

## Background

Part of both pieces of FOI legislation require that institutions prepare a 'publication scheme', and again as a collaborative effort Model Publication schemes were prepared for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and a separate one for Scotland. Copies of both these documents may be found on the [JISC Legal website](#).

So far as is known all post-16 educational institutions signed up to one or other of these rather than prepare a scheme from scratch. These schemes were taken as the starting point for this exercise, because they represented a standard approach to the categorisation of records and provided an obvious outline framework for this project.

The third major contributor to this exercise was the Study of the Records Lifecycle prepared for JISC in 2002, which attempted to identify in Higher Education Institutions the sources of records creation and management according to functional principles, rather than departmental or organisational structures, and provide a set of retention periods appropriate to HEIs.

The [Function Activity Model \(FAM\) and Record Retention Schedule \(RRS\)](#) study was based on the principles of best international practice for records keeping now codified as ISO 15489.

The [Document Management Specialists](#) website also contains a list of recommended retention periods as they applied to institutions of Higher Education, and wherever appropriate this has been retained. The Model Publication schemes for FE accepted the logic of functional organisation, and in one sense the present project represents a simplified version of the Lifecycle document.

## Methodology

The core structure of the Retention Period Schedule for FE project was that of the Model Publication Scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The main groups of classes of information are as follows

1. Governance/Corporate Management
2. Financial Resources
3. Human Resources
4. Physical Resources
5. Student Administration and Support
6. Information Services

## 7. Teaching and Learning

## 8. External Relations

All records created were fitted into one or other of these groups of classes, whether or not they are to be included in an Institution's publication scheme.

Within each Group of Classes the following fields were created

- Class Number and title
- Description of types of Records within the class
- Records Retention Schedule reference number (from Study of the Records Life Cycle)
- Model Publication Scheme England, Wales and Northern Ireland reference number
- Model Publication Scheme Scotland reference number
- Retention/Destruction period (where statutory the statute is detailed in the next 2 fields otherwise it is a suggestion based on best practice)
- Statutory Reference, England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Statutory Reference, Scotland (where different from the rest of the UK)
- Specific examples of records falling within record type
- Notes and Comments
- Blank field titled Responsibility ( this field is for the end-user of the database to record on their own copy where the record is held within the individual institution and the person or area which is responsible for its management and destruction.

An example of a complete entry looks as follows

'Records documenting the payment of expenses to third parties (e.g. honorary appointees).'

**Group Of Classes :** Financial Resources  
**Class No.:** 2.3  
**Description:** Records documenting the payment of expenses to third parties (e.g. honorary appointees).  
**RRS REF:** 28.7  
**MPS (UK) REF:**  
**MPS (Scot) REF:**  
**Retention:** Current financial year + 6 years \*  
**Legal Reference (UK):** [1980 c.58 Limitation Act](#)  
[1970 c.9 \\*](#)  
**Legal Reference (Scot):** 1973 (Scotland)  
**Examples:**  
**Notes/Comments:**  
**Responsibility (Institute Dependant):**

## Acknowledgements

This project relies heavily on the work which went in to the Study of the Records Lifecycle cited above. The team who prepared the present work consisted of Alan Cameron, JISC infoNet; Anne Atkins, Western Colleges Consortium; Sharon Barron, Gorseinon College; Ray Heasley, Loughborough College; Colin Steen, Adam Smith College; and Steven Walls, Causeway Institute, who was also responsible for designing the database with his colleague Richard Crook.

## Records Retention Schedule for FE - Database Status

The current version of the database is **release 1.1**. This is a fully-populated read-only reference resource plus a downloadable Excel spreadsheet.

You can access the database [here](#).