Establishing a university records management programme in South Africa: A case study of the University of the Free State

by

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DECLARATION

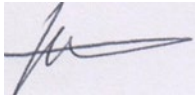Name: Lwazi Daysman Mestile

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Title: Establishing a university records management programme in South Africa: case study of the University of the Free State

I, Lwazi Daysman Mestile, declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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Date: 13 August 2023

ABSTRACT

As long as records are successfully managed, the management of records is essential to all organisations, including universities. Ad hoc records management makes it impossible to actively manage a business, to be held accountable for past transactions, or to make well-informed decisions about the future. An essential part of a records management program is, first and foremost, the management and preservation of records. Effective records management guarantees that documents can be found when needed. Evidence of business transactions in the form of records is one of the vital ways that institutions are held accountable for their deeds. Policies, procedures, and programs used in the state sector for managing records are key components in determining whether a state institution, government, or nation exhibits the qualities of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Sound records management could help universities achieve their goals, fulfill their mandate, protect themselves from legal action, preserve institutional memory, and foster a culture of accountability and good governance. Therefore, effective corporate governance aims to speed up accountability and even stop major catastrophes before they happen. Universities are also under pressure to proactively show that they are accountable and uphold good corporate governance practices. This can be done through appropriate legislation, such as information access laws, in the form of an audit or public scrutiny. Equally so, good record-keeping practices ascertain information and records are not unnecessary duplicated, which not only serve as a save-costing measure, but also maintaining the version control and accuracy. The UFS mostly rely on numerous data management systems (e.g., Image Now, Campus Solutions, PeopleSoft, UNIdrive, SharePoint, Blackboard, Shared Folder) to manage piles of information that is generated daily. The literature demonstrates that there is always a link between good governance and compliance with the law as good governance is intertwined with the law and is completely not apt to entirely unhinge government from the law. In all stages of records life-cycle management (e.g., the creation/ or capture/ use/ or store and preserve/ or destroy/ or delete) there are rules that should be followed, and the overall information governance of the institution should take the legal requirements into consideration.

Key terms: best practice, data management, electronic records, information on records, University of the Free State, records management programme.

UMXHOLO

Logama iirekhodi zilawulwa ngempumelelo, ulawulo lweerekhodi lubalulekile kuyo yonke imibutho, kubandakanywa neeyunivesiti. Ulawulo lweerekhodi ze-ad hoc lwenza ukuba kube nzima ukulawula ishishini ngokusebenzayo, ukuba noxanduva lwentengiselwano yangaphambili, okanye ukwenza izigqibo ezinolwazi malunga nekamva. Inxalenye ebalulekileyo yenkqubo yolawulo lweerekhodi, okokuqala, kulawulo nokugcinwa kweerekhodi. Ulawulo olusebenzayo lweerekhodi luqinisekisa ukuba amaxwebhu anokufunyanwa xa efuneka. Ubungqina bentengiselwano yoshishino ngohlobo lweerekhodi yenye yeendlela ezibalulekileyo amaziko anokuthi aphendule ngayo ngezenzo zawo. Imigaqo-nkqubo, iinkqubo, kunye neenkqubo ezisetyenziswa kwicandelo likarhulumente ekulawuleni iirekhodi ngamacandelo aphambili ekumiseleni ukuba ngaba iziko likarhulumente, urhulumente, okanye isizwe sibonisa iimpawu zokungafihli, uxanduva kunye nokuthembeka. Ulawulo lweerekhodi olufanelekileyo lunokunceda iidyunivesithi ukuba zifezekise iinjongo zazo, zizalisekise isigunyaziso sazo, zizikhusele kumanyathelo asemthethweni, zigcine inkumbulo yeziko, kwaye zikhuthaze inkcubeko yokuphendula kunye nolawulo olululo. Ke ngoko, ulawulo olusebenzayo lweshishini lujolise ekukhawuleziseni ukuphendula kwaye nokuyeka iintlekele ezinkulu ngaphambi kokuba zenzeke. Iidyunivesiti zikwaphantsi koxinzelelo lokubonisa ukuba ziyaphendula kwaye zibambelele kulawulo olululo. Oku kunokwenziwa ngowiso-mthetho olufanelekileyo, olufana nemithetho yokufikelela kulwazi, ngendlela yophicotho-zincwadi okanye uphononongo loluntu. Ngokulinganayo, iindlela ezilungileyo zokugcina iirekhodi ziqinisekisa ulwazi kunye neerekhodi azikho ikopi engeyomfuneko, engasebenzi nje njengendlela yokulondoloza ixabiso, kodwa nokugcina ulawulo loguqulelo kunye nokuchaneka. I-UFS ixhomekeke kakhulu kwiinkqubo ezininzi zolawulo lwedatha (umzekelo, Umfanekiso ngoku, i-Campus Solutions, i-PeopleSoft, i-UNIdrive, i-SharePoint, i-Blackboard, iFolda ekwabelwana ngayo) ukulawula iimfumba zolwazi oluveliswa imihla ngemihla. Uncwadi lubonisa ukuba kusoloko kukho unxibelelwano phakathi kolawulo olululo kunye nokuthotyelwa komthetho njengoko ulawulo olululo luthungelana nomthetho kwaye alunakukwazi ngokupheleleyo ukumchasa ngokupheleleyo urhulumente emthethweni. Kuwo onke amanqanaba erekhodi yolawulo lomjikelo wobomi (umzekelo, ukudalwa/okanye ukuthatyathwa/ukusetyenziswa/okanye

