle model should be changed into a more unified model consisting of four instead of eight stages. She further argued that although the Records Life Cycle model had been useful in promoting a sense of order in the overall management of records, strict adherence to its principles undermined any trend towards greater cooperation and co-ordination among archivists and records managers and hence ignored the many ways in which records and archives' operations overlapped.

Yusuf and Chell (2000:135-141), observed that the model was more applicable to those studies dealing with the management of paper-based records in organisations. The authors pointed out that the Records Life Cycle model was not suitable for studies investigating the management of electronic records and needed to be replaced with a model that appropriately reflected the special characteristics of electronic records.

In discussing the weaknesses of the model in relation to the management of electronic records, Yusof and Chell (2000:135-141) explained that with the evolution of technology, the record grew more prone to transformation and conversion. The concept of a Records Continuum was subsequently promoted in the records management field because it addressed the management of both paper-based and electronic records. The perceived weaknesses of the Records Life Cycle model therefore inadvertently led to the development of the Records Continuum model.

2.9 The Records Continuum Model

Xiaomi (2003:25) provides the Australian Standard 4390 definition of a Records Continuum as a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the creation of records (and before creation, in the design of recordkeeping systems) through to the preservation and use of records as archives. The Records Continuum model has many advantages over the Records Life Cycle model, most importantly that it demonstrates that the mechanism behind best practices is the integration of the management of documents, records and archives. Integrated approaches, integrated control, and integrated framework are components of a best practice framework according to the model. The Records Continuum model can be used as a theoretical foundation for studies dealing with the management of both paper-based and electronic records. The model consolidated the eight stages of the Records Life Cycle concept into four stages, namely: creation, classification, scheduling and maintenance, and use of information (Atherton, 1985).

Under the Records Continuum model, archivists and records managers would be involved in all the stages of managing records. This enables the creation of the right records containing the right information in the right formats; organizing the records to facilitate their use; systematically disposing of records that are no longer required; and protecting and preserving records. The Records Continuum model originated in Canada but was developed and adopted in Australia (Bantin, 2002). According to McKemmish (1998), the Continuum model was developed by her Australian colleague, Frank Upward. The model provides a graphic tool for framing issues about the relationship between records managers and archivists, past, present and future, and for thinking strategically about working collaboratively and building partnerships with other stakeholders.

Shepherd and Yeo (2003:10) explain that the Records Continuum concept was developed in the 1980s and 1990s in response to criticism of the Life Cycle model.

In a continuum, there are no separate steps. Managing records is seen as a continuous process where one element of the continuum passes seamlessly into another. Pemberton (2003) agrees that the Records Continuum concept is a variation of the Records Life Cycle concept, and argues that it takes a higher intellectual view of records since it follows an integrated model rather than one that is made up of stages. The model stresses the need for records professionals to be involved in the earliest planning stages of information systems. Millar (2008:108) identified four actions of records and archives management under the Records Continuum model as follows:

- Identification and acquisition. Records management actions are the creation or acquisition of records, while archives management actions relate to the selection and acquisition of archives.

- Intellectual control. Records management actions include the classification of records within a logical system, while archives management actions relate to the arrangement and description of archives.

- Access. Records management actions relate to the maintenance and use of records, while archives management actions relate to the description of archives.

- Physical control. Records management actions are disposal by destruction of records or their transfer to national archives, while archives management actions relate to the preservation of archives.

The structural principles of the Records Continuum model as presented by Upward (1998) tie in to the concept of records of continuing value. The principles stress the use of records for transactional, evidential and memory purposes and promote unified approaches to archiving/ recordkeeping. Other structural principles focus on records as logical rather than physical entities, regardless of whether they are paper-based or in electronic form. The institutionalization of the recordkeeping profession suggests a particular need to integrate recordkeeping into business and societal processes and purposes.

Xiaomi (2003:27) differentiated the records life cycle and the records continuum model in a form of a table.

Table 2. 1 Model Aspect Life Cycle Model vs. Records Continuum Model

Model Aspect	Life Cycle Model	Records Continuum Model
Origins	· evolved from the need to effectively control and manage physical records after World War II (half a century ago)	· evolving from the more demanding need to exercise control and management over electronic records for digital era (today)
Elements of Records Definition	· physical entity	· content · context · structure
Major concerns in Records Management	·records-centered, redact-driven · focus on records as tangible physical entities, the physical existence of records themselves · paper world	·purpose-centered, process- and customer-driven · focus on the nature of the records, the recordkeeping process, the behaviors and relationships of records in certain environments · digital world
Records movement patterns	· time-based: records pass through stages until they eventually die, except for the chosen ones that are reincarnated as archives · time sequence: records processes take place in a given sequence	· multi-dimensional: records exist in space/time not space and time · simultaneity: records processes can happen at any point in the record's existence, or even precede it
Recordkeeping perspectives	· exclusive · single purpose ·organizational or collective memory · current or historical value	· inclusive · multiple purposes · can be organizational and collective memory · can have current, regulatory, and historical value from the time of creation simultaneously not sequentially
Recordkeeping process	· There are clearly definable stages in recordkeeping and they create sharp distinctions between current and historical recordkeeping.	· The recordkeeping and archiving processes should be integrated.
Criteria for selecting archives	· currency or historical value	·continuing value, including current and historical value
Time of archival appraisal	·end of records movement	· from beginning to end
Role of records professional	· passive and reactive · locked into custodial role and Strategies	*Proactive post-custodians:* · recordkeeping policy makers · standard setters ·designers of recordkeeping systems and implementation strategies · consultants · educators/trainers · advocates · auditors
Records management tasks	· things are done to the records in fixed stages, in a given sequence by particular professional group	· integration of business process and recordkeeping processes

The main purpose for such differences is so that records practitioners can be able to differentiate when and where to use the different kinds of records models and how they differ in terms of their strength.

2.10 The South African Records Management model

The mission of the National Archives of South Africa (2005) aims towards fostering a national identity and the protection of rights by preserving a national archival heritage for use by the government and people of South Africa, and promoting an efficient, accountable and transparent government through the proper management and care of government records. According to the National Archives of South Africa (2005), the responsibility for records management should be shared by record-creating organisations, record users, and the National Archives and Records Service.

The South African Records Management (2005) model applies not only to the governmental bodies but also to institutions of higher learning. According to the model, a sound records management programme for both paper-based and electronic records should include the presence of a records management policy endorsed by the heads of government bodies, their top management teams and the National Archives and Records Service; and records management procedures to back the records management policy. The latter should be designed by the National Archives and Records Service and take into account the unique functions, structures and resources of each government body.

Other elements stated by the South African Records Management (2005) include the need for records managers to attend training courses designed by the National Archives and Records Service; the presence of records classification systems that should include a file plan, schedules for records other than correspondence, paper-based records other than correspondence, microfilm records, electronic records, and audio-visual records; and the presence of a records disposal programme which

should be implemented by applying the National Archives and Records Service's general disposal authorities for records that are common to most offices, and ensuring that disposal authorities are carried out on a regular basis. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2005) has also developed electronic records guidelines that require government bodies to implement and maintain integrated document and records management systems. The South African Records Management model attempts to address the management of records following the various stages of a record's lifecycle, and thus the theoretical foundation of the model is the Records Life Cycle model.

2.11 The management of physical and electronic records

The management of records plays a major role in ensuring that both physical and electrical records are managed in a proper and effective way in an organization. Makhura (2005:51) states that the management of both physical and electronic records play a big role thus they need to be captured as soon as they are generated.

2.11.1 Managing physical records

Because of their retention and re-use as evidence of decision-making and business activities, records are a valuable corporate asset that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. While there are costs involved in the management of records, good management practices are likely to reduce these costs in the long run. With records management, an organization such as a university benefits from reduced risks from legal or regulatory challenges by finding and producing the relevant evidence contained in records. By managing records, the university can ensure that it can provide decision-makers with access to all the information that they need to carry out their duties, thus improving the quality of decision-making, business, long term planning and reporting, and providing a fast and accurate punter service. Records are also kept as proof of changes.

Physical records are normally paper-based. These records should be managed properly as they act as tangible evidence of an organization's activities. For instance minutes of board meetings, departments, different committees, etc., provide evidence of what has taken place and show the direction in which the university is going. Thus records, regardless of the format, require sophisticated storage and handling processes in order to preserve them as long as they have value. It is vitally important for the storage and handling processes to be designed in such a way as to prevent unauthorized access, loss or damage to the records. Handling processes would include allocations check in/check out to track the whereabouts of the records. The records would also need to be stored in an appropriate environment to protect them from damage and theft. An appropriate environment would be one that is completely dry, has good sanitation to prevent problems with pests and insects, and is well insulated for protection against rapid fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

The management of physical records can be summarized as follows:
· Identifying records. If an item is presented as a record, its relevance must first be checked, and it must be authenticated. Forensic experts may need to examine a document or artifact to check that it is not a forgery, and if it is genuine, any damage, alterations or missing content should be documented.

· Storing records. Records must be stored in such a way that they are both sufficiently accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. A typical contract or agreement may be stored on ordinary paper in a file cabinet in an office. However, many records' file rooms employ specialized environmental controls over temperature and humidity. Vital records may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault to protect against fire, floods, earthquakes and even war.

• Circulating records. Records are stored because they may need to be retrieved at some point. Retrieving a record, tracking the record while it is away from the file room, and returning the record is referred to as circulation. At its simplest, circulation is handled by manual methods such as simply writing down who has a particular record and when they should return it. However, most modern record environments use a computerized records management system that employs barcode scanners for better accuracy, or uses radio-frequency identification technology to track the movement of records from office to office, or even out of the office. Barcode and RFID scanners can also be used for periodic auditing to track the unauthorized movement of the record.

• Disposal of records. Disposal of records refers to two processes, namely:

(i) The transfer of records to a historical archive, a museum, or even to a private party, and

(ii) The physical destruction of a record. When physical records are destroyed, the records must be authorized for destruction by law, statute, regulation, and/or operating procedure. Once approved, the record must be disposed of with care to avoid inadvertent disclosure of information to unauthorized parties. The process of disposal needs to be well-documented, starting with a records retention schedule and policies and procedures that have been approved at the highest level of an organization. An inventory of the types of records that have been disposed of must be maintained, including certification that the records have been destroyed.

• Appraising and classifying records. This involves outlining the types of records created by each department - correspondence, annual reports, minutes, interoffice memos, financial statements - and determining the value of the documents to archives and to the office itself. Value can be measured by: the importance of the records in the daily activities of the record-generating office (contracts,

correspondence, policy statements, etc.); the importance of the records to the creator in fulfilling legal requirements or providing legal information or evidence (contracts, deeds, agreements, bylaws); the value of the records to the creator for financial purposes (financial statements, tax returns or annual budgets); and the value of the records either to the creator or to independent researchers for informational, evidentiary or historical purposes (records providing information about the structure, history, creation or operation of the organization).

2.11.2 Managing electronic records

According to the Government of South Africa (2006:1-5), electronic records are records that are in machine-readable form. They may be any combination of text, data, graphics, images, video, audio, e-mail, internet content, documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc., that are created, maintained, modified or transmitted in digital form by a computer or related system. Electronic records management provides a digital environment for capturing electronic documents and applying standard records management practices (Government of South Africa, 2006: np). Electronic records management supports the medium-to-long term information management needs of a business. It can manage a corporate filing structure, document classification within the filing structure, and provide formal retention and disposal scheduling based on an approved disposal and review schedule. Electronic records are easily updated, deleted, altered and manipulated.

2.12 Requirements and challenges of electronic records

According to Li, Ramiaah &Wal (2003:n.p), an electronic record is preserved if and only if it continues to exist in a form that allows it to be preserved while providing reliable and authentic evidence of the activity that produced the record. Demonstrating the authenticity of electronic records requires one to verify that: the right data was put into storage properly; either nothing happened in storage to change this data or changes in the data overtime are significant; all the right data and only the right data was retrieved from storage; the retrieved data was subject

to an appropriate process and the processing was executed correctly to output an authentic reproduction of the record.

2.12.1 Standards and procedures for records management

Despite the consequences of the physical format or location, records need to be managed through established and documented standards and procedures that are applied consistently. For instance the Records Management Standard BS ISO 15489 which is set in the United Kingdom provides a standard for records management policies and procedures. The purpose of the standard is to ensure that appropriate attention and protection applies to all records, and that the evidence and information that they contain can be retrieved effectively and efficiently using standard practices and procedures. Standards make records management possible in organizations by clarifying the purpose and value of the records.

There are several challenges facing the proper and efficient management of electronic records. The first is to maintain them in a way that would enable the retrieval of all documents that are relevant to a transaction when they are needed. The second is to ensure that the records are not retained for a longer period than necessary in order to avoid overloading systems and indiscriminate dumping. A problem that is unique to electronic records is that they lack familiar physical and visual cues about their origins or authenticity, such as official letterheads or written signatures. Special measures must be taken to ensure that the electronic records are reliable and authentic.

