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The state of records management at the University of Zimbabwe

Njabulo Bruce Khumalo
University of Zimbabwe
njabulobass@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-6474-408X

Samson Mutsagondo
Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi / University of South Africa
samson.mutsagondo@sorbonne.ae
ORCID: 0000-0001-8554-1241

Tafadzwa Zawi
University of Zimbabwe
tzawi@admin.uz.ac.zw
ORCID: 0009-0004-7978-8319

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Abstract

Records management is the lifeblood of effective and efficient service provision in any organisation including institutions of higher learning. Over the years, decision-makers have had to learn it the hard way as their sidestepping of records management has in some cases led to litigation, financial loss, and the failure to locate important records or even recover after a disaster. However, a number of organisations have come to realise the need to manage records throughout their life cycle. The current study came against the backdrop of the establishment of the administrative records management function at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). This noble development called for an analysis of the state of the records management at the UZ. Such an analysis would unpack and or reveal the status quo and thus inform any developments needed to establish or strengthen the records management function at the UZ. A qualitative research methodology and a case study research design were applied. The study findings pointed to the absence of a records management system within the eleven faculties at the UZ. Moreover, records were neglected, and records of enduring value were not preserved for posterity. The study recommends the establishment of a university archive and the development of records management tools such as the records policy, retention, and disposal schedule, and the records procedures manual, among other recommendations.

Keywords: records management, university records, archives, records life cycle, University of Zimbabwe

Introduction

The establishment of records and archives management functions in organisations, and institutions of higher learning is key, given the volumes of records generated by such institutions. The establishment of a records management function is necessary for the creation

of a records management system, which, among other things, properly and securely manages, preserves, archives and disposes of records (Coetzer 2012). Records are central to good governance and accountability in institutions of higher learning. They are the bedrock for decision making and, without them, managers do not have a basis for making sound and informed decisions. Thus, the need for a records and archives management function within institutions of higher learning cannot be overstated. Abdulrahman (2015) notes that record keeping occupies a strategic position in the efficient and effective management of the university systems and by virtue of documenting the planning and implementation of appropriate course of services, it allows for proper monitoring of work. Competent record keeping in universities is the key to attainment of university vision and mission, namely teaching, research, consultancy, innovation, enterprise and service to the community (Coetzer 2012:5). To put it in the words of Phiri (2015:ii), good records management can help public universities achieve their mandate, enhance efficiency, maintain institutional memory, respond to an audit culture, promote trust, enhance competitiveness, support the university's fiduciary duty and be transparent, accountable and fight corruption. Institutions of higher learning are thus in need of good records management.

Good records management cannot happen coincidentally, as there is a need for proper planning and implementation to achieve it. Cox (2004:263) recommends that, "to ensure that records of enduring value are maintained and preserved, universities should have a records and archives management function". Thus, setting up university records and archives management functions paves the way for good records management. This is because there can be no systematic approach to managing records without having a unit or department solely dedicated to managing information and records. Records management systems also ensure office efficiency, facilitate access to records, consistently maintain records, decrease operational costs, increase staff productivity and ensure that the university meets legal and regulatory standards (Coetzer, 2012:32). According to Netshakhuma (2019a:66) "university records and archives management functions provide administrative, legal and regulatory compliance, educational and research services and thus, contribute to the information needs of the university". Various faculties, departments and units within a university create and use records in the process of community development, learning, research and teaching (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005; Iwhiwhu 2005:345). Given the large volumes of records created within academic communities, there is a need for proper records management programmes in universities. Good records management enables the university to achieve its mandate, enhances efficiency, maintains a reliable institutional memory, promotes trust, responds to and supports a culture of auditing, enhances the university's competitiveness, supports the university's fiduciary duty and demonstrates transparency (Phiri 2016:ii).

Records management functions within universities are a necessity for universities, which need good records management. According to the International Standardization Organisation (ISO) 15489-1 (ISO 2001), records make it possible for organisations to consistently and equitably deliver services, in a manner that is efficient and orderly and support and document policy formulation and decision making. Sound records management is at the heart of good corporate governance. Thus, organisations, tertiary institutions included, seeking to achieve effectiveness and efficiency need to have sound records and archives management systems in place. Records support decision making, organise documents, provide evidence of policies, decisions, transactions and activities, and support the university in cases of litigation (Coetzer 2012:7).