ukugcina nokugcina/okanye ukutshabalalisa/okanye ukucima) kukho imigaqo ekufuneka ilandelwe, kwaye lonke ulwazi lolawulo lweziko kufuneka luthathe iimfuno ezisemthethweni zithathelwe ingqalelo.

Amagama angundoqo: eyona ndlela yokwenza, ulawulo lwedatha, iirekhodi ze-elektroniki, ulwazi ngeerekhodi, iDyunivesithi yaseFreyistata, inkqubo yolawulo lweerekhodi.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father Zwelinjani Sidney Mestile who was a pillar of my strength when I informed him on my decision to channel my little savings of money from my former poor paying job as security guard to fund my studies instead of building a two-room flat that I promised him to build for myself where he pat me on my shoulder and encouraged me to move on with that decision. Ndithi mazenethole Mzangwa, Mlanjana, Ncuthu, Khwalo, Sohobese, Nkuma, Nkomo zika Ntanta, zika Gqosha, zika Pheleki, zika Ntshici, zika Mestile, zika Bonisani yeyakho le eyam iseza.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIIM   Africa Infrastructure Investment Managers

ARMA   Association of Records Managers and Administrators

ASD   Assistant Director

ASDI   Amazon Sustainability Initiative

BPM   Beats Per Minute

CCTV   Closed Circuit Television

CD-ROM   Compact Disk Read-Only

DMA   Disaster Management Authority

DMM   Data Management Maturity

DR/BR   Disater ecovery/Business Resumption

DRB   Disaster Recovery Board

ECM   Electronic Content Management

EDMS   Electronic Document Management System

EDRMS   Electronic Document and Records Management System

ERMS   Electronic Records Management System

ESARBICA   East and Southern Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives

GARP   Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles

GRC   Governance Risk and Compliance

HEA   Higher Education Act

HoD   Head of Department

ICA   International Council on Archives

ICT   Information Communication Technology

IDMS   Information Distribution Management System

IMCS   Information Management and Communications System

IR   Industrial Revolution

IRMT   International Records Management Trust

ISO   International Standards Organisation

IT   Information Technology

Mancom	Management Committee
MSR	Mining Software Repositories
NARSSA	National Archives and Records Service of South Africa
NARS	National Archives and Records Service
NAS	National Archives Service
NDMF	National Disaster Management Framework
NECCC	National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council
NGO	Non-Profit Organisation
NRF	National Research Foundation
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
RM	Records Management
RIMS	Research Information Management Systems
SAPS	South African Police Services
SHE	Safety Health Environment
SHO	Safety Health Officer
SITA	State Information Technology Agent
SW	Semantic Web
UCT	University of the Western Cape
UFS	University of the Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UMCO	University Management Committee
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of Africa
VPN	Virtual Private Network