Mutula & Wamukoya (2005:71) highlight the problems of managing electronic records as follows:
· Lack of policies and guidelines for the management of electronic records;
·Lack of awareness among records personnel about electronic records management;

·Lack of knowledge, competencies and skills in the management of electronic records;

·Lack of standard practices and procedures in the management of electronic records;

· Lack of long-term preservation of electronic records;

· Lack of guidance on electronic records management by government agencies;

· Mismanagement of electronic records leading to their loss; and

·Inability to determine appropriate hardware and software for e-records management.

Other problems with the management of electronic records include poor management of electronic mail (e-mail), failure to access and read electronic records due to obsolete hardware and software, fragile storage media, the manoeuvrability of e-records, and lack of data formats and metadata standards.

2.13 Records management policies

A records management policy is a foundation or guide for the effective management of records in an organization. It:

- Demonstrates to employees and stakeholders that managing records is important to the organization
- Provides a statement of intentions that underpins a records management programme
- Serves as a mandate for the activities of the records manager
- Provides a framework for supporting documents such as procedures, business rules, disposal schedules, etc.

According to Bexly (2006), a records management policy ensures that records are accessible to enable the making of well-informed decisions. This applies to paper and electronic records. He also states that a policy ensures that:

- Records are kept securely and protected from accidental loss and destruction

- Records are maintained in an environment that enables access and that has good storage conditions and physical security

- Records are not kept longer than is necessary in accordance with the retention guidelines

- Records are disposed of appropriately in accordance with legal and regulatory obligations

- Staff are made aware of and trained in the management of records within their sphere of action/responsibility

If a rationale of a records management policy is as stated by Bexly, then it means that it is of importance that every organization formulates a records management policy that they will operate according as a guideline.

2.14 Preservation of records

The preservation of records is not a new phenomenon. Ancient civilizations entrusted record keepers with the task of memorizing documents. Gradually the increase in records proved too much for the record keepers, leading to the need to store records in other ways. As time progressed, records were kept in physical form on shelves, resulting in the first collections of various records (archiving). The preservation of records facilitates continuity in decision-making while providing substantiation of precedent activities and historical superiority for future generations.

Van Albada (in Ngulube, 2003) states that records and archives help to "establish communications between the past and future generations", for without records and archives it would be difficult, if not impossible, for people to learn from past successes or failures, limiting the society's ability to act based on sound

information. Van Albada further states that without records and archives, we cannot fully explain the ever-changing present and inform the future with wisdom, and thus archives and archivists are the guardians of "the continuity with the previous and future generations of our nations".

With the introduction of different technologies, recordkeeping moved from manual to electronic format. Different records are now preserved in a range of technological systems, e.g. emails, databases, etc., and archived for later access. However it is important to note that while technology has significantly increased ease of access to records, it also allows the authentication and authorization of access to records by people who are not authorized to have access to particular documents. In order to preserve records effectively, everyone involved with records management or preservation must share the responsibility for their physical security and protection.

Preserving records effectively means that documents must always be placed, handled, consulted and/or displayed in a way that minimizes the risk of damage and takes into account their size, shape, and physical condition. The records must be stored in a safe and secure location and displayed under appropriate preservation conditions (e.g. avoiding areas of unsuitable temperature and humidity or areas directly affected by ultra violet light), and if they are moved, they must be moved with care between locations. Proper accounts must be kept at all times of the precise location of all records, including those temporarily withdrawn or undergoing administration (i.e. referencing, cataloguing, etc.). In cases where serious damage or loss has taken place, it is imperative for the right staff to be alerted immediately in order for corrective measures to be taken.

2.15 Preservation Policies

The creation of preservation policies is an essential step in the preservation of records. A preservation policy is set as a reminder of all the restrictions that need to be adhered to if important records are to be saved for present and future generations. Cloonan (2001:232) states that policy issues pertaining to preservation are indeed a neglected area.

It is a fact that preservation is a core function of any record office. Preservation ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to access and enjoy unique and important records. Policies play a major role in that they clearly stipulate the responsibilities of the archivist, i.e. the preservation of archival materials of all types in order to guarantee access to the information they contain, both for the current generation of archives and records' users, and for generations to come (Ngulube, 2003:117). Ranson (1995:440) defines policies as statements that are typically expressed both in utterances and textual form. He explains that they have a distinctive and formal purpose for organizations and governments, and that is to codify and publicize the values which are to inform future practice and thus encapsulate prescription for reform. Ranson also explains that policies are oriented towards change and action, providing public intent of transforming practice according to ideal values.

2.16 Records Management Implementation Plan

According to the Government of South Australia on Records Management (2012:8-27) an implementation plan for the adequacy of records managements has to be implemented for the effectiveness of records management. This plan according to the Government of South Australia has got four stages and the stages are listed together with the duties involved.

Stage One: Preliminary Investigation – gathering information

Information gathered from the preliminary investigation stage is relevant for various records management purposes on an ongoing basis. The contextual information can be used for wider information management strategy implementation.

Determine context

This requires a review of documentary sources such as annual reports, business plans of both the department as a whole and of individual business units, organization charts, strategic plans, mission statements, policies and procedures, establishment documentation, service charters and intranet sites.

Conduct business functions and activities analysis

Understanding the business of the agency will help the project team to understand the records that are produced as a result of transactions executed by the agency.

The project team will need to identify:

· the broad functions the agency undertakes to support its goals and strategies

· the activities which comprise the agency's functions

· the groups of recurring transactions or processes that comprise these activities.

Determine recordkeeping requirements

The project team needs to determine what chain of evidence is required, through policies, guidelines, standards, and/or legislation, to substantiate a sequence of decisions or actions.

Assess existing systems

Having identified recordkeeping requirements can be applied to existing systems to determine to what degree the current practice satisfies the requirements. This

should be determined to what extent creation, capture and control, access and disclosure, disposal, and storage of official records is enabled.

Stage Two: Design & Testing

Develop policies, guidelines and procedures

It is vitally important that policies, guidelines and/or procedures for the following be in place:

• records creation, capture and disposal (including retention and destruction)

• access to records in the custody of the agency, in the custody of private storage providers and in the custody of State Records

• the disclosure of information within records

• records location control (including on and off site storage)

• the alteration of records

• record version control

• disaster recovery

• identification of vital records

• records security

• the validation of records

Develop support tools

To supplement and enable the practical application of policies and guidelines there is need to have in place or develop the following support tools:

• a business classification scheme

• a function-based thesaurus

• operational records disposal schedule/s.

• appropriate records management software

• intranet site.

Allocate responsibilities

The project team will need to define authorities, roles and responsibilities for the capture, control, disposal, access and storage of official records. This should include mapping the relationships between management, end users, records managers, and systems administrators.

Develop conversion plan

A conversion is necessary to:

· test the comprehensiveness and usability of the proposed or revised policies, procedures and guidelines

· test support tools

· assess user satisfaction, understanding of new or revised roles and systems, and success rating

· determine degree of compliance and accuracy concerning the new or revised methods for the management of official records.

Stage Three: Implementation

Develop and communicate implementation timetable

An implementation timetable for the progressive rollout across business units needs to be developed and communicated to staff. Such communication can take place via an intranet, newsletter, staff meetings or visits by the project team to each business unit. The implementation timetable needs to be endorsed by the Senior Executive and this communicated to staff.

Distribute policy statements

It is important to distribute the adopted policy statements. These should have to be endorsed by Executive. The statements may be distributed via intranet or in hardcopy or both. A formal announcement or launch of the endorsement of the new policy statements should be made.

Distribute guidelines and procedures

Guidelines and procedures should be distributed via identified channels. This should be done as soon as possible after the distribution of the Policy Statements.

Train staff and establish support systems

Induction training should be devised and conducted for all relevant staff. This training may be provided internally or by external contractors. The training would be progressively offered to the various business units in accordance with the implementation plan. Initially training may be provided as face-to-face groups with each business unit. Online training and self-help may then be provided as ongoing support. Such training is necessary before the new guidelines and procedures can be formally instituted.

Establish performance measures

Establish a regime for performance measurement of systems, for end user awareness and compliance and for effectiveness of new policies, guidelines, procedures and support tools. Actual measurements regarding quality, quantity, timeliness and cost for performance testing would also need to be developed.

Develop a maintenance plan

This need should be largely fulfilled by the development of specific policy, guidelines and procedures as well as by performance testing. In addition, a hand over process is needed to identify what staff will be responsible for the various aspects of managing the records management program once the project team is disbanded.

Stage Four: Post-Implementation Review

Interview management and staff/conduct surveys

Following rollout, it is important to conduct interviews with management and staff and/or conduct surveys to determine user satisfaction, compliance and understanding.

Observe and measure effectiveness

Collect and analyse performance data based on performance measures assess the performance of systems, review quality of capture and storage of official records, then devise and initiate corrective action.

Evaluate the new program

After a defined period from implementation, review policies, guidelines, procedures, support tools and the training program, and continue to document and report on findings.

This kind of implementation plan developed by the Government of Australia is very important because it provides a generic plan for implementing an adequate records management program for State Government agencies, Local Government authorities and Universities. The adequate records management implementation plan according to the Government of South Australia (2012:5) seeks to make sure that official records are created, official records are captured, official records are disposed of systematically, access to official records is managed, official records can be found, official records can be relied upon, the management of official records is planned, records management training is provided to staff, records management reporting mechanisms are implemented, policies, procedures and practices exist for the management of official records and that records management resources are implemented.

2.17 Review of Related/Empirical Studies

Various studies on records management have been widely conducted. An example can be studies conducted by Gibbons & Shenton, (2003:144); Ngoepe, (2003:18) show that records management trends have been investigated and the findings being that the current practices are conflicting to the practices that are stipulated in terms of the regulatory framework. An example of this statement can be a study that was conducted by Gibbons and Shenton (2003:143–144). In their study they found that, in spite of the regulatory framework that is in existence, the records managements practices of the United Kingdom Parliament were not in contour with the practices recommended by the regulation.

Yusuf & Chell (2002:57) also conducted a study on records management whereby they indicated the different theoretical views of records management that exist. They further stated that records management originate its theoretical basis from the integration of archives, records information management and information technology. Gill (2005:239) supports Yusuf and Chell by stating that the traditional view, regards records management as originating from archival studies.

Studies conducted by Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:2; King, 1997:656; Mullon, 2004:1; Ngulube, 2004:3; Shepherd, 2006:6; Willis, 2005:86–89 show that proper records management is the foundation for supremacy. It is worth mentioning that departments with proper records management practices should be able to deliver transparency in any action that they take, for example, it is very important that they indicate that they acted in agreement with the set regulations (King, 1997:657–658; Willis, 2005:90–94).

Proper management of records should be in place to ensure that valuable information is neither lost nor misplaced (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:2; Ngulube, 2004:10). An Institutional audit that was conducted by the Department

of Education at the University of Zululand in March 2010 proved with evidence that there is a lack of proper records management at the University of Zululand. "Cases were reported of missing marks, incorrect marks being entered and even graduation certificates being issued even though there are incomplete academic records" (Department of Higher Education 2010:21). All these studies are relevant to the investigated study on the status of records management at the University of Zululand. They give an overview of the importance of proper records management and how an institution can be affected if records management is not in place. Thus there won't be good governance nor good supremacy in terms of records keeping and safety.

2.18 Implications of the reviewed studies

This chapter presented a review of some of the literature on records management. There are similarities in most of the methodologies used in the various studies that were encountered. Most of the studies used both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the survey method, questionnaires, interviews and observations. Various lessons were learnt from the review and from other literature that was not included in this study.

Firstly, the realization that there is a great need to preserve corporate memory. The preservation of corporate memory guarantees that there will be continuity in the organization. This would support the future of the organization, helping it to operate effectively and efficiently and learn from previous mistakes.

Secondly, there is a need to develop records management policies, guidelines and procedures. Ngulube (2003:117) states that policies play a major role in that they clearly stipulate the responsibilities of the archivist, i.e. the preservation of archival materials of all types in order to guarantee access to the information they contain, both for the current generation of archives and records' users, and for generations to come. The availability of adequate policies sets up a foundation or

guide for the effective management of records in an organization. In the case of an institution like the University of Zululand, adequate policies would result in staff awareness of standards and allow them to follow proper records management practices.

Thirdly, there should be an adequate records management program and an implementation plan. This is indicated by the guideline of adequate records management implementation plan by the Government of South Australia (2012:8) specifies that there should be a team/committee that will look closely at records management. This team will have to co-ordinate and conduct the implementation plan, making sure that all the stages are followed e.g the preliminary investigation stage which works with the gathering of information, the design and testing stage which deals with the development of policies, guidelines and procedures, the implementation stage which makes sure that the policy statements, guidelines and procedures are being distributed and that staff are trained and the is the establishment of the support systems. The last stage deals with the post implementation review which observes and measure effectiveness, thus also evaluating new programs.