Records also foster continuity, facilitate effectiveness and efficiency throughout an organisation, enable organisations to meet regulatory and legislative requirements and support

oversight and audit activities (ISO 2001). Records are a key business resource for institutions of higher learning, as they promote competitiveness, good governance, due process, transparency, accountability and compliance with statutory frameworks (Thornhill 2008; Shepherd 2006). Thus, good records management practices in academic institutions are a worthwhile investment (Jones 2003). Given the importance of records to organisations, good records management is a must for universities.

Background to the study

The University of Zimbabwe (UZ) is the oldest state university in the country, established in 1952 and was known as the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the colonial era. The university was initially affiliated to the University of London. The name of the university later changed to the University of Rhodesia and upon independence in 1980, it changed to its current name the UZ. The university has a rich history spanning over seventy years. In spite of having a rich history, the university had not yet established a records management unit to manage records generated by its eleven faculties. However, in 2021, a total of 11 records officers and a records manager were employed to manage the university's records throughout the 11 faculties. This records management function was placed under the office of the university registrar. The placement of the records management function in the office of the registrar is justified by Netshakhuma (2019b:71) who points out that:

- the registrar is responsible for information management, including document scanning, archival and file destruction
- the registrar plays a role in the university's academic operations by effectively managing the maintenance and integrity of all students' academic records
- the registrar ensures the integrity, accuracy and security of all academic records of current and former students.

One of the first activities carried out by the records management unit was to determine the state of the records management at the university prior to making any recommendations. Thus, this research was a product of the researchers' assessment of the state of records and records management at the UZ in 2022.

Statement of the problem

Prior to the employment of records officers and the manager, the absence of the records management function dedicated to the management of academic records at the University of Zimbabwe led to poor records management, which also led to the neglect of records. Phiri (2016) points out that there is evidence pointing to the neglect of record keeping in universities in sub-Saharan Africa.

The management of records in institutions of higher learning is a critical part of ensuring effectiveness and efficiency, yet some institutions of higher learning, especially in developing countries, have not established records management programmes. Despite the growing need for management efficiency in universities, the records management function has made little headway (Procter 2002). Researchers have also pointed out that records management in universities is neither considered important for good governance nor valuable (Momoti & King 2020:80). Poor records management in universities in some African countries such as South Africa has been noted over the years (Giba-Fosu 2020; Kemoni & Wamukoya 2000; Mnjama 2000; Uwaifo 2004). Moreover, in some cases, recordkeeping qualifications are largely sparse

among those officials appointed with a responsibility for managing records in universities (Sigauke, Nengomasha & Chabikwa 2016:22).

Poor records and archives management in universities leads to the loss of records and/or difficulties in retrieving them as and when required. Records and archives managers in South African and Nigerian universities lack recognition by university councils, have inappropriate reporting lines and are placed at low levels within organisational structures (Netshakhuma 2019b; Egwunyenga 2009). Netshakhuma (2019b) argues that as middle managers within university management structures, records and archives managers lack the authority to implement effective records and archives management programmes. Such failures hamper the carrying out of university functions, good governance and accountability and also hamper efforts to efficiently respond to freedom of information requests (Giba-Fosu 2020). The inability to implement effective records and archives management programmes translates to poor records management that cannot support accountability and informed decision making, among other things.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The study sought to assess the state of records in the UZ's faculties, which had been without a records management section for years before July 2021. The specific objectives of the study sought to:

- assess the current records management system used to manage academic records at the University of Zimbabwe
- determine the state of records across the eleven faculties at the University of Zimbabwe
- make recommendations for the management of records at the UZ.

Literature review: the state of records management in academic institutions

Poor records management is detrimental to effectiveness and efficiency in institutions of higher learning. Matangira et al. (2013) lament the lack of awareness and appreciation for records management responsibilities and importance in African universities such as the University of Namibia. The lack of proper records management practices is due to little value being placed on records as an information resource (Popoola 2009). Thus, the establishment of formal records management functions within universities is a step in the right direction for institutions seeking to service their clients in the form of students, staff members, researchers, alumni, ministries of higher and tertiary education, service providers and other stakeholders.

One of the challenges faced in most academic institutions is the absence of formal records management systems. Coetzer and Roux (2013) note the lack of formal records management at administration, faculty and departmental levels at the University of Zululand. Without formal records management systems in place, there cannot be formal records management systems for the creation, management, storage and disposal of records. Some universities in developing countries do not have suitable records storage facilities and the retention and appraisal of records are compromised (Erima & Wamukoya 2012; Mnjama & Pendo 2014). Abdulrahman (2015) lamented the fact that university records are affected by random destruction, and are rarely protected from disaster and, in most cases, storage facilities are inadequate, and this leads to heaps of files on floors having no proper arrangement. Records management principles and theories are also not applied, and this distorts the management of records from their creation, during use and up to disposal (Abdulrahman 2015).