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Institutions must keep records in order to successfully conduct their operations and carry on with their activities (Iwhiwhi 2005:345). Records management may be as old as civilization itself (Kaczmarek 2006). For any organisation's governance, an effective records management program is crucial (Ngoepe & Van Der Walt 2010:82). Record-keeping tasks have often been combined with tasks that resemble an archivist more closely throughout history (Kaczmarek 2006). As long as records are successfully managed, the management of records is essential to all organisations, including universities. Ad hoc record management makes it impossible to actively manage a business, to be held accountable for past transactions, or to make well-informed decisions about the future. An essential part of a records management program is, first and foremost, the management and preservation of records (Ngezana & Muchaonyerwa 2019). Effective records management guarantees that documents can be found when needed (Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro & Lukileni 2013:103). Evidence of business transactions in the form of records is one of the vital ways that institutions are held accountable for their deeds (Cox 2001:18). Policies, procedures, and programs used in the state sector for managing records are key components in determining whether a state institution, government, or nation exhibits the qualities of transparency, accountability, and integrity (Schellnack-Kelly 2013:3). Sound records management could help universities achieve their goals, fulfill their mandate, protect themselves from legal action, preserve institutional memory, and foster a culture of accountability and good governance (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005; Coetzee 2012). Therefore, effective corporate governance aims to speed up accountability and even stop major catastrophes before they happen (Nadaf & Navi 2017:67). Universities are also under pressure to proactively show that they are accountable and uphold good corporate governance practices, as Phiri (2015:27) emphasizes. This can be done through appropriate legislation, such as information access laws, in the form of an audit or public scrutiny (Phiri 2015:27).

Although good records management practices are an investment for the organisation, they are frequently given less attention and are easily overlooked and frequently given less consideration in organisations, including universities (Bailey 2011:46; Mnjama 2002:32). For instance, Mnjama (2002:32) contends that while most universities offer first-rate services and facilities for the provision of library materials, some of them are unable to manage the records they produce. Kaczmzrek (2006) adds to this neglect by stating that records management is frequently underfunded and given low priority in higher education. According to Mnjama (2002:32), one of the main purposes of universities is to serve as a repository for knowledge. However, there is evidence of numerous instances of record management issues in Sub-Saharan African universities and other institutions (Phiri 2015).

The quantity of records and documents that must be managed continues to increase as universities expand and more buildings are constructed. Similarly, a more proactive, precise, and organised approach to manage the records and documents is needed (Phiri 2015:27). Universities all over the world have established institutional archives to organise the wealth of recorded information that documents their activities, transactions, culture, and history due to the significant role that records play in higher education (Khumalo & Chigariro 2017:67). As a result, many universities, according to Miah and Samsudin (2017:1895), use specific software applications apparatus to manage the records they produce.

In 1904, when Grey College was first established as the University of the Free State (UFS) had just six students. Since then, the UFS has expanded and now has three campuses i.e. Bloemfontein, South and QwaQwa. From a modest beginning in 1904, the UFS rose to become a renowned organisation with 2521 staff members and 164 NRF-accredited researchers. With over 30,000 students, the university changed its name to the University of the Free State in 2001 (UFS website intranet 2019). Similar to the majority of South Africa's higher education institutions, the UFS is only partially independent in that it receives the majority of its funding from the government and student fees. The university processes a tremendous amount of physical and electronic documents, information, and

data are generated; these documents, information, and data are essential and must be managed meaningfully to improve their preservation.

Similar to other semi-public or public institutions, universities are required by law to maintain official records of their business dealings and activities. There are currently no record-keeping procedures or best practices at the UFS, and different sections manage records in accordance with their own methods. The only department that has transferred records to the university archives is the Department of History and other departments have never done so. To manage its records, the UFS has never had a real records management program or even a records management policy. As a result, academics agree that creating effective records management programs that connect with business needs is a struggle (Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:82). These academics also cautioned that creating a records management program is not a straightforward assignment and that most projects, if they are completed at all, take longer than expected. This is clear from the fact that the UFS's archives primarily serves researchers as their clientele since most of its collection is made up of artifacts from the former National Party in addition to some donations from particular individuals and families. The university does not have any mechanisms in place for controlling its records, such as a file plan, a procedure manual, a time limit for keeping records, or a method for systematically discarding them.