Fourthly, there is a need to adopt strategic planning and management. This would help the employees to envision the systematic desired future of the organization and to translate the vision into broadly defined goals with a sequence of steps to achieve the goals.

Finally, records professionals must adapt to the use of information technology in the storage, retrieval and dissemination of preserved/recorded memory/information. A good example can be records management software that can be added as a module to the existing ITS that is used by the university.

Alternatively, the university will need to opt for a Windows Share Point server that will have a records management module in it.

2.19 Summary

While various studies have been done based on the Records Life Cycle model, it is only suitable for studies dealing with paper-based records. The Lifecycle theory does not accommodate studies that seek to investigate the management of electronic records. This was the motivation behind the Records Continuum model developed by Upward, which is suitable for both paper-based and electronic records. The South African Records Management model clearly challenges institutions that are not conducting proper records management. This model emphasizes the importance for an institution to have a functional records management policy and the necessary infrastructure - both in terms of human and physical/technical resources - to manage its records effectively.

The literature review has clearly indicated the importance of records management especially on how records (both physical and electronic) need to be managed. Also the purposes of records management towards preserving a corporate memory for an organization or institution such as the University of Zululand have been explained. Challenges faced by records management especially electronic records management have been revealed. The review explained the significance of a records management policy, standards, procedures and proper records management.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three presents the research study design. It is thus indispensible for researchers to clearly state their research method (Kothari 2004:31; Ngulube 2005a). Organizing and implementation of a research project is precarious to its success (Henry 2004:41). Kothari (2004.31) pointed out that decisions regarding what, where, when, how much, by what means, concerning an inquiry or a research study constituted a research design. Pearce (2005:55) stated that, for all disciplines, it was clear that the candidate's awareness of the importance of the method was absolutely crucial and the more sensitive a researcher was to this fact, the better the thesis was likely to be. The key elements of a research design are: defining the population and how it was obtained, sampling procedures, instrumentation used, procedures employed in gathering and processing data and the statistical treatment of the data (Ngulube 2005a: 128).

Issues presented in the chapter, as part of the study research design, included the following;

- Research methods and methodology;
- Procedure; use of survey research;
- Study population and justification;
- Sampling (frame and size)
- Data collection instruments;
- Data collection procedures;
- Validity and Reliability
- Data analysis;
- Research ethical considerations;
- Challenges, discrepancies and limitations.

3.2 Research methods and methodology

The research methodology of a study refers to the set of procedures and methods that the researcher uses to conduct research. Research methods had to be evaluated in order to explain what information was required, how it was procured more accurately and more cheaply and how it was analysed (Ngulube 2005a:139). Unexpected changes to the research design, limitations of the research design, acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the execution of the study and ethical issues must be dealt with when evaluating research procedures. There are generally two approaches to research, namely quantitative or qualitative, with a third dimension referred to as the mixed method approach that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.2.1 Quantitative research

According to Burns (2000:43), quantitative research uses descriptive statistics that enable the researcher to summarize quantities of data by using graphs and numbers such as values and percentages. Research methods in a quantitative study include experiments, surveys, content analysis and existing statistics (Neumann, 2000:56). A quantitative study measures a phenomenon using numbers in conjunction with statistical procedures in order to process data and summarize results (Creswell, 1994:2; Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 1998:123). The quantitative research paradigm was employed in this study. The major attraction of the quantitative design is that it is the oldest type of research that can describe, predict and explain a research phenomenon (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 1998:124). The quantitative research paradigm provides "a significant part of the foundation on which the social sciences have been erected" (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 1998:124).

3.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research can commonly be understood as research that is conducted in a natural setting; the researcher gathers notes or pictures, analyzes these

inductively, focuses on the meaning of the population/participants/environment, and describes the phenomenon in language that is both expressive and persuasive (Trochim, 2000:n.p). Neuman (2000:122) explains that in qualitative research, data is not described using statistics, but by using words, sound, images/visuals or objects. Neuman (2000:122) defines a qualitative study as an investigation that is intended to understand a social or human problem. Flick (2006:11) confirms that qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations. Qualitative research involves a detailed report of the feelings, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behavior of the respondents by use of words aided by pictures/visuals, sound, or objects. Sarantakos (1997:6) reiterates that qualitative research employs methods of data collection and analysis that are non-quantitative. Such research aims to explore sociological elements and describe reality as experienced by the respondents. An investigation into social phenomena warrants the use of qualitative methods because human actions, such as web information seeking behavior, are difficult to quantify.

3.2.3 The survey method

The study used the survey method to assess the status of records management at the University of Zululand. A survey can be defined as a deliberate, well-planned research study of a selected number or group of individuals with respect to one or more variables, carried out in such a way as to significantly reduce the error inherent in all social science research by adhering to scientific research principles and methodologies. Surveys are perceived to be excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes in a large population such as a university. In a survey, the researcher gathers relevant data for his/her research either via a questionnaire which can be in printed or electronic format, or via recorded person-to-person interviews. This study employed the questionnaire as its primary data collection instrument.

3.3 Population

The term 'population' refers to a well-defined group from which a sample can be drawn and which is specified in very concrete terms (Neuman, 2000:201). An

example of a population can be a person, a group, an organization, a written document or symbolic message, or even a social action under investigation. This study targeted both the administrative staff and academic Heads of Departments (HODs) from the University of Zululand's four faculties. Twenty four (24) administrative staff and twenty six (26) academic HODs were purposively sampled.

3.4 Sampling

Neuman (2000:195-196) identifies two types of sampling techniques, namely probability (representative) sampling and non-probability (non-representative) sampling. With probability sampling, the researcher can determine the chance or probability of an element being included in the sample. This technique gives each and every member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the sample. Examples of probability sampling include simple random sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling.

In contrast, non-probability sampling is when the researcher has no way to determine the chances of inclusion of a particular element of the population in the sample. The sample may be drawn depending on a determined size in advance, but there is no assurance of representativeness. Examples of non-probability sampling include haphazard sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling, deviant-case sampling, sequential sampling, theoretical sampling and purposive sampling.

3.4.1 Purposive Sampling

In purposive sampling, the investigator uses his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study. In this study, purposive sampling was used because it is judgmental, allowing the researcher to handpick certain groups or individuals according to their relevance to the issue at hand (Aina and Ajifuruke, 2002:37-38). The use of purposive sampling was aimed at getting as more relevant and valuable information for the research as possible.

3.4.2 Sample size and sample frame

Sample size depends largely on the degree to which the sample population approximates the qualities and characteristics of the general population. Gay and Airasian (in Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:207) provide the following guidelines for selecting the sample size:

 For a small population (less than 100 people or other unit), there is little point in sampling; a researcher has to survey the entire population;

 If the population size is around 500, 50% of the population should be sampled;

 If the population size is around 1,500, 20% should be sampled; and

 Beyond a certain point (at least 5, 000 units or more), the entire population size is almost irrelevant, and a sample size of 400 should be adequate.

The general rule of thumb is that the larger the population, the smaller the percentage, and one still needs to get a representative sample in order to increase the accuracy of one's findings. The expectation is that the larger the sample, the smaller the amount of sampling errors, but a larger sample does not necessarily guarantee good results if it is not representative (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:207).

This study used non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, to gather information from the University of Zululand's administrative section and academic departments on the status of records management at the institution. In the administrative section, eleven administration sections out of forty eight were represented in the study. This meant that 23% of non-academic sections were included in the study. Respondents from the administrative sections were twenty four. The reason behind this selection was the idea that the selected respondents were known to be key informants who deal with records on a daily basis thus they could have enough information pertaining the study being conducted. The researcher concentrated on the following sections: Exams office, Filing, Finance,

Student Services, ICT, Housing, Research, Human Resources, Faculty Officers, Office of the Registrar and finally of the Rector. These sections are considered crucial in the successful day-to-day running of the university and should therefore be served by a functional records management system.

Table 3. 1 Administrative section and sampled respondents

Section	Number of Respondents
Exams	2
Faculty Officers	4
Filing Administrator	2
Finance	3
Human Resource Officers	2
Housing Administrator	1
ICT	2
Rectors Office	1
Registrar's Office	3
Research Office	2
Student Services Department	2
Total	24

The University of Zululand has a total of fifty one (51) academic departments spread over four faculties as follows; Faculty of Arts with twenty two (22) departments; Science & Agriculture with fourteen (14); Law & Administration with seven (7); and Education with eight (8) departments. The researcher purposively selected half of the departments in each faculty, with a special emphasis on the HODs. Eleven (11) departments were purposively selected from the Faculty of Arts, seven (7) from Science & Agriculture, four (4) from Law & Administration, and four (4) from Education. Overall, twenty six (26) departments

were represented, or 51% of the total number of academic departments on campus.

Table 3. 2 Sampled academic departments

Arts	Science & Agriculture	Commerce, Admin & Law	Education
Information Studies	Geography & Environmental Studies	Economics	Educational Planning & Administration
Communication Science	Biochemistry & Microbiology	B.Com Management	Maths, Science & Technology
Social Work	Computer Science	Political Science	Educational Psychology
Psychology	Zoology	Law	Foundation of Education
Tourism	Nursing		
Dev. Studies	Hydrology		
English	Botany	Total Departments: 26	
General Linguistics			
History			
Sociology			
Criminal Justice			

The total number of respondents in the study amounted to fifty (50). This included both administrative staff (24) and academic HODs (26).

3.5 Research instruments

Research instruments refer to the tools that are used to collect data. Qualitative and quantitative studies largely use the same research instruments for data

collection. Popular examples of data collection techniques include questionnaires, interviews and observations. This study used both close-ended (structured) and open-ended (unstructured) questionnaires to ascertain the status of records management at the University of Zululand.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire consists of a set of questions for submission to a number of persons or respondents in order to gather specific data about a given phenomenon or subject (Onyango, 2002:65). Onyango (2002:65) Babbie (2005:254) explain that questionnaires fall into two categories, i.e. either open-ended (unstructured) or close-ended (structured) questionnaires. In close-ended (structured) questionnaires, the respondent is provided with a list of possible answers to choose from, thus eliminating the complexity and problems that emanate from the respondent providing his/her own responses. Close-ended questions are popular in survey research because they facilitate greater uniformity in the responses and are more easily processed than the responses to open-ended questions (Babbie, 2005:254).

In open-ended (unstructured) questionnaires, the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question (Babbie, 2005:254). Open-ended questionnaires are designed to permit free responses from participants rather than ones that are limited to specific alternatives. However, since there is no limit to possible responses to an open-ended questionnaire, accurately categorizing and analyzing such varied responses can be problematic if not impossible. It is for this reason that a single questionnaire should contain both open-ended and closed-ended questions. In practice, a combination of structured and unstructured questions is most successful (Onyango, 2002:65-66).The study employed an unstructured questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended questions.

3.6 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the research instruments are important considerations when conducting research. Hopkins (2000:np) defines validity as how well a variable measures what it is supposed to measure, while reliability tells one how reproducible measures are in a retest. Edwards and Talbot (1994:70) suggest that the validity of information is based on the extent to which the methods measure what they are expected to. Validity is also seen as the extent to which a study is free from interference and contamination and control or variable manipulation (Sarantakos, 1997:80).

To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaires were piloted on a small group of staff from the University of Zululand (n=10) before distribution to the main sample. Among the staff were lecturers from the department of information studies, department of social work, department of psychology and other staff members from the administration section. A pilot study exposes mistakes/errors so that counteractive action can be taken quickly before resources are wasted on collecting data whose reliability and validity would (later) be questioned. The pilot study tested whether the questions were clear and could be understood by different respondents, and led to improvements in the precision of the questions and how they captured content. Frankel and Wallen (2000:169) recognize that the quality of instruments used in any research is important because the information obtained through them is used to draw conclusions. The data collection method used in this study (questionnaires) proved to be reliable. The pre-test revealed that the questionnaire should not take more than ten (10) minutes to complete. Confidentiality was guaranteed as questionnaires were returned anonymously.

3.7 Data collection procedures

Questionnaires were distributed to both the administrative staff and the academic Heads of Departments. Prior to questionnaire administration, a requisition letter for the study was issued to the respective departments and telephone calls were

made to the respondents. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents in their offices and collected in person after three days. The offices were a convenient place to administer the questionnaires because the respondents spent most of their time in them. This type of data collection strategy was good as it allowed the respondents' time to fill in the data. The researcher was able to respond to any queries that arose during data collection and there was control over the data collection procedure, which enabled the researcher to get 100% response rate.