Poor records management affects records, as Netshakhuma (2019b) points out that the poor storage of records exposes them to a multiplicity of threats, which may include moisture, rain, heat, insects and unauthorised access. Moreover, the lack of proper records management at the University of Zululand resulted in missing marks, incorrect capturing of marks and, in some cases, the issuance of graduation certificates to students with incomplete academic records (Department of Higher Education, South Africa 2010:2). Such mishaps can dent the image of any given university and must be nipped in the bud by establishing formal records management functions. The absence of a records management system also exposes records to theft, mishandling and may also compromise students' and staff members privacy. Some employees in most universities in Malawi and South Africa tend to store some university records on their personal computers and this compromises the security of such records (Phiri 2016). Adomi (2002) posits that academics in some universities keep records in cabinets in their offices with no security, and records in such environments are not easily accessible.

Research methodology

The study applied a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings, the researcher is the key instrument, has multiple sources of data, has emergent designs, seeks the participants' meanings, offers reflexivity and provides holistic accounts (Creswell 2016; Hatch 2002; Marshall & Rossman 2016). Thus, the current study was conducted in natural settings, that is, within the 11 faculties at the UZ and the researchers were the key instruments. Moreover, a case study research design was applied in this study, where the UZ was the case under study. The case study research design is known for providing detailed descriptions of the individuals or settings followed by a detailed analysis of the data for themes (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Observations were used as the main data collection methods, as one of the researchers is the newly appointed records manager and the other two researchers were lecturers in records and archives management at the UZ. The researchers have been members of staff at the UZ and thus, were able to observe over time records management issues bedevilling the university. Some of these observations were made during workshops and seminars aimed at addressing issues such as the disposal of examination scripts and challenges faced in managing emails and knowledge in general. The researchers applied purposive sampling wherein all 11 faculties were chosen for the survey, as they all had records that were subjected to the survey. The researchers thus had a week to go throughout the faculties' offices and conduct a records survey. Data was analysed thematically in this study and the themes were derived from the objectives of the study. Thus, the researchers were able to move around and inspect the state of records across the 11 faculties.

Presentation and discussion of findings

Data was presented and analysed thematically with the themes derived from the objectives of the study which were to:

- assess the current records management system used to manage academic records at the University of Zimbabwe
- determine the state of records across the eleven faculties as the university of records
- make recommendations for the management of records at the UZ

Records management system for management of academic records

The first objective of the study sought to assess the records management system used to manage academic records at the UZ. The researchers observed the management of records throughout the 11 faculties' administrative offices, departmental chairpersons and secretaries' offices and lecturers' offices. The preceding sections present the researchers' findings on the state of records management.

Records storage

The researchers wanted to establish how academic records were stored in offices at the UZ. The records included minutes of meetings, senate records, correspondence, examination scripts, administrative records, and examination results. The data revealed that flat and arch lever box files were used for filing records and were placed on open wooden shelves. It was worrisome that some records were piled on floors in the lecturers' offices and departmental seminar rooms. The assessment also revealed that the shortage of office space was a cause for concern. This was exacerbated by the fact that semi-current and non-current records, that were ideally supposed to have been transferred to the records centre or archive, were still stored in offices and kept piling up. The researchers observed that some of the records dated back to the 1970s. Some of the files included senate records, financial records, and correspondence. This prevailing scenario calls for the establishment of a university archive where university records can be purposively preserved in the medium to long term. In concurrence are Bajwa and Rafiq (2023) who argue that universities are unique organisations that foster the utilisation and preservation of documents, records, and archives with the purpose-built university archival building being the ideal storage unit. Unfortunately, as Ripah, Bunawan and Shoid (2022) observe, many universities in developing countries do not have such facilities.