In order to create a Records Management Program, the UFS hired the Manager of Archives and Records Management Service in the fourth quarter of 2020. A senior UFS professor complained about the lack of controls over the management of university records during a senior management meeting, according to the then director of library and information services. In order to support the university's strategic business goals and preserve corporate memory, it is essential to manage corporate records throughout their life cycle (Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro & Lukileni 2013: 103). The University's records have never been managed in accordance with their life cycle, so with the UFS, this claim appears to be a pipe dream. At the UFS, records are mostly consulted by crucial stakeholders such as the Vice Chancellor office, the University Registrar, Management Committee, Council Committee, Senate, Bursar etc, to take decisions. On the other hand, records are used for administrative purposes such as designing policies, procedure

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manuals, strategic plans, examining organigram etc. For records to have a meaningful value, they must be well managed throughout their life cycle by the university. The life cycle of a record entails creation, maintenance and use through its current stage and records disposal when a record is semi-current. As the university carries out its daily operations massive amounts of records are created and need to be managed in a meaningful manner in order to recognise their full value. However, higher education institution to be specific, universities, in particular, face many difficulties when managing both physical and electronic records (Miah & Samsudin 2017:1895). When one examines the inventory and the collection from the vaults in the UFS archives, it is evident that only the department of History has ever transferred its records to the archives. In the university, not a single department has ever disposed of records legally. Without consulting archives staff and records management division, the UFS departments hire a service provider to destroy their records and make money. Without institutional memory in the form of recorded information being transferred to the UFS archives, the university's institutional memory could be compromised, making it impossible to recover crucial records in the event of a disaster.

The UFS archive's main responsibility is to make it easier for university departments to transfer records to its holdings as the custodians of documents kept by the organisation. To ensure that the university as a whole has a successful and well-organised records management program, the University Archives and Records management's mission is to update and formalise records management procedures. To ensure that a successful and well-organised records management program has been established for the entire university, it is the responsibility of the university archive and records management unit to revamp and formalise the records management processes. According to the rules and international archival standards endorsed by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA), the researcher intended to assist the records management unit of the UFS to formalise record-keeping at the university.

At UFS, the directorate of library and information services has an archives division and the Registrar's office has both archives and records management under one division. For instance, records management and archives are combined into one section at the UFS, unlike other universities, such as the University of South Africa (UNISA). The Manager of Archives and Records Service was appointed in 2020, and with that appointment came a new responsibility that was added to the university as archives and records management. So, the primary goal of the study was centered on investigating how the UFS manages its records, with the goal of assisting in creating a records management program.

A records management program needs to be established for the institution in order for any records management system to function effectively. Through this program, the institution's information and records are moved consistently and efficiently. A successful records management program will ultimately ensure that ephemeral records are destroyed, and records are made available for use when needed. Programs for managing records directly affect whether or not an organisation has a successful records management strategy (Wema 2003:48). A successful records management program, in a nutshell, entails the following:

- creating a records management strategy that will result in policies, procedures, and guidelines for record-keeping practices;

- putting into place file plans and records control mechanisms;

- carrying out a record audit;

- establishing and carrying out record retention schedules;

- efficiently storing semi-current records; create strategies for the appropriate and orderly destruction of outdated records, and make a record of this destruction;

- creating and upholding crucial records (those that are necessary for carrying out and maintaining business operations);

- creating and maintaining archival records (historical, permanent records);

- creating a disaster recovery plan to store and get access to records in case of an emergency;

- developing strategies to maintain effective operations (Wema 2003:48; Barrit 1989:5; Ngoepe & Van der Walt 2010:82-83).

In most university a comprehensive records management program has proven to be an elusive goal (Barrit 1989:5-6). The records management program can only be as effective, according to Ngoepe and Van Der Walt (2010:82) if it is interested in and addresses the strategic goals of the entire managerial scope. Similar to this, efficient records and information management depends on a number of variables, one of which is the availability of personnel with the necessary expertise and organisational and information management skills. Whereas (Saffady 2015:38) claims that a thorough records management program includes policies, procedures, and processes that specifically direct the following crucial recordkeeping matters:

- creating a schedule for record retention that takes into account business   needs;

- ensuring that the organisation operates in accordance with all applicable laws governing the management of records;

- cost-effectively managing semi-active records;

- coordinated management of active records to guarantee their retrieval for use when required.