3.8 Data presentation and analysis

Data has no clear meaning unless it is analyzed and interpreted. Data analysis therefore gives raw data meaning and implications. Kothari (1990: 151) states that data analysis involves a number of closely related operations which are performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing it in a manner that answers the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (1989:114) list the operations of data analysis to include editing, coding, classification and tabulation. It also entails categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing data in order to find answers to the research questions.

Microsoft excel was used to analyze the data. Data was analyzed as follows:

Step 1: An excel database was created in the form of columns, rows and cells.

Step 2: Data was then coded. Numbers were assigned to responses prior to entering the data.

Step 3: Data was entered beginning with rows, i.e. the numbers and the data for each question.

Step 4: Upon entering the data, it (data) was squared to make sure that it was accurate.

Step 5: Finally the data was analyzed using tables, graphs and percentages.

3.9 Ethical considerations

There are a number of ethical issues that a researcher must consider when designing research that will utilize participants. Ethics are moral standards that can be followed in situations where there can be potential harm or actual harm to an individual or a group (Churchill, 1992:68).Awareness of ethical issues in research protects the integrity of the researcher and ensures honest research results. Some of the ethical issues related to both the researcher and the research subjects included avoiding plagiarism, mis-using privileges, for example, using collected data to stigmatize or entrap somebody, and maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the human subjects (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999:190-191).

Other ethical issues included ensuring anonymity of respondents, ensuring validity and informed consent of the human subjects, avoiding embarrassing questions that caused psychological harm to respondents and concealing research findings after completion of the research. The variables that form the basis of ethics include honesty, integrity, courtesy and privacy. Researchers must be sensitive not only on how information is protected from unauthorized observation, but also how (and if) participants are to be notified of any unforeseen findings from the research that they may or may not want to know. True null hypotheses should exist from the onset regarding the outcome of the trial. The present study adhered to all legal and ethical considerations and issues; all sources used in the study were acknowledged and a general picture of the collected data was presented at the analysis stage to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents. Consent was also sought from the respondents telephonically prior to their participation. The respondents were also informed of confidentiality when they were given the questionnaires, with further written assurance on the questionnaires of confidentiality and the freedom to choose to answer questions. Research instruments were pre-tested, to ensure that any embarrassing questions

were avoided. Pre-testing of research questions ensured that research questions were specific, real, researchable, interesting to the researcher and that they encompassed the expected content and predicted the whole argument.

3.10 Challenges, discrepancies and limitations

Several challenges were encountered in the course of the study. Some respondents took longer than the stipulated three days to finish the questionnaires. To some extent, some respondents feared victimization even though they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The reason for their fear was that at the time of study, the university was undergoing an audit/ administrative review, perhaps leading to some staff members fearing that they could be somehow exposed, however those staff members ended up filling the questionnaire.

3.11 Summary

This study surveyed respondents using quantitative research method in a questionnaire. Purposive sampling gathered a sample of twenty four (24) staff from the administrative section with a representation of fourteen administrative offices and twenty six (26) academic HODs, resulting in a total of fifty (50) respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters presented the background of the study, the literature review and the research methodology. This chapter presents, interprets and analyses the questionnaires' findings. The questionnaires were divided into two categories: i) Section A, which targeted the administrative staff, and ii) Section B, which targeted the academic departments. The sampled population was likewise divided into the administrative support section and academic departments. Twenty four (24) administrative staff members were included in the study. The administrative respondents were drawn from the following sections: Exams office, Filing, Finance, Student Services, ICT, Housing, Research, Human Resources, Faculty Officers, Office of the Registrar and finally of the Rector. Twenty six (26) Heads of Departments representative of academic departments from all four of the university's faculties - Arts, Science, Education and Commerce & Law - were included in the study. The results were organized and presented according to the themes of the study. The findings are presented through symbolic representations such as bar charts and figures. Tables were used to display numerical and other results. The questionnaires incorporated both open and close-ended questions. A total of nineteen questions were set for the administrative respondents while nine were set for the HODs.

The distribution of the questionnaires was aimed at achieving the following objectives:

a) To determine what types of records are kept in the records management system

b) To find out whether the University of Zululand has a formal records management system besides the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which is not a records management system but an Enterprise Resource Management Program.

c) To determine whether or not the university has a formal policy, procedures and/or filing system for records

d) To find out if the policy (if it exists) and the procedures forms part of the university's regulatory structures

e) To find out whether or not the policy (if it exists) and the procedures complies with the government's records management regulations

4.2 Section A: Administrative Section

4.2.1 Availability of a records management system for recordkeeping

The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the university was using any records management system. All twenty four of the administrative respondents stated that the university was using Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), which they assumed was a records management system. They further stated that a manual system was in use.

4.2.2 Records management tasks

The survey sought to determine whether or not the respondents were assigned records management duties (physical or electronic). All twenty four (100%) of the respondents indicated that their administrative sections were tasked with records management. They were then asked about the types of records that their administrative sections were tasked with. The respondents indicated that they were tasked with various kinds of records, in particular those listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1 Records created at elected administrative offices

Types of records created at elected administrative departments at Unizulu	
Academic departments	Memorandums &minutes
Admission and admission policy	Passed Master's &Doctoral theses
Alumni records	Performance appraisal
Audit reports	Policies
Annual budgets	Project reports
Applications received	Registered students
Architectural drawings	Reports on courses offered
Budget proposals	Research awards & scholarship records
Human Resource records	Students awarded degrees
Courses offered, Enrolment reports	Staff recruitment records
Examination dates	Student organizations &associations
Examination question	Students' academic records
Expenditure records	Staff evaluation policy
Financial records and financial aid policy	Students financial records
Governing board minutes &reports	Student Representative Council
Graduation photos	University staff records
Graduation videos	University professors
Mission statement &vision	University council
Maintenance reports	Winter school records

4.2.3 Gender of the participants

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Sixteen (67%) of the administrative participants were female and eight (33%) male. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.1.
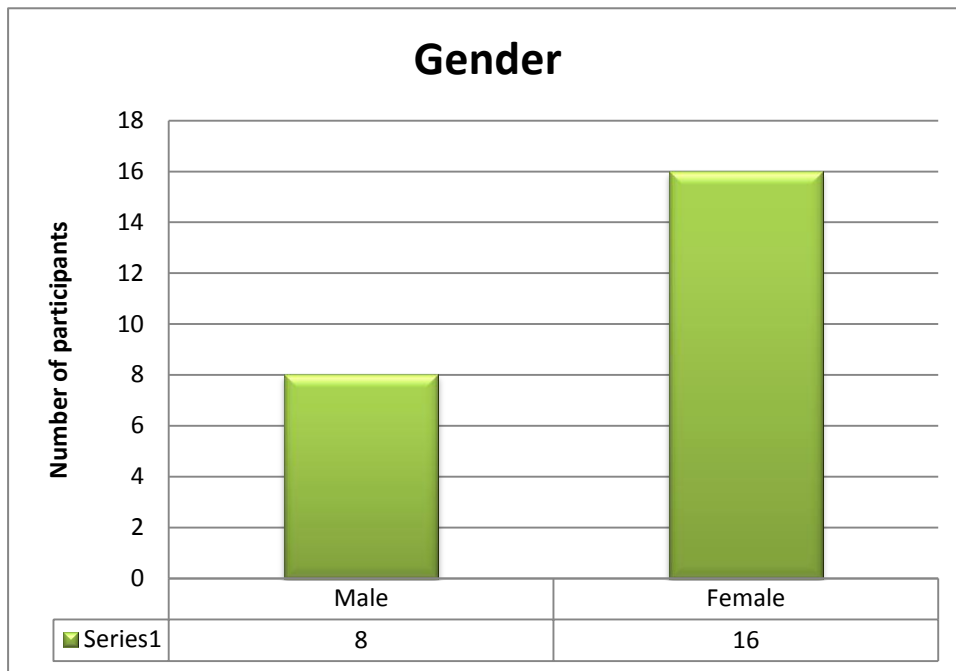
Figure 4. 1 Gender of the respondents

4.2.4 Qualifications of the respondents

Qualifications of the respondents ranged from school leaving certificates to Honours degrees. Of the 24 respondents, two (8%) had no qualifications, thirteen (54%) had a diploma, six (25%) had a degree, and three (13%) had Honours qualifications. However none of the qualifications fell under records management. The two respondents with school leaving certificates indicated that they were studying towards a non-records management degree. None of the respondents had a qualification in records management or related to records management. The University of Zululand evidently lacks employees with formal qualifications in records management and does not appear to provide any training in records management.

Respondents' Qualifications
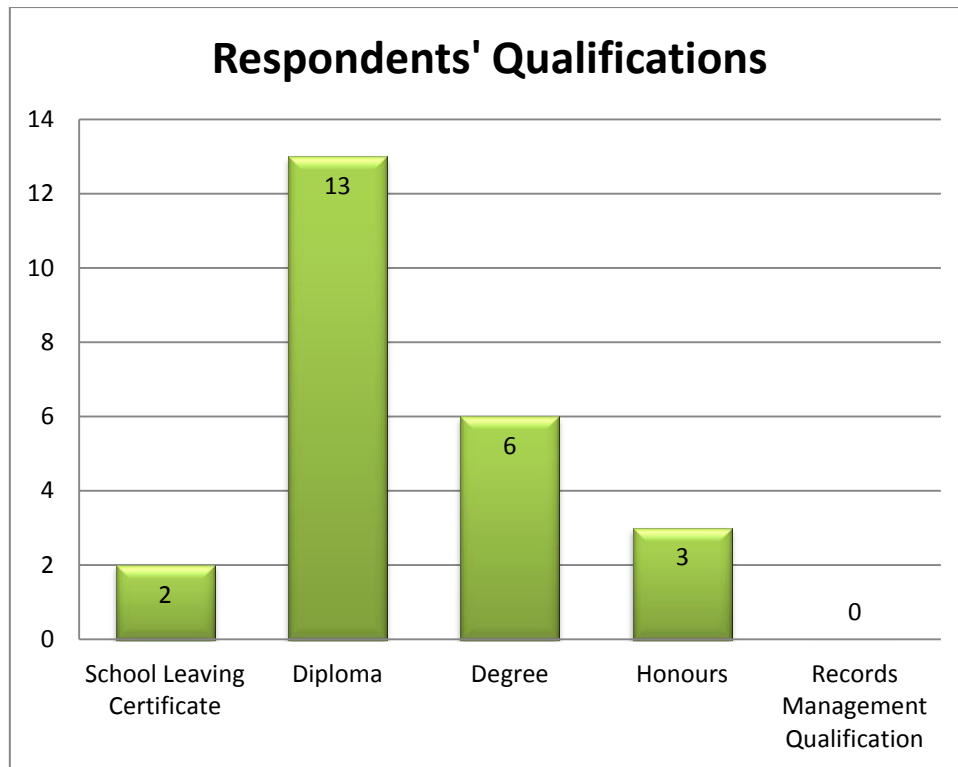
Figure 4. 2 Respondents' qualifications

4.2.5 Employment position within the university

Respondents were asked to state the position they were occupying within the university. This was asked to ascertain the respondent's possible relation to records management. Six (25%) held senior positions (an assistant director, administrators, a financial administrator and faculty administrators). Two (8%) were in information management and communications technology, sixteen (67%) were administrative assistants (personal assistants, secretaries, faculty officers and filing/records clerks). The results indicated that indeed most of the respondents were working with records.