The records survey results showed that the shortage of shelves and filing cabinets exposed records to sunlight and dust. In some offices, the records were piled close to windows, which were not tinted and without curtains where they were exposed to sunlight and dust. This was because offices at the UZ were not specifically built to store records. Thus, some records stored in offices for long periods were yellowing and some page corners were damaged while other pages had become brittle. The storage of many records in offices also exposed university staff members to health hazards by trapping dust and through paper deterioration that produces fine and harmful dust. Infrastructure plays an important role in records and archives preservation. Matangira (2016) argues that there is usually a lack of top-management goodwill and buy-in concerning infrastructure investment in many developing countries. This subsists against the assertion by Mutsagondo (2017) that the lack of proper and adequate equipment and infrastructure is one of the greatest impediments to proper and professional management of records.

Records retrieval

Administrative staff such as secretaries and office managers had classification systems that were either subject-based or alphabetic. These classification systems facilitated the retrieval of records in offices. However, records in academic staff's offices did not have classification systems. Moreover, there was no file retrieval system for electronic records that were stored on computers used by both academic and administrative members of staff. Thus, the retrieval of

especially e-records was a challenge in some cases as the norm was to search using keywords which, in some cases, failed to retrieve records. As Chaterera (2017) argues, records are created so that they can be used. This is supported by ICA (2004) which states that the provision of access is the ultimate objective of record-keeping. Difficulties in retrieving records and sometimes the total failure to retrieve them negates the purpose of running records management programmes.

Mail and email management

The records survey revealed that there were no clear set guidelines and procedures for the management of records in all departments. This was evidenced by some departments having incoming and outgoing mail registers whilst some did not have such registers. Thus, there was no standard guideline regarding the management of mail. Equally disturbing was the issue of electronic mail (email) management, another important component of university records management. This is because a lot of official university communication is electronic and the quest to go paperless has made it unfeasible to make physical copies of all electronic communication. Thus, these researchers sought to determine the management of electronic mail at the UZ. There was no records management plan for the management of email at the university, as there was no plan in place to manage emails as the organisation's records. The study established that some officers within the university tended to print electronic communication when demanded to do so. There was no email management system in place as there was a prevalence of official communications done through personal emails. This email management conundrum has also been seen at the National University of Science and Technology, another public university in Zimbabwe, where no email system, programme, or policy existed (Sigauke, Nengomasha & Chabikwa 2016). At the national level, a study by Mutsagondo (2021) revealed that the management of email as official records was at its nascent stage and was many times poorly handled to the point that a lot of official correspondence made through email could not be captured, used and managed in formal records management systems.

The use of personal emails for official university business poses challenges for the university as the ownership of records transmitted shifts from the university to individuals. Moreover, the study showed that the management of records generated and transmitted through private emails became the responsibility of the individuals concerned and thus, can delete the emails at any time. The study also revealed that whenever officers left the university, they deprived the university of its official documents, as there was no system in place for them to transfer the documents to the university email management system. A study by Mutsagondo (2021) reveals that the management of email of leavers has been a perennial problem in situations where officers use personal gadgets in conducting official duties and where there is no official hand-over take-over of digital records such as emails. Cloy (2007) states that the departure of employees at one point due to death, retirement dismissal, or other reasons is inevitable, and as such an email handover takeover exercise is called for lest a lot of official organisational information is lost.

Social media records

Social media platforms have become very useful in communication and some of these platforms are even used for official communication. The current study noted that during the Corona Virus-19 (COVID-19) hard lockdown, a lot of official communication between university staff members and students was conducted via social media platforms such as

WhatsApp. The study noted that even though official communication and records are shared through workgroups created by different university departments and units, such official communication and records were not managed as official records. Yersel, Kalkan and Özer (2020) agree that the use of social media platforms in official business was boosted by the dawn of the COVID-19 when people resorted to using online and instant messaging communication as they sought to avoid or limit physical contact. Nonetheless, scholars such as Okae and Gyasi (2013) attribute the rise in the use of social media to increased internet penetration in Africa, while Sethunya (2015) attributes it to the introduction of electronic government programmes where countries heavily invest in information and communication technologies and related supportive infrastructure. Thus, universities such as UZ should adjust to the realities of disruptive technologies, which have transformed into the new normal.

Retention and disposal schedules

The records survey revealed that there was no retention schedule to guide Office and Information Managers through the record life cycle concept. This naturally led to the mismanagement of records, as it was noted that most semi-current records were still occupying scarce office space instead of having been transferred to the records centre. Without a retention schedule, office managers did not know how long to keep records and when to transfer or dispose of them. This exposed records of enduring value to destruction as they could be destroyed, stolen or tampered with. The study revealed inconsistencies in the manner records were disposed of at the UZ as some departments disposed of their examination scripts after five years, while others disposed of them after 10 years. In support of the retention and disposal schedule are Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) who argue that the records retention schedule is an important document that universities cannot afford to operate without. This stems from the rationale that the tool informs records officers what to destroy, when to destroy, what to transfer, and what to preserve permanently. Without the document in place, UZ staff, who were mostly non-records officers, were unable to deliver as professionally expected.