Ngoepe (2016:338) for instance, points out that, to this effect, Abbot (2007:7) has yet to come across a records management program that is both compliant with archival laws and successfully supports decision-making in his many years working as a consultant in South Africa. Mwangi; Ng'etich and Ochichi (2017), however, believe that the most important aspect of any institution's governance is efficient records management program.

1.1.2 Advantages of effective records management

According to academics, if universities manage their records effectively, they will reap immediate benefits and probably have an advantage over their rivals (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005:3; Phiri 2016:5). Effective information management and record-keeping are essential to preventing corruption (Okello-Obura 2011:44; Phiri 2016:6). According to

Ngoepe and Phiri (2004.1; 2016: 6), records are the primary source through which public entities can be held accountable to the general public. Consequently, an organisation needs to keep some kind of record in order to successfully carry out and continue its operations (Iwhiwhi 2005:345). Records play a critical role in facilitating both individual and organisational activities (Msibi 2015:1). Ramlee (2018:229) adds to this claim by stating that good governance is the ability to oversee the organisation and facilitate good decision-making to support a state's accountability and transparency. Although it might be easy to see good records management practices as an overhead expense, they are an investment for the organisation (Bailey 2010:47).

The importance of effective records management in a university includes: facilitating the efficient operation of a university; maintaining authentic corporate memory; adhering to the requirements of common laws; standardising the records management practices; fostering trust; and responding to audit culture (Phiri 2016:2-7). But for this to happen, an effective records management system is required that would guarantee accurate, timely, and accessible information while utilising fewer resources.

1.1.3 The consequences of the ineffective record keeping practices

Without records, institutions would be unable to comply with the standards and legal frameworks governing the management of records, which would leave them without any proof of their operations and transactions. Public entities must keep, maintain, and manage records in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws, including the National Archives and Records Service Act, PAIA, and POPI, among others (Ramlee 2018:229). According to Ngoepe and Ngulube (2014:148), ineffective record-keeping procedures are to blame for the negative audit results. Fighting corruption is made more difficult if a case of embezzlement with strong evidence is dismissed for failure to produce the necessary documents (Okello-Obura 2012:116). Sound records management systems are essential to the effective management of records, as Wamukoya and Mutula (2005: 77) highlight that the public sector needs reliable records management systems in order to be transparent and accountable to the public and to improve services to citizens,

particularly in developing nations. When records are improperly managed, a great deal of time is lost sorting and locating necessary information among enormous amounts of records (Olanrewaju Issa; Abioye & Bakere 2016:49).

1.2   Theoretical framework

A theory could be thought of as a logical framework that arranges ideas in a way that fosters comprehension and insight (Fox & Bayat 2007:29). According to Kemoni (2008:105), theories were developed through observation and then verified through observation. Isaac Newton, for instance, who witnessed the apple fall and created the theory of gravity, is one example. In relation to the choice of a topic, the conceptualization of the literature review, the design, approach, and the analysis, the importance of theory-driven thinking and acting is emphasised (Grant & Osanloo 2014: 12). The theoretical framework serves as the guide for the whole dissertation investigation. One cannot overstate how crucial it is to use a framework in a dissertation study (Grant & Osanloo 2014:12). The Records Life Cycle was used by the researcher as a result to frame this study. Therefore, the researcher employed the Records Life Cycle Model in establishing a records management program for all the university's records, from creation to disposal, was the study's primary objective.

1.2.1   Records Life - Cycle Model

Fox and Bayat (2007: 29) define theory as reasoning behind organising concepts in a way that produces insight and understanding. Whereas Chaterera (2013:19) concurs with Kemoni (2007:107), in that the Records Life Cycle Model is a basis for establishing a successful records management programme, "since it becomes the basis of the development of suitable mechanisms tools, systems and methods required to best organise each stage of record life cycle." Makhura (2005:31) underscore this by asserting that like a living organism, records have a life cycle. According to Fox and Bayat (2007: 29), theory is the justification for categorizing concepts in a way that results in understanding and insight. Makhura (2005:31) emphasises this by saying that records have a life cycle, just like a living thing does. The Records Life Cycle Model was used by the researcher as a framework for this study because it is believed to be a successful