Current Employment Positions

	ICT / Information Management	Senior Positions	Administrative Assistants
Series1	2	6	16
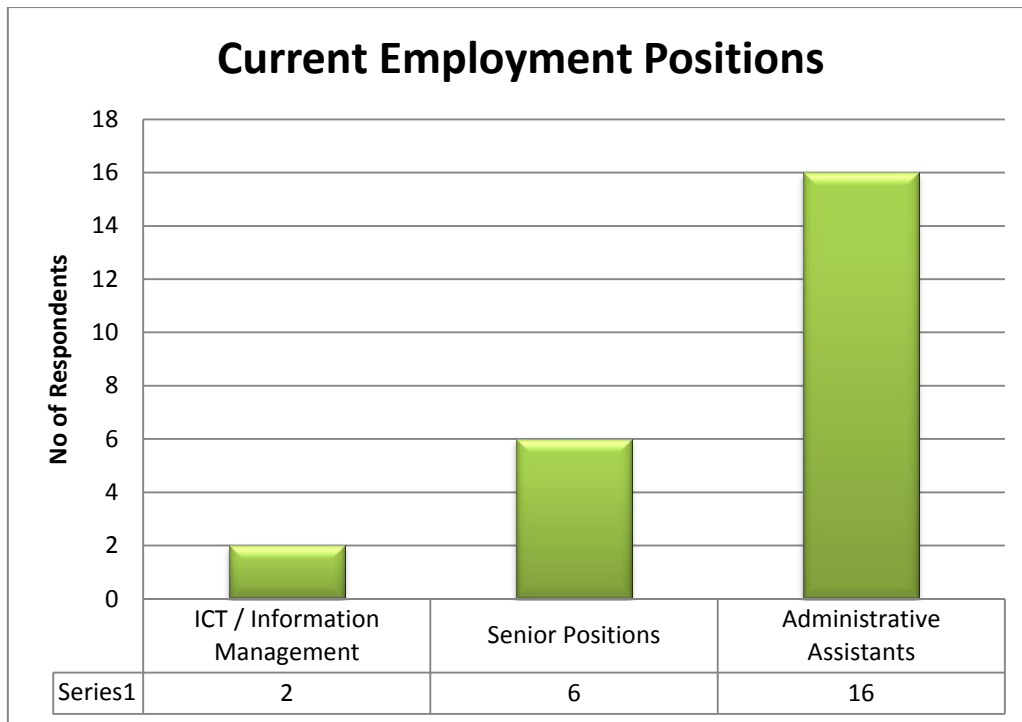
Figure 4. 3 Employment positions of the respondents

4.2.6 Sections of employment in administration

The respondents were asked to indicate their sections of employment within administration. Two (8%) were in Examinations, four (17%) were Faculty Officers, two (8%) were in Filing, three (%) in Finance, two (8%) in Human Resources, one (4%) in Housing, two (8%) from ICT, one (%) in the Rectors Office, three (13%) were from the Registrar's office, two (8%) were in Research and two (8%) were in the Student Services Department.
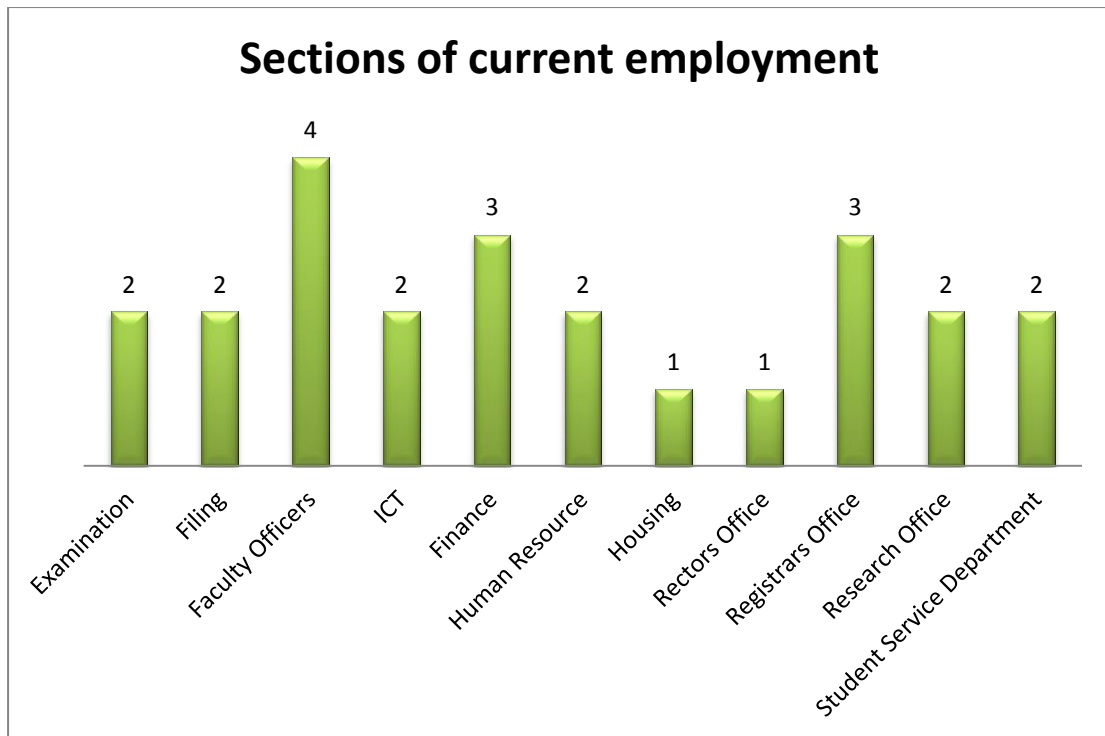
Figure 4. 4 Sections of employment in administration

4.2.7 Types of records kept in the records management system

Respondents were asked to state the types of records that are kept in the records management system that they use at the University of Zululand. In their responses they gave the following records as listed:

Table 4.2 Showing records that are kept at the university's records management system

|		
Annual/Summary Reports	University Speeches/Presentations	Staff details
Accreditation Reports	University Organized Conference Records	Statements of accounts
Agreements and Contracts	Unit/Department Training/Course Materials	Student admissions and registrations
Agendas/Minutes	University Publications	Student housing
Car hire rentals details	Procurement and tenders	Student records
Calendars and Schedules	Public Records Requests	Student results
Departmental entity numbers and accounts	Planning Documentation	Student societies (academic, political and religious)
Examination timetable	Policies and Procedures	Students accounts
External Complaints Federal Lobbying Reports	Payroll records	Outside Activity Reports
Elections to Committees	Money transfers	Organizational Charts
Financial accounts	Performances/Events (non-athletic)	Surveys/Questionnaires—Non-Academic
Legal Notices	Meeting Recordings	Statements of Economic Interest

4.2.8 System used in the administrative department for recordkeeping

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of system that they were using in their department for recordkeeping. All the respondents (24; 100%) said that they use their computers, laptops and the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS). They also mentioned keeping physical records in standard filing cabinets, special records

boxes, special paper folders, and in empty carton paper boxes, especially empty rota-trim boxes.

4.2.9 Formal or written policy, procedures and filing system

Policies are important because they set out the goals that need to be achieved as well as the guidelines for implementing them. The National Archive of South Africa emphasizes the development of records management policies that regulate records management activities. Such a policy should be endorsed by the university's management structure, which includes the office of the rector and council. The main purpose of this question was to ascertain whether the University of Zululand had a formal records management policy and procedure in place and whether or not the administrative staff members were aware of it. There was general uncertainty among the respondents as to whether or not the university had a specific records management policy in place other than the ITS Enterprise Management System. Two (8.3%) respondents stated that they operated according to a policy on records management, two (8.3%) said they were not sure, and twenty (83.3%) indicated that there was no records management policy that they were informed about. The overall impression from this result was that the respondents were not aware of any specific records management policy.

Policy, procedures and filing system

Category	Value
Policy Operation	2
Not sure	2
No Policy	20
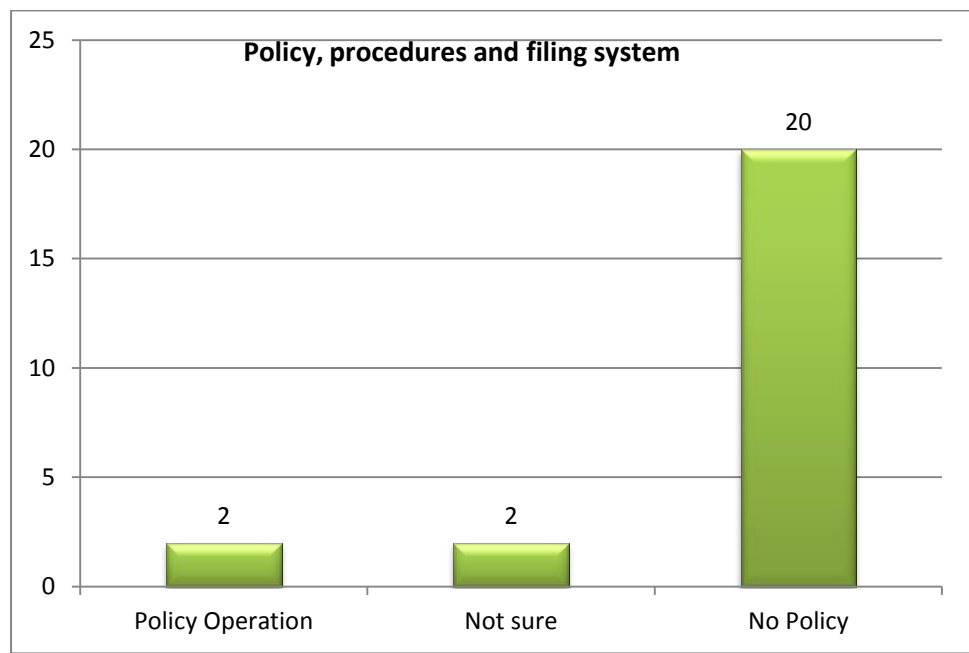
The two respondents who indicated that there was a records management policy, procedure and a filing system were asked whether or not the policy, procedure and filing system formed part of the University's Regulatory Structure. Both responded in the affirmative.

The twenty respondents who said that there was no specific records management policy in place at the University of Zululand were asked if they were aware of any plans to formulate a policy in the next coming twelve months. None (0%) said yes, seven (35%) said no, and thirteen (65%) said maybe. The nine respondents who said maybe based their opinions on the changes and improvements that the new rector had introduced since the start of her term of office in 2010. The responses are shown in Figure 4.6.
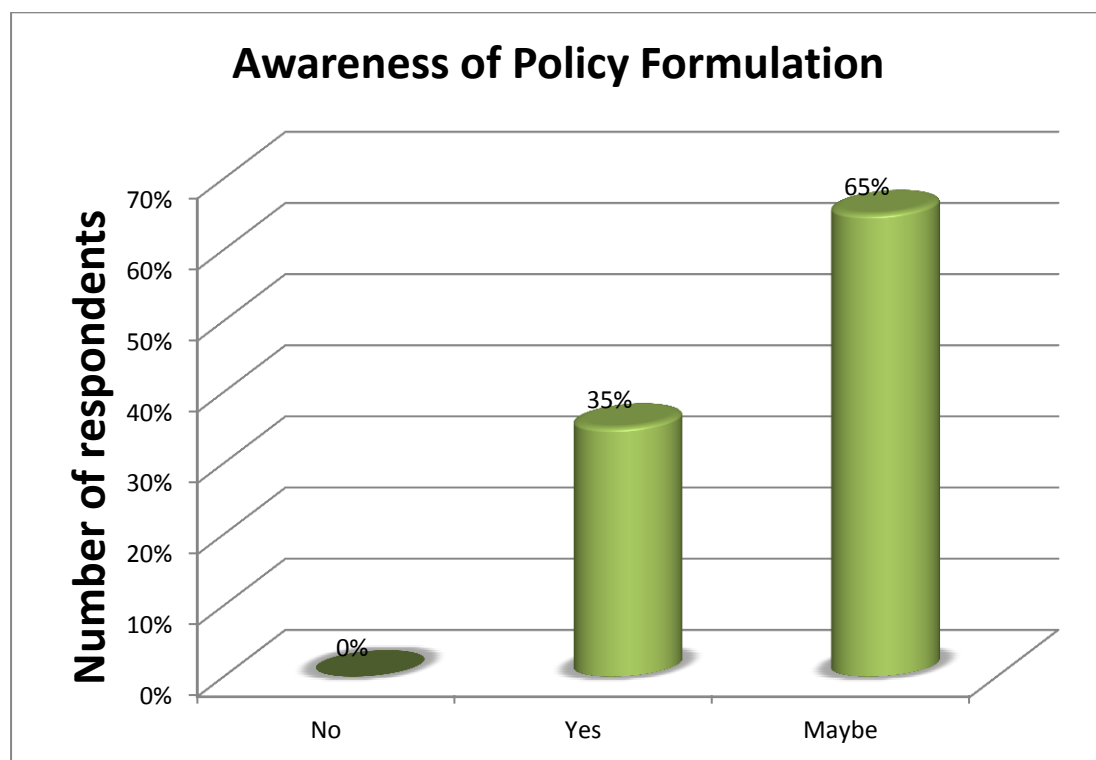
Figure 4. 6 Awareness of policy formulation

4.2.10 Existing strategy (plan of action) being used for recordkeeping

A records management strategy plays a vital role in establishing and disseminating principles that influence recordkeeping behaviour within a university

organisation. For example, a policy strategy is important when a university wishes to emphasize corporate ownership of records and establish a framework for consistent and accountable recordkeeping practices. The twenty respondents who said that there was no specific records management policy were further asked if there was any existing strategy for records management, i.e. a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim. All twenty (100%) of the respondents were not sure whether there was a centralised strategy in place that the university was using in terms of records management; however they said there were strategies that they were using in their departments in order to ensure that the records were properly kept.