Records classification

The survey revealed that the classification system used was subject-based and office of origin-based. Millar (2009) defines classification as the process of organising records into mutually exclusive categories to determine their location as well as to enhance their retrievability. Nonetheless, the study revealed two classification-related challenges. Firstly, it was noted that some files did not have unique numbers or volumes for use in case a volume had to be closed. Secondly, some files had duplicated alphabetic classifications. Both challenges result in difficulties in retrieving and accessing records, meaning to say, many records are rather redundant and unusable.

Disaster planning

Disaster management is indispensable for any organisation, tertiary institutions included. The researchers wanted to establish if the UZ had a records disaster preparedness plan. All the interviewed office managers highlighted that they had neither drafted nor seen any disaster preparedness or recovery plan for records or information. However, the researchers established that archivists from the National Archives of Zimbabwe had been engaged to train some of the university's staff members in records management. However, such workshops and training did not target administrative staff working under the eleven faculties. They were meant for other support staff working in areas such as finance and student affairs. The importance of disaster

planning cannot be overemphasised. It is a common fact of life that disasters are inevitable and that there is a need to prepare for them to prevent them or to lessen their impact whenever they occur. Zulkipli (2021) argues that organisations that do not have disaster management plans are living precariously and are in danger of losing everything whenever disaster strikes. This is not the kind of situation old established universities like UZ would want to find themselves in.

Physical state of records

The second objective of the study was to determine the state of records across the 11 faculties. The researchers discovered that some important records had been neglected and were gathering dust in some offices, which were now occupied by lecturers. Files dating to the pre-independence era were still in offices, gathering dust and exposed to wear and tear. It is important to cater to the physical wellbeing of records to make them useful and useable. Oweru and Mnjama (2014) state that physical care for records is an important aspect of the records preservation programme. The failure to care for records implies they deteriorate and later become unusable, which defeats the very cause for their creation in the first place.

Some correspondence being neglected had significant communication between the university and prominent figures of the community such as Ngugi wa Thiong. Such and other documents are not only important to the UZ community but to the whole of Zimbabwe and Africa at large. However, due to the absence of a dedicated records management system, such records were being neglected. Upon inspection of some offices around the university, the researchers also noted that most of the university's senate, faculty boards, departmental boards and other important records dating back to the 1960s were still in some lecturers' offices. Some of these records were classified whereas some were supposed to be kept for posterity. However, over the years, the UZ had not managed to identify its treasure trove in the form of records. The failure to establish an archive and develop proper records management systems exposed the records to destruction. Arguing in defence of the records lifecycle and records access, Matangira (2016) states that physical records have a lifecycle and the failure to respect the cycle means many records would be inaccessible in the future as they may never make it to archival holdings.

Files and records left in lecturers' offices were being exposed to wear and tear as there was no office and officers tasked to manage such records. Some of the records left in lecturers' offices constituted the university's institutional memory which was being exposed to risks. Moreover, the absence of a university archive had left the university's records of enduring value exposed to deterioration in lecturers' offices and some departmental seminar rooms where they were stored in areas without proper storage facilities. Without proper storage facilities, some records and files in lecturers' offices and departmental seminar rooms were torn or damaged, not filed systematically, and thus, not easily retrievable. Files and records stored on floors were exposed to water spills and dirt resulting from dust and floor polish applied by the university cleaning staff in offices. Katekwe and Mutsagondo (2017) hold that the failure to properly handle records emanates from a lack of knowledge about the importance of records in day-to-day business as well as the poor appreciation of the centrality of records in decision-making, good governance, and fostering transparency and accountability. Therefore, there is a need to train staff about the importance of records and records management to foster positive behaviour change. The hiring of 11 qualified records officers is set to help improve the management of records, and thus issues such as records neglect and poor handling may be nipped in the bud.

Centralization of records management

The lack of a centralised records management system for records housed within the UZ's eleven faculties jeopardised the records because of the absence of a structure to ensure their preservation. This, combined with Zimbabwe's premier university's failure to establish an institutional archive, jeopardised the university's institutional memory and history. Therefore, in the year 2021, the UZ established a Records Management Unit, led by a records manager who is subordinated by eleven records officers. Each of the eleven records officers was assigned to a faculty and the management of records held in faculties within the UZ became structured and centralised.