approach for examining how records are created and used, which is the reality of a study which is a sound records management program's reality (Chaterera 2013:19). For organisations to deal with the transactions covered by the life cycle of records, which is from the creation of the transaction, use, maintenance, and disposition of the documents and records, records management practices are areas of necessity (Ramlee 2018:228). According to Atherton (1985-86:43), the National Archives in Ottawa and Washington, DC, have vigorously backed the "life cycle" idea of records management and archive relationships for many years. But Phillip (2008:18) compares the records life cycle model to the systematic management of records from the cadre to the grave, resulting in a comparison between the lives of records and living things. According to Atherton (1985–86:43), this model is based on the justification that is most likely to divide the eight distinct stages of a record's life cycle, starting with the stage of records management. Records management systems in this study not only met the requirements for internal purposes but also served as the foundation for transparency that was approached over the course of the records' entire life cycle (De Mingo & Cerrillo-i-Martínez 2018:256).
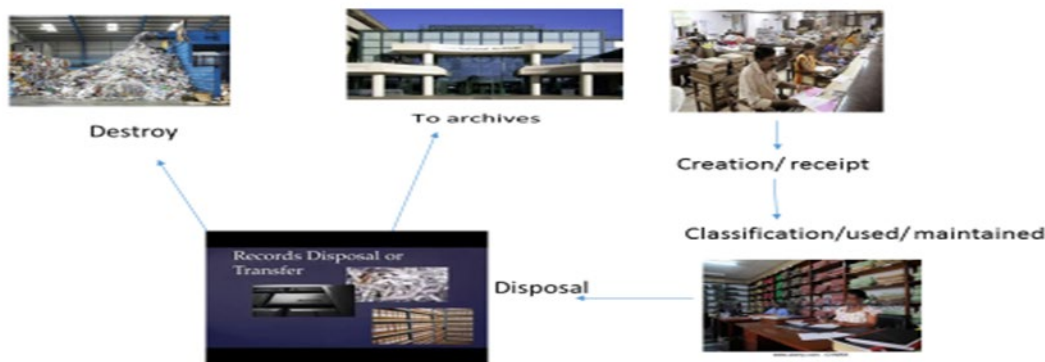
Figure 1:1 shows an eight-stage records management life cycle that is supported by Atherton (1985-86:43).

The eight distinct stages of the records management life cycle model that illuminated the current study are briefly explained below:

 Records are created or received, and they go through a life cycle: Their physical forms (paper, digital, magnetic, or photographic) are established during this phase. In

order to increase the retrievability of records, they are received or created in this way and given a special identifier in the form of a reference or file number.

Classification, use, and upkeep: State institutions must use the functional subject filing system, which includes an approved file plan and an appropriate storage system, to manage both paper and electronic records (NARSSA 2007:15). A records classification system/file plan, according to Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:92–93), offers a way to determine what records are present and where to find them. Henttonen (2015:1) asserts that records can be categorised in records management, based on their subject content organisational structure, organisational activities, record format (such as minutes or letters), and their combination. To put it another way, classification systems describe characteristics that do not exist in the records, i.e., how the records relate to the actions and actors who created and used the records (Henttonen 2015:1). While records are still being used, effective records management programs ensure that they are maintained in an economical and efficient manner (Ree 2016:168).

Disposal: No public records under the control of any state institution may be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without the written consent of the National Archivist, according to section 13(2)(a) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (NARSSA 2007:21). Records are disposed of either by transfer to archives or recycling: Tools like retention and disposal schedules help identify the small but crucial body of records-roughly 2-5 percent of all records created that are crucial for current state operations and those that merit permanent retention in the state archives (Ree 2016:168).

Destroy: Records are recycled or destroyed through shredding when they reach the semi-active stage as the National Archives and Records Service claims that (2007:26).

Transfer to archives: Under Section 11(2) of the National Archives and Records Service Act of 1996, as amended, public records that the National Archivist deems to have archival value must be kept by a state institution for twenty years after the date the records first became available.