The twenty respondents were asked to list the existing recordkeeping strategies or the plan of action that they use to achieve their day-to-day goals. Their responses were as follows:

- Create or capture records and associated metadata directly in standard formats
- Ensure the security of all records, whether physical or electronic
- Use lockers to store physical records
- Store paper records in cupboards if the lockers are occupied
- Save electronic records into shared directory folders or save them in personal files for ease of access, i.e. decentralization
- Records should only be used and maintained by authorised users
- Prohibit staff from disclosing the contents of records without authorisation

4.2.11 Compliance with South African government regulations for records management, and awareness of a records management policy by staff

Records management principles and best practices for government and semi-government institutions in South Africa are determined by the National Archives

Act no.43 of 1996. Respondents were asked if and to what extent the University of Zululand was complying with government regulations for records management. This question was asked because the University of Zululand is a public institution subsidised by the government. Only two respondents (8%) stated that the university was complying with government regulations for records management. The majority (22; 92%) doubted whether or not the University of Zululand was complying with government regulations for records management.

Unizul compliance with government regulations for records management

8%

■ Complies with govt regulations for RM

■ Doubt if Unizul complies with govt regulations for RM

92%
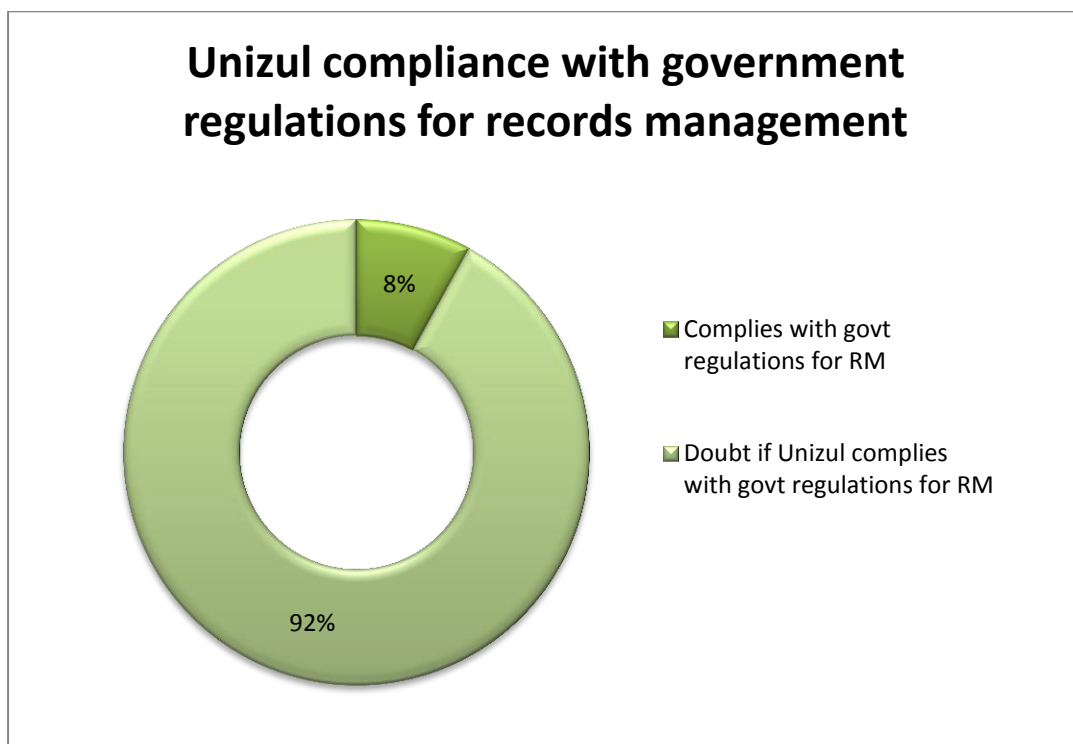
Figure 4. 7 University of Zululand's compliance with South African government regulations for records management

4.2.12 Management of records in terms of a formal university policy

Since only two (8%) of the twenty four respondents indicated that they were aware of the university's records management policy, these two respondents were asked if the staff members managed records according to the university's records management policy or not. Both respondents said that they think all the administrative staff managed records according to the records management policy. The question was asked to determine whether or not the administrative staff were

using the policies prescribed to them by the university. It is, however, highly questionable as to how only two people can be aware of a policy that should be known by all the university staff.

In order to determine the relevance of the records management policy, the respondents were asked whether the existing policy was reviewed at regular intervals. The same two (8%) respondents said that the policy was not reviewed at regular intervals.

4.2.13 Methods used to raise staff awareness of the records management policy

Respondents were asked how the staff was informed about the university's records management policy. All the respondents (24; 100%) listed various methods, including the intranet, e-mails, circulars, memorandums, meetings, workshops and training. However they hadn't been informed of any records management policy.

4.2.14 Challenges in records management at the University of Zululand

Respondents were asked to list any challenges that they were facing with regard to records management at the University of Zululand. The responses from the questionnaires revealed a number of challenges that were being experienced at the university, as follows:

- Lack of awareness of the importance of proper records management practices
- Absence of a records management policy and procedures
- Tremendous volume of older stored records (mainly physical records)
- Very limited space in terms of placing physical records, e.g. exam scripts, physical students' information (e.g. biography of students) and other records
- No ventilation in some offices, e.g. the filing department
- Too much dust leading to the damage of records
- No assistance to help with the filing of records in some departments

- Lack of resources to manage records

- Absence of a disposal authority within the university's records policy which facilitates the disposal of records

- Inability to distinguish historical records from those with temporary value

- Staff changes that leave the context of many records unknown

- Most records are not generally up to date, leading to the wrong information being provided

- There is no records manager, leading to many record protocols not being observed as the employees are not aware of how to take care of different types of records

- Lack of training and workshops

4.3. Section B: Academic departments

The questions focusing on this group were almost similar to those for the administrative staff. HODs somehow generate similar types of records (from their departments) that are then taken to administration, e.g. exam questions, scripts, student marks, departmental budgets, minutes and meetings, etc.

4.3.1 Respondents per faculty

A total of 26 HODs out of a total of 51 represented academic departments from the four faculties, i.e. the Faculty of Education (4; 15%), the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law (4; 15%), the Faculty of Science and Agriculture (7; 27%), and the Faculty of Arts (11; 42%). Figure 4.8 below shows that the Faculty of Arts with its many departments was the most highly represented, followed by the Faculty of Science & Agriculture, Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law.
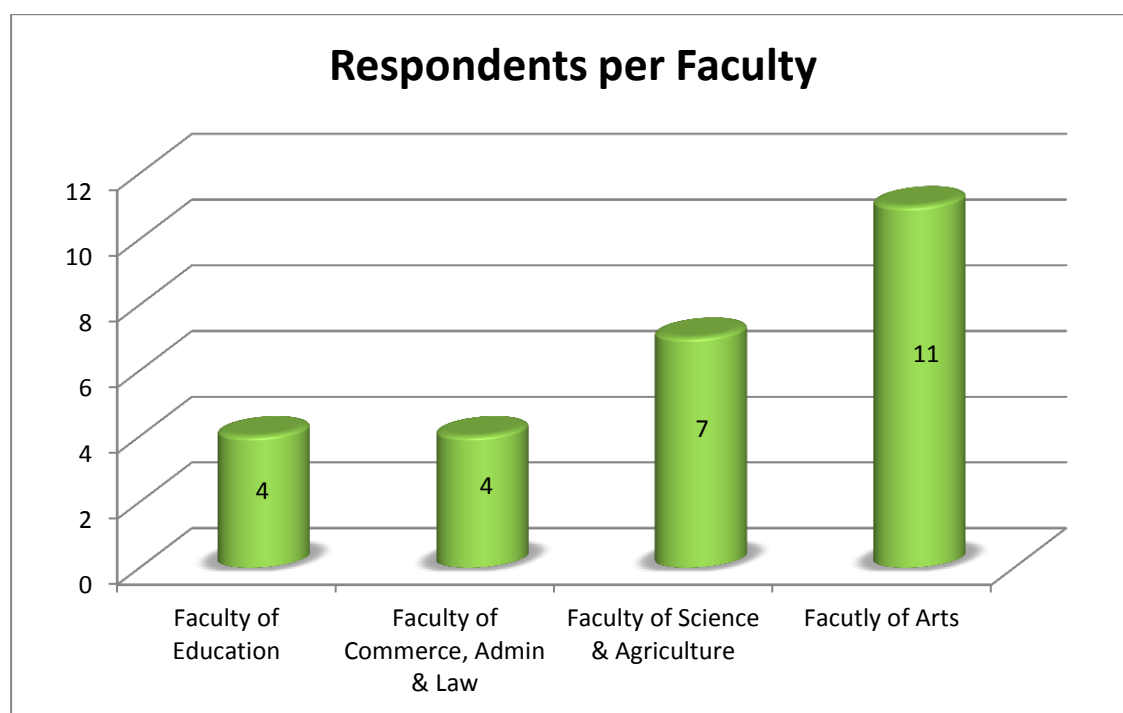

Figure 4. 8 Respondents per faculty

4.3.2 Department surveyed

Each respondent was then asked to indicate the department that he or she was the head of. Table 4.2 shows the departments that were selected.

Table 4. 2 Department surveyed

Arts	Science & Agriculture	Commerce, Admin & Law	Education
Information Studies	Geography & Environmental Studies	Economics	Educational Planning & Administration
Communication Science	Biochemistry & Microbiology	B.Com Management	Maths, Science & Technology
Social Work	Computer Science	Political Science	Educational Psychology
Psychology	Zoology	Law	Foundation of Education
Tourism	Nursing		
Dev. Studies	Hydrology		
English	Botany	Total Departments: 26	
General Linguistics			
History			
Sociology			
Criminal Justice			

4.3.3 Records management tasks

The survey sought to determine whether academic departments were tasked with records management. All 26 (100%) indicated that academic departments were tasked with records management and included the types of records shown in

Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3 Records created at elected academic departments of Unizulu

Types of records created at elected academic departments of Unizulu	
Class lists	Samples of assignments and tests
Complete list of current teaching staff	Student continuous assessment marks
Course modules	Student evaluations of lecturers
Courses run by the department	Student examination scripts
Curriculums of the courses run	Teaching responsibilities allocations
Examination questions	Timetables and class venues
Examination results	Staff meetings and minutes
Departmental financial report	Peer evaluation by other lecturers

4.3.4 Gender profile

Twenty three (88%) of the respondents from the academic departments were male and three (12%) were female, as shown in Figure 4.9.
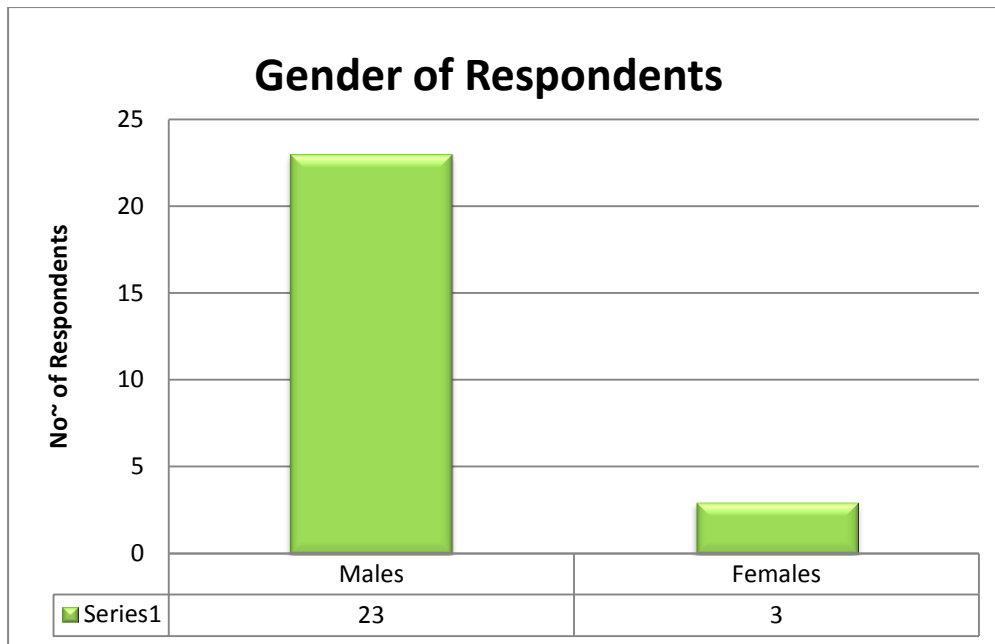
Figure 4. 9 Gender of the respondents

4.3.5 Highest qualification

This question sought to determine the highest qualification of each respondent. The reason behind asking this question was so that the researcher can get the demographic figures of the participant. The assumption was that the higher the level of education, the more likely the respondent would know how to manage records, and also that they might have experience in records. All 26 of the respondents (100%) had a PhD.

4.3.6 Type of system used for recordkeeping

Respondents were asked to specify the type of recordkeeping system they used for their records. All 26 (100%) said that they used manual record-keeping as well as electronic recordkeeping on programs such as Ms Office. They also mentioned the centralised use of ITS for entering student marks.

