

UNESCO

Archives and Records Policy Statement

In view of UNESCO's role in promoting high standards in the field of archives and records keeping, the Organization will endeavour to apply the best international norms and standards within its Secretariat.

The Organization's archival heritage includes records of outstanding cultural and historical value and is a rich source for contemporary history, in particular in the field of international intellectual co-operation. In order to provide access for scholars today and in the future, appropriate appraisal and preservation of the records are essential.

A coherent records management programme will help ensure the Organization's efficiency and accountability and is thus necessary in supporting UNESCO's goals and objectives. Records management should always be given appropriate attention, including resource allocations, enabling it to meet this vital requirement.

Therefore, a new Records Policy for the UNESCO Secretariat as a whole, including specialized Institutes and Field Units, is herewith established, based on the following principles:

1. Objective

The objective of the Records Policy is to introduce a comprehensive, cross-organizational records management programme to secure accountability and transparency at all levels of the Secretariat. This will be accomplished through the application of the best available standards, rules and practices relating to the creation, organisation, maintenance and appraisal of records as well as to their transfer to archival custody for permanent preservation and use by the Organization and - in conformity with established access rules - by scholars and the public at large.

2. Scope

The Records Policy will cover the totality of paper, electronic and audio-visual records created by UNESCO at Headquarters and in its field offices.

3. Regulatory Framework

In order to implement the Records Policy, revised and simplified procedures will be developed covering authority and responsibilities for the creation, appraisal, organisation and communication of records as well as for their transfer to archives. These new standards will define an active role for the Sectors and Units of the Secretariat and clearly outline their responsibility in providing effective support of record keeping.

4. Standards and Practices

In order to implement the Policy, standards and practices, which respect prevailing international norms, will be prescribed for the various records/archives operations, including preservation conditions, security, the management of electronic records, recruitment of specialised staff and continual training of all staff members involved in the organisation and maintenance of records in the Secretariat.

5. Access

The UNESCO Archives will attend to its cultural and informational function by providing access to the holdings in accordance with fair and liberal criteria, by editing finding aids and by making use of modern information technology to disseminate archival information.

6. Structural measures

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Records Policy is given to the Archives and Records Management Division (BSS/AM).

The intersectoral Records Management Committee (RMC) will ensure observance of the procedures and standards in the programme units and assist the Archives and Records Management Division in monitoring the implementation of the Policy.

7. Facilities, equipment, staffing

The budget of the Organization will ensure adequate facilities, equipment and staffing for the processing and maintenance of the paper, audio-visual and electronic records.

8. Custody of the records

The records constitute the inalienable property of the Organization. Their extraterritoriality is specifically stipulated in the Headquarters Agreement and they will be preserved in premises belonging to or rented by the Organization.

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