1.3 Problem statement

Despite the University's assertion that the UFS's goal and vision is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of governance and support systems, it appears that recordkeeping is not treated equally to other governance functions like risk management and audit (Phiri :2015; Ramlee 2018:82). One of the main concerns of the discipline of records management is the connection between governance, audit, risk, and record keeping (Phiri & Tough 2018:47). To manage the enormous volume of records produced by the university, the UFS lacks a records management program. When a facility oversees the creation, storage, and distribution of records inconsistently without a strong records management program, it exposes itself to unnecessary risk (Kaczmzrek 2006:24). Lack of a successful records management program also reflects the legitimacy and excellence of the institutional archives (Kaczmzrek 2006:24). The apparent lack of records management control mechanisms, such as policies, a procedure manual, a schedule for records retention, a program for disposal, a file plan, and resources, raises the possibility that the university's crucial records might be lost or irretrievably, destroyed in the event of a catastrophe. It will be difficult to comply with obligations regarding transparency and access to public information if there is no control or proper records management and information (Casades de Mingo &-i-Martnez 2018:256). This will make it difficult to prevent corruption. The risk that the university's records won't be able to be found or accessed could undermine business continuity. A clumsy and careless approach to managing records, according to Khumalo and Chigariro (2017:69), will at most ruin the university's reputation. Records must be maintained with the utmost transparency in order to ensure records management systems make public information easier to access, disseminate, and use (Casades de Mingo &-i-Martnez 2018:256).

By presenting a case for the creation of the university records management program at the UFS in this context, the study aimed to support its establishment. The study also looked into the ways in which other tertiary institutions had benefited from records management programs.

1.4   The aim of the study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate how records are managed at the University of the Free State with the intention of assisting with the creating a formal records management structure for the entire institution. The research inquiry also sought to learn more about the UFS's record management practices in order to ensure that its operations are effective and efficient and rely on an evidence-based decision-making process. The creation, upkeep, use, retention, prevention of record loss, and disposition of records are a few of the important issues that were looked into.

1.5   Research questions

Based on the objectives, research questions that needed to be answered by this research were as follows:

1. How does the University of the Free State manage its records?
2. What records management practices can be recommended at the UFS?
3. Which standardised frameworks in the form of strategies, guiding documents and systems can be created for the management of records at the University of the Free State?
4. What form of strategies can be applied to improve records management at the University of the Free State?
5. How can the university establish a platform that is conducive for the introduction of electronic document and records management system (EDRMS)?

1.6   The objectives of the study

Therefore, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate records management practices at the University of the Free State.
2. Recommend records -keeping best practices at the UFS.
3. Create and standardise policies, guidelines, and tools for the management of records at the University of the Free State.
4. Recommend strategies that need to be applied to revamp records management at the university.

5. Establish a plan for the endorsement of electronic document and records management system at the University of the Free State.

Table 1:1Demonstrates research questions and objectives

NO	Research question (s)	Objectives
1.	How does the University of the Free State manage its records?	Investigate records management practices at the University of the Free State.
2.	What records management practices can be recommended at the UFS?	Recommend records-keeping best practices at the UFS.
3.	Which standardised frameworks in the form of strategies, guiding documents and systems can be created for the management of records at the University of the Free State?	Create and standardise policies, guidelines, and tools for the management of records at the University of the Free State.
4.	What form of strategies can be applied to improve records management at the University of the Free State?	Recommend strategies that need to be applied to revamp records management at the university.
5.	How can the university establish a platform that is conducive for the introduction of electronic document and records management system (EDRMS)?	Establish a plan for the endorsement of electronic document and records management system at the University of the Free State.

1.7   Justification of the study

The fact that there have been numerous studies on records management is fully acknowledged and appreciated.   However, the majority of the recent records management literature focuses on managing and improving records management. There hasn't been much effort put into starting a records management program in universities. The researcher aimed to fill the gap left in South Africa's discipline of archives and records management.

1.8   Importance of the study

The need for establishing a records management program in the UFS, as well as paving the way for well-received records management best practices in universities, was the focus of this study, making it crucially important. The study is the first of its kind to be conducted in South Africa that goes beyond the establishment of a university records management program. This may give universities the chance to fully value and treasure the important role that records management plays from a logical and practical standpoint. The University Archives' role in the management of university records was also examined as part of this study. For universities aiming to provide effective service, the literature produced by the current study is of utmost importance. This study was crucially important because it focused on the necessity of establishing a records management program in the UFS and opened the door for well-liked records management best practices in universities. The research, which goes beyond the development of a university records management program, is the first of its kind to be carried out in South Africa. The opportunity to fully appreciate and treasure the significant role that records management plays from a logical and practical standpoint may result from this for universities. The literature that this study has produced is crucial for universities that want to offer effective services.