4.3.7 University policy regarding records management

It is important for universities to follow the ISO Standard for records management policies and procedures which ensures that the evidence and information that records contain can be retrieved effectively and efficiently using standard practices and procedures, and that appropriate attention and protection applies to

all records. This would require every employee to know and adhere to the policy for proper records management. In terms of university status, such policies have to be endorsed by the senate, rector or the top management, before being communicated to employees and implemented.

The respondents were therefore asked if there was any formal (written) policy in place regarding records management at departmental level. All 26 of the respondents (100%) indicated that they were not aware of any policy regarding records management at the University of Zululand.

4.3.8 Availability of strategies or methods for records management

Since all 26 of the respondents (100%) were not aware of any written policy, they were then asked if they had any strategies and methods that they used for recordkeeping. All 26 (100%) said that they had strategies and methods for managing records in their departments.

4.3.9 Strategies and methods for recordkeeping

Respondents were asked to indicate the strategies or methods that they used for recordkeeping in their departments. Their responses were as follows:

- Microsoft Office programs, e.g. Ms Word, Ms Excel, etc., and saving their work on their laptops/computers
- Using lockers and cupboards to store physical records
- Saving electronic records and keeping them in personal files for future access (decentralization)
- Requiring that all papers attached to files be numbered for ease of access
- Prohibiting staff from destroying records unless such action is authorised

4.4 Summary

From the data analysis there seem to be no proper records management in place to guide records management in its academic departments or in administrative support. Formal records management does not form part of the strategic plan of

the university. A high percentage of the staff revealed that a proper records management policy was lacking, resulting in strategies or methods being used as policies. The study found that some sections of the administration were not well positioned to function in an electronic work environment, which requires record specialists to do the work. There appeared to be little evidence to show that senior management was supporting records management activities and training or workshops amongst staff. The results revealed a clear lack of proper training and skills in records management amongst records management practitioners. Although the university acquired a sophisticated software management system in 2006 known as ITS (Integrated Tertiary Software), the system is not a records management system and it is not used to capture non-centralized records such as minutes of meetings, correspondence, emails, etc.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5. Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand.

5.1 Discussion according to research questions

5.1.1. Research question one: What types of records are kept in the records management system?

A records management system improves office efficiency, facilitates administrative access to inactive as well as active records, ensures the consistent maintenance of records, decreases operational costs, increases staff productivity, and helps the university to meet legal and regulatory standards. Intrinsic to the benefits of a records management system are that a process (work) is done more easily (less effort required), quickly, and with better quality, afterwards; and it can be understood and monitored.

Even though the University of Zululand's does not have a records management system, the ITS that they are using keeps different types of records, including: student admissions/registration, student accounts, student records, student results, staff details, student housing, examination timetable, payroll, financial accounts, statements of accounts, hotel and flight booking information, buying and store details, money transfers, departmental entity numbers and accounts, student societies (academic, political and religious), human resources, library services, procurement, tenders, and graduation (grading and promotion).

The different records are linked to a central database, for example from the student account one can access all the information about the student, including the student's financial status, results, whether he/she stays on campus or off

campus, etc. With these records, the university can determine whether or not the student is allowed to graduate based on his/her results and financial status. This also applies to university staff; the records display all the information about the staff - their demographic details, staff numbers, accounts, payroll, etc. These records are very important and beneficial to the university and such records need to be safeguarded at all times.

5.1.2. Research question two: Does the University of Zululand have a records management system other than ITS that the university uses?

A records management system (RMS) is an agency-wide system that facilitates the storage, retrieval, retention, manipulation, archiving and viewing of information, records, documents or files pertaining to law enforcement and institutional operations. It covers the entire lifespan of records development, from their creation to their disposal or archiving. A records management system is essential at the University of Zululand which works with records on a daily basis.

In 2006, the University of Zululand replaced its in-house developed information technology (IT) system with a system specifically designed for higher education institutions. This system, called Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS), is not a records management system but an Enterprise Resource Management Program (ERMP) primarily designed to act as a fully integrated solution to support the student, financial, human resources, payroll and library business processes of a university (ITS, 2011). The ITS system is fully web-based and can be accessed by both students and staff depending on the allocated level of security (the ITS's functions are detailed in Chapter two). The latest version of the ITS system is referred to as Integrator v2 and the university is currently in the process of acquiring it for both the Kwa-Dlangezwa and Richards Bay campuses.

The results revealed that there is no records management system at the University of Zululand. Nengomasha 2003:68, pointed out that record management system are important for the use of classification schemes, retention schedules and systematic disposal of records, to avoid congestion of offices and poor retrieval of information. It is for that reason that the University of Zululand needs a records management system that will provide the above mentioned things. The improvement of records management practices; as well the introduction of a legal and regulatory framework that supported records management is vitally important at the University of Zululand.

The ERMP is a centralised system that is used within the university. Records created by the university sections and departments are kept and managed by the sections or departments that created those records. In other words, the sections/departments manage the various records that they have created or any records that they receive through their correspondence with other university structures. Records that need to be kept centrally are kept in the ITS, and in most cases the administrative officers are responsible for those records. Even though there are no stipulated structures, in most cases records management responsibilities were surrogated to various staff, especially administrative officers or any staff member who had been given rights/authorization to access those records. Examples include students' financial accounts, student records, administrative records, etc. Heads of Departments also delivered some records to administration as evidence, e.g. examination scripts were kept in the Registrars section as evidence and proof that students had written their exams.

5.1.3. Research question three: Does the university have a formal policy, procedures and/or filing system for records?

It is very difficult for a university to function properly without policies and procedures that lay out the goals and standards of the university as well as the

guidelines for implementing them. While it was assumed that the University of Zululand would have a records management policy, only two (4%) out of a total of fifty respondents (including administrative support and academic departments) stated that the university had a records management policy and procedures.

Going with the majority, it would appear that policies for records management at the University of Zululand are nonexistent, in turn suggesting that records are neglected. Alternatively, if the two respondents were correct, then there is absolutely no awareness of the policy at the university (discussed further in the sections that follow). Either way, a records management audit is essential for examination and verification purposes. The literature review revealed that without a records management policy, a university has no foundation or guide for the effective management of records, meaning that there is no framework for supporting documents such as procedures, business rules, disposal schedules, etc. (Bexley 2006).Furthermore, appropriate attention and protection does not apply to all records and the evidence and information that they contain cannot be retrieved effectively and efficiently because of the lack of a policy that would govern the entire process of records management.

The availability of a policy for records management at the University of Zululand could help tosafeguard records and the interests and rights of students, employees, agents, clients, and present and future stakeholders, and provide continuity in the event of disaster. A policywould also ensure that satisfactory records are kept of all of the university's core activities; there would be support through documented records of current and future research, developments and achievements, and institutional memory would be maintained.

5.1.4. Research question four: Does the policy form part of the university's regulatory structures?

The rationale for records management is that effective records management allows the university to create and maintain records that enable it to meet legislative and regulatory requirements. The results of the study revealed that only two (4%) respondents believed that a records management policy formed part of the regulatory structure of the university, while 96% were not aware of any such policy. Based on the literature (Government of South Australia on Records Management 2012:8-27) and the responses, the implications are that either there was no awareness of the policies and regulatory structures of the university by the majority of staff, or the university was not doing enough and the policy did not, in fact, exist.

The Government of South Australia on Records Management 2012:8-27, emphasizes the establishment of a regime for performance measurements for end user awareness. The latter further accentuated the compliancy for policies, guidelines and procedures so that end users may be aware, know and use them effectively. This therefore means that if the two respondents were correct - the possibility is that because of their lack of awareness, the majority of the staff were not following the structures of the university as they were supposed to. Alternatively, the two respondents who stated that the policy forms part of the regulatory structures may have lied or did not know what to say in an attempt to protect the university (as stated in chapter one, some respondents were possibly fearful as the administrative department was going through an audit and they thought their identities would be revealed). Should it happen that the two respondents were not honest or correct, the implications are that there is not much protection and support for processes that require the existence or evidence of organizational activities and there is very little support for document policy

formulation and decision making that is based on consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration.

5.1.5. Research question five: Does the policy comply with government regulations for records management?

The Government of South Africa has setup a records management policy that provides institutions and organizations with regulations on records management. The fact that only two (4%) respondents from all the participants indicated that the university has a records management policy that complies with the government's regulations, begs the question of whether it is really possible for only two respondents to know about a policy, and for the overwhelming majority not to know about it. The evidence once again points to no records management policy, meaning that the university does not follow the government's regulations for records management. Since there is no formal records management policy at the University of Zululand, it can also be assumed that the university does not comply with the Standard for Records Management (ISO 15489). These standards also make records management possible in universities or organizations by clarifying the purpose and value of the records, which is exactly what is needed by the National Archives of South Africa.

If the University of Zululand could institute a policy that complies with the South African government for records management, chances are that all university correspondence and transactions would be conducted in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner. Service delivery would also be consistent and equitable. As it stands, most of the work at the University of Zululand is not done in an orderly manner, especially in the administrative section, and service delivery is poor because records do not receive sufficient attention and protection. For example documents cannot be retrieved with ease when required, and in some cases there is no trace of a document due to improper filing or misplacement. As stated in the

literature review, an audit conducted by the Department of Education concerning the University of Zululand revealed that there are difficulties with records keeping at the University of Zululand with reference to that there were cases that were reported whereby there were missing marks, incorrect marks being entered and graduation certificates being issued even though there were incomplete academic records. The administrator and the council of the university should therefore formulate appropriate policies that would help to guide the staff on how to conduct their work with records in mind on a daily basis.

5.2 Summary

Chapter five has demonstrated that the University of Zululand still has a long way to go before it can achieve its motto of "structured for relevancy". The university lacks professional and qualified records management staff, resulting in the improper and poor management of records. There is lack of evidence of a records management policy and procedures', confirming that the university is going against its motto as it is not that relevant in issues pertaining records management. The unavailability of a records manager also contributes to the university straying in many records related issues. Raising awareness about the importance of a records management policy and procedures is therefore essential.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings and literature review in the previous chapters. The aim of the study was to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The summary and conclusions were drawn from the objectives, research questions and findings of the study. Recommendations were based on the literature review in Chapter two and the findings of the study discussed in Chapter five.

6.1 Summary

The University of Zululand creates records on a daily basis, resulting in a lot of records that need to be filed, preserved, appraised and archived accordingly. Despite this, it would appear that records management is not an objective in the strategic plan of the university. A high percentage of the staff revealed the lack of a proper records management policy, which begs the question: without a records management policy, how is the university operating in terms of records management and how protected is the institution in terms of its records?

There was also no overall departmental performance management framework related to records management. In other words employees were not being measured according to their records management skills or abilities during performance appraisal as it does not form part of their performance contracts. The results provide no evidence of active support from the university's management structures in instituting proper records management practices.

There also do not appear any qualified records management practitioners at the University of Zululand. There is therefore a considerable lack of proper training,

workshops and skills in records management amongst records management practitioners at the University of Zululand.

6.2 Conclusion

This study was undertaken in order to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The study revealed that the university does not have a records management system besides the ITS, which is not a formal records management system.

The literature review, survey findings and discussions have clearly demonstrated that the university still has very far to go with respect to records management. In general staff complaints about missing records and correspondence going missing are common at the University of Zululand, which suggests poor recordkeeping and accountability in some sections of the university's administration.Because of the tangible and intangible value of university records, it is crucial for them to be part of a comprehensive records management program that ensures that all university records are properly and securely managed, replaceable (in the case of vital records), preserved, archived and disposed of. It is essential that those who are responsible for virtually any type of information become familiar with the requirements and processes of records management. Every employee must know why records management matters to them and why it is so important to the university.

The infrastructure of records management appears in danger of collapsing in various departments and particularly in the university's administrative offices. None of the staff surveyed in this study had any formal or informal records management training. The study also established that the university did not have a clearly defined formal records management policy or program to manage, maintain and preserve the bulk of physical and electronic records created on a daily basis. Despite claims by some of the surveyed staff that the university had a

records management policy, there was no evidence of that policy and/or the dissemination of such a policy to staff members. Two percent of the respondents claimed that the university had a records management policy while ninety six percent said that the university did not have a records management policy. One is therefore left to conclude that a policy for records management at the University of Zululand is either nonexistent or entirely inadequate, especially in terms of the South African Archives Act. The lack of a policy means that there is a lack of understanding of records management functions.

There is an urgent need to instill standards in order to attain consistency in records management at the university. It is important to examine and check the university's compliance with policies, procedures and strategies by doing a records management system audit. This would enable the university or relevant authority to examine and verify the activities of records management in order to enforce compliance with established policies and hold individuals and departments accountable (Ricks, Swafford and Gow, 1992:457).

The findings of this study may help to influence records management policy and practices at the University of Zululand, while the recommendations could help in the formulation of an appropriate policy for records at the University of Zululand in the future. It is hoped that the study will give other institutions the strategic direction and incentive that they need to initiate measures for the protection of university records. Ultimately institutions need to understand the physical needs of records and to meet or extend nationally and internationally agreed upon standards for the preservation of records.