Conclusion and recommendations

Having analysed the state of records within the 11 faculties of the UZ, the researchers made recommendations aimed at improving records management. One of the recommendations made by the researchers was that there was a need for the UZ to invest in establishing an institutional archive. This recommendation was made because the university has a rich history dating back to the pre-colonial era. According to Netshakhuma (2019a:65), an academic archive serves as the institutional memory and plays a critical role in managing the institution's information resources in all media and formats. Therefore, an archive established by the institution would preserve the corporate memory of the institution and contribute to the preservation of the nation's political, social, and economic history. The researchers also noted that Zimbabwe was currently promoting the heritage-based education system and, thus, the UZ would set the pace in that regard if it were to establish an archive.

The researchers also recommend that policy documents such as the records management policy and tools such as retention and disposal schedules should be created and used to manage records. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (2010) points out that a records management policy is the cornerstone of effective records management, provides a statement of underpinning a records management programme, and serves as the mandate for the activities of the records manager. This is also supported by Chikomba, Rodrigues and Ngoepe (2021) who hold that the lack of policies, guidelines, and standards affects records management practices such as creation, access, appraisal, and storage.

Moreover, without a records management policy, the university will not be able to enforce and standardise records management. Moreover, tools such as the retention and disposal schedule would enable records professionals to ensure that records are managed throughout their life cycle. The findings of the study pointed to the prevalence of records piling up in lecturers' offices and not disposed of accordingly. Thus, the current study recommends that retention and disposal schedules would go a long way in establishing uniform retention and disposal procedures across the eleven faculties. The UZ will also need to develop a records procedural manual, which is necessary for enabling office managers and records personnel to manage and handle records from creation, use, and maintenance until disposal. Moreover, disposing of records would go a long way in creating space in offices. The university will also be able to retain and preserve records of enduring value for posterity.

The retention schedules help create space in offices, as records of enduring value are preserved in the appropriate place and ephemeral records are destroyed to create space for current records. Yusof and Chell (2005) state that retention schedules are tools that determine records retention

periods and thus highlight the value of records concerning legal, operational and regulatory requirements. Retention and disposal schedules also establish a system for managing records appraisal and procedures for the closure of non-current records. These guide office managers and records management officers about when to destroy and transfer records from one point to the other and how to distinguish vital records from ephemeral ones. Furthermore, the development of retention schedules will go a long way in enabling records management personnel to identify and retain records of permanent value.

The findings of the study also showed that a subject-based classification system was being used to manage records prior to the establishment of the records management function. The researchers recommend that a functions-based classification system be used to manage records at the UZ. The study recommends that, in line with ISO 15489, a functions-based classification system be installed. ISO 15489 stipulates that, “Classification systems reflect the business of the organisation from which they derive and are normally based on an analysis of the organisation’s business activities (ISO 15489, 2016). Classification by functions is based on the context of a record’s creation and use, rather than on the content of the record itself. This means the record is classified according to why it exists i.e. its function rather than what it is about, that is, its subject.

The classification of business functions recognises three classification levels which are as follows:

Level 1: Functions

Level 2: Activities (or sub-functions)

Level 3: Transactions

Owing to the records storage challenges faced at the UZ, the researchers recommended that modern records filing equipment, for example, the Six Bay Bulk Filers or Easy file cabinets, which are secure, spacious and free from dust and gaseous pollutants, be acquired. Having such specialised records storage equipment will go a long way in ensuring that records are stored accordingly and not compromised in lecturers’ offices and even in basements. Such records storage equipment will have to be installed in purpose-built storage facilities.

The researchers also recommended that the university was supposed to come up with and or draft a disaster management plan for its records and information. Not having such a plan by the university leads to possible losses of all its records and thus bring its business to a halt should disaster strike. Staff should also be trained in disaster management in order to be ever ready to contain and deal with disasters as and when they come. They should also be comfortable with salvaging and restoration of records should disasters strike.

The researchers further recommended that the university needed to take the management of emails seriously especially considering that the advent of technology had changed the conduct of business in today’s business environments. Thus, the researchers highlighted that there was a need to engage with the information communication technology (ICT) department at the UZ to map a way forward in the use of official email to ensure that electronic mail was managed accordingly.

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