6.3 Recommendations

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

6.3.1 Implementation of a centralized system

A suitable campus-wide records management system such as Windows SharePoint Server or other relevant system would be advantageous.

6.3.2 Frame Record Department

The university needs to develop an improvement agenda that should be endorsed the vice rector and be supported throughout by the departments. Each department must have a storeroom for physical records.

Management should offer full support to all the departments - administrative and academic departments - in records management. There is a need to outsource records specialists who know how to build and maintain recordkeeping infrastructure. Administrative staff specializing in records management should also be trained.

6.3.3 Records Management Policy

Staff should be made aware of the university's records management policy and procedures. The literature review revealed that records management programmes in Africa were plagued by various problems, due to the inability of registries and national archival institutions to play their roles effectively. Studies of recordkeeping practices focused on the role played by registries and the support they provided in managing records during the stages of records creation, distribution, storage, maintenance and disposition, to meet the information needs and business objectives of parent organizations. The implementation of the policy would ensure that they had the capacity to provide leadership and guidance on many information and knowledge management issues. This includes metadata standards, records management, business activity and the structure of classification systems, content management, long-term access and preservation of

information technologies. The other challenge related to the need to acquire resources, to develop a robust information technology infrastructure for the long-term preservation of, and access to, government records. It is thus very important that the registry of the University of Zululand formulate a policy that will govern the management of records in its institution so that the staff can operate using it.

It is evident that there is a need to develop records management policies, guidelines and procedures as stated in the literature. Ngulube (2003:117) states that policies play a major role in that they clearly stipulate the responsibilities of the archivist, i.e. the preservation of archival materials of all types in order to guarantee access to the information they contain, both for the current generation of archives and records' users, and for generations to come. The availability of adequate policies sets up a foundation or guide for the effective management of records in an organization. In the case of an institution like the University of Zululand, adequate policies would result in staff awareness of standards and allow them to follow proper records management practices.

6.3.4 Organized Filing System

The filing system should be organized so that records can be protected against loss and damage. As is, the universities records especially paper records are not kept in a safe environment neither are they classified accordingly. The literature reveals that many countries, particularly in developing countries such as in Africa, offices and corridors were piled high with closed files and filing cabinets were crammed with files that had ceased to be active (Thurston and Cain 1995). Classification systems were breaking down and unsatisfactory systems existed for managing the creation, use and storage of these records. This had serious consequences for officers who depended on files to define and implement policy, thus compromising public service delivery. The findings of Thurston and Cain regarding the poor state of recordkeeping in many developing countries, reported

in 1995, concurred with the observations made by the IRMT (1999d; 2002), and Mnjama (2004). It is thus important that a filing system be organized for convenience. The literature reveals that records professionals must adapt to the use of information technology in the storage, retrieval and dissemination of preserved/recorded memory/information. A good example can be records management software that can be added as a module to the existing ITS that is used by the university alternatively, the university will need to opt for a windows share point server that will have a records management module in it.

6.3.5 Appointment of a records manager

Currently, the study reveals the importance of a records manager and it is unfortunate that the University of Zululand has no records manager. It is thus important that it has one. The records managers have roles and responsibilities. The records manager is responsible for the overall control over the compilation, implementation, maintenance and utilization of approved filing systems and the records filed according to these systems. The records manager should ensure that the registry staff are trained in the allocation of reference numbers and in filing system maintenance procedures. The records manager should also ensure that all the users of the system are trained to allocate reference numbers to correspondence, to ensure that records are not misplaced. Supervision over the implementation and maintenance of the filing system must be ensured. The records manager is responsible for the overall control over the compilation, maintenance and utilisation of the approved schedules for records other than correspondence systems as well as the records themselves. He should ensure that the master copy of the schedule is maintained and updated

6.3.5 Transition of records from paper to the electronic environment

There should be a way that will show how records transits from paper based to electronic based records. This will work hand in hand with the records life cycle and the continuum model.

6.3.6 Staff Training

Records management is a field that needs to be run by experienced professionals who will know what has to be done when, specialists who understand their roles and responsibilities as they know themselves. Therefore it is recommended that the university (especially the registrar's office and the records manager) should train the records management staff to have a qualification in records management. Workshops will also be advantageous so that they can always be alert on what they are doing.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

The study investigated the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The study surveyed administration sections and selected Heads of Department from the four faculties of the university. The study identified several issues which could be a subject of further investigation by records management researchers. It is recommended that studies be conducted to establish the current state of records management in other South African universities and other sectors of the government e.g. records management in schools (both primary and high schools), records management in business. It is also recommended that studies be conducted to establish recordkeeping practices in the private sector, e.g. banking, insurance and non-governmental organisations, agricultural sector and in the health service sector. Such a study would provide useful comparative data on recordkeeping practices in the public and private sectors.

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8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Covering letter for pretesting the questionnaires

Dear Colleague

I am a student at the University of Zululand doing a Master's degree in Information Studies. I am seeking your assistance in my research project. The aim of this study is to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire as a data collection tool, I am conducting a pretest on the questionnaire I am intending to use for the study. The target population includes Administrative Support and Academic Heads of Departments (HODs). Your comments and contributions will be most welcome.

1. Are there any typing errors? [ ] Yes [ ] No

2. If your answer is **Yes**, please indicate them in the questionnaire.

3. Are there any misspelled words? [ ] Yes [ ] No

4.) If your answer is **Yes**, please indicate them in the questionnaire.

5. Do the item numbers make sense? [ ] Yes [ ] No

6. If your answer is **No**, please provide some suggestions below:

………………………………………………………………………………

7. Is the font type size big enough to be easily read? [ ] Yes [ ] No

8. If your answer is **No**, please provide some suggestions below:

………………………………………………………………………………

9. Is the vocabulary appropriate for the respondents? [ ] Yes [ ] No

10. If your answer is **No**, please provide some suggestions below:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

11. Is the survey too long? [ ] Yes [ ] No

12. If your answer is **Yes**, please provide some suggestions below:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

13. Is the style of the items too monotonous? [ ] Yes [ ] No

14. Are the skip patterns too difficult to follow? [ ] Yes [ ] No

15. If your answer is **Yes**, please provide some suggestions below:

....

16. Does the survey format flow well? [ ] Yes [ ] No

17. If your answer is **No**, please provide some suggestions below:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

18. Are the items appropriate for the respondents? [ ] Yes [ ] No

19. If your answer is **No**, please provide some suggestions below:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

The pretest will be collected by me within two (2) days of distribution or you can call me on Extension 6820 or 0726479757 so I can come and collect it.

Thanking you in advance for your time in taking part in the pretest of my questionnaire

Yours faithfully

Xolile P. Coetzer

APPENDIX B: Requisition letter addressed to the administrative support section who formed part of the sample

P.O.Box 79

Kwa-Dlangezwa

3886

28 March 2011

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Kindly allow me to administer questionnaires in your department in April as part of my research. I am a Master's student at the University of Zululand. As part of my course, I am required to produce a dissertation, and this requires me to conduct an investigation. The title of my dissertation is: **The status of records management at the University of Zululand.**

The aim of this study is to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The study is done under the supervision of Professor CJB Le Roux and Prof. D. Jacobs from the University of Zululand, Department of Information Studies. The success of this study relies on the information that will be collected.

Please be assured that the information will be used strictly for the purposes of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

Thanking you in advance

Yours Faithfully

Xolile P. Coetzer

APPENDIX C: Requisition letter addressed to academic heads of departments who formed part of the sample

P.O.Box 79

Kwa-Dlangezwa

3886

28 March 2011

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Kindly allow me to administer questionnaires in April as part of my research project. I am a Master's student at the University of Zululand. As part of my course, I am required to produce a dissertation, and this requires me to conduct an investigation. The title of my dissertation is: **The status of records management at the University of Zululand.**

The aim of this study is to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand. The study is done under the supervision of Professor CJB Le Roux and Prof. D. Jacobs from the University of Zululand, Department of Information Studies.

The success of this study relies on the information that will be collected. Please be assured that the information will be used strictly for the purposes of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

Xolile P. Coetzer

APPENDIX D: Administration Staff Questionnaire

Please complete within three (3) days

Introduction

My name is Xolile Patience Coetzer. I'm doing a Master's Degree in Information Science, Department of Information Studies, and conducting research on the topic, "*An investigation into the status of records management at the University of Zululand (Unizulu), Main Campus*". The purpose of the study is to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand.

Kindly assist me by completing the questionnaire. Please do not enter your name on the questionnaire. Anonymity is guaranteed. It should take you a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Completed questionnaires will be physically collected by the researcher within three to five days of distribution. For any enquiries relating to this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (Extension 6820 or 078 443 7886).

Please tick the appropriate answer or fill in the spaces where needed

Section A: Information on records management

1. Are you tasked with records management (e.g. student, financial, academic staff records)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If **Yes,** please indicate the types of records you are tasked with and complete Section B

……………………………………………………………………………………

....

Section B: Personal Details

1. Gender?

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Your highest qualification(s)?

Diploma ☐

Degree ☐

Honours ☐

Master's ☐

PhD ☐

3. Are any of the above qualifications in records management?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Other: Specify………………………………………………….

4. Your current position within the university?

Records manager ☐

Senior manager and above ☐

Admin / personal assistant ☐

Finance administrator ☐

Professor ☐

Other: Specify…………………………………………………..

5. Which section are you currently working for?

Finance ☐

Exams ☐

Registrar ☐

Human Resources ☐

Filing ☐

Research ☐

Faculty Administration ☐

Other, specify…………………………………………….

6. Does the University of Zululand have a records management system?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

7. What types of records are kept in the records management system?

8. What system are you currently using in your department for recordkeeping?

   a) Manual recordkeeping ☐

   b) Electronic

      a. ITS ☐

      ☐

b. Non-ITS

c) All of the above ☐

9. Does the university have a formal (written) policy, procedures and filing system for records?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

(If your answer is **No** kindly move to question 10)

10. If **Yes**, does it form part of University Regulatory Structures?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

(If **Yes** please move to question 13)

11. If **No**, are you aware of plans to formulate one within the next 12 months?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Maybe ☐

Other…………………………………………………………………………………

12. If the university does not have a written policy, is there any existing strategy for recordkeeping (e.g. a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim)?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

13. If **Yes**, what are the strategies, please list them below

i)..

ii)...

iii)..

14. Does the policy comply with government regulations for records management?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

15. Are all the staff members aware of the policy?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

16. Do staff members manage records according to this policy?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

17. If **Yes** is the policy reviewed at regular intervals?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

18. What methods are used to make staff aware of the policy?

Intranet   ☐

E-mail   ☐

Circulars   ☐

Other,

Specify…………………………………………………..............................

20. Does the university have a records management system that it uses for recordkeeping?

Yes   ☐

No   ☐

If **Yes** please include the type of system that the university uses if you know it

…………………………………………………………………………………

21. Kindly list any challenges that you are facing with regard to records management

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Please complete within two (2) days

Introduction

My name is Xolile Patience Coetzer. I'm doing a Master's Degree in Information Science, Department of Information Studies, and conducting research on the topic, "*An Investigation into the status of records management at the University of Zululand (Unizulu), Main Campus*". The purpose of the study is to investigate the status of records management at the University of Zululand.

Kindly assist me by completing the questionnaire. Please do not enter your name on the questionnaire. Anonymity is guaranteed. It should take you a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Completed questionnaires will be physically collected by the researcher within two days of distribution. For any enquiries relating to this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (Extension 6820 or 078 443 7886).

Please tick the appropriate answer or fill in the spaces where needed

Section A: Information on records management

1. Does your department perform records management with respect to the following: (student records, marks, finances, minutes of meetings, conferences, etc.)

Yes ☐

No ☐

If **Yes** please indicate the types of records you are tasked with and then complete

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Section B

1. Gender?

Male

Female

2. Your highest qualifications?

Master's

PhD

Other: Specify…………………………………………………..

3. What is your other position within the university besides being a Head of Department?

Senate member

Disciplinary commitee member

Lecturer

Senior lecturer

Professor

Other: Specify…………………………………………………..

4. Which faculty are you in?

Arts ☐

Commerce, Admin and Law ☐

Education ☐

Science and Agriculture ☐

5. Which department are you currently in?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What system are you currently using in your department for recordkeeping?

   a) Manual recordkeeping ☐

   b) Electronic

      a. ITS ☐

      b. Non-ITS ☐

   c) All of the above ☐

7. Does the university have a formal (written) policy in place regarding records management at Faculty and Departmental level?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If **No** continue with the questions below

8. If there is no written policy on records management, do you have an existing method or strategy for keeping records other than on the ITS system?

Yes

No

9. If **Yes,** please indicate which method or strategy is currently being used in your department for recordkeeping

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Thank you for your contribution