1.9   Scope and delimitation of the study

This study's primary focus was on the UFS's duty to adhere to the legal frameworks for records management that control record-keeping procedures in South Africa. The study's main topics included record-keeping procedures, including filing systems, records disposal, records storage areas, record preservation, and record retention. Since most of the university's administration takes place on the main campus, the research project was restricted to UFS Bloemfontein, and the participants were drawn from the registrar's office, support departments, and faculty departments. The research project made an effort to go beyond the constraints and identify potential obstacles that could prevent the implementation of a records management program from achieving its deemed goal of intensifying admissible sound records management practices. The results of this study were guided by an interpretivist approach and used a small number of phenomena, like any other qualitative research.   As it turned out, one shouldn't expect this study's findings to lead to fully developed predictive descriptions.

1.10   Definitions of key words

Prior dissertations and theses were read to aid in understanding the ideal meanings of terms that deviated from written language, including the NARSSA (No. 43 of 1996), Advisory pamphlet No. 1, and previous dissertations.

1.10.1 Archives

According to Ngulube (2003:6), there is a lot of disagreement over what constitutes an archive. Ngulube (2003:6), for example, claims that in the context of information technology, archiving refers to the creation of backup storage for either short- or long-term use or the saving of data or information on a diskette. Pereira (2017:13) believes that archives are distinct from the building in which they are preserved and made available for consultation. Archives are records with enduring value according to NARSSA (archival repository). In this study, the term "archives" refers to a section of the records management unit that is in charge of maintaining records that have been transferred to it

by stakeholders or that are part of an archive. It would be used to describe records with long-term value in the alternative sense.

1.10.2 Governmental bodies

Governmental body is defined as any national or provincial level legislative, executive, judicial, or administrative state organ (including a statutory body) (NARS Act No. 43 of 1996). body that oversees a state (Concise Oxford Dictionary Tenth Ed.). Since the UFS reports to the minister of higher education, the university can also be considered a governmental body.

1.10.3 Record

A record is presented as proof of a transaction for the information that it contains (NARSSA 2007.vi). While Marutha (2011:14) describes a record as a transaction that is kept because of the nature of the information it contains and will be used as evidence in the future. A record, according to Cox (2001:2), is an extension of the human memory that is intentionally made to record data, document transactions, communicate ideas, support assertions, provide justifications for actions, and preserve evidence of past events. Any official transaction made by the office of origin while conducting business that possesses all the required qualifications, i.e., is unaltered, authentic, and reliable, and is admissible in court. In contrast, according to ISO (2011), a record is any document that is created, maintained, and used by an organisation (public, private, or in pursuit of legal obligation or in the transaction of business which it forms part of or provides evidence).

1.10.4 Records management

The field of management known as records management is in charge of effectively and systematically controlling the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records. This includes processes for gathering and maintaining records that serve as evidence and information about business transactions and activities (Ellis 2002:8; Saffady 2015:38). Records management is the practice of providing effective custody of records from the moment they are created until they are destroyed (Chaterera 2013:8). In order

to achieve effective, transparent, and accountable governance, the NARSSA (2004:15) defines records management as "a procedure to ensure the proper creation, preservation, use, and disposal of records throughout their life cycle." ensuring that the right record-keeping procedures are used when records are created, such as putting records in file covers or folders, giving them the correct names, the file number, shelved, valued, thrown away, or archived. The supervision and administration of paper or digital records, including their creation, receipt, upkeep, use, and disposal, is known as records management (Zulkipli 2019). According to Allamaghani (2015:2), records management is the practice of applying a well-structured approach to managing records and information.

1.11 Research Methodology

Only a brief summary of the research methodology used for this study is provided in this section. Chapter 3 of the dissertation provides a thorough analysis. According to Ngulube (2015:127), methodology is crucial to the research process because it serves as a simple microscope that a researcher can look through to gain knowledge about a social phenomenon and find solutions. When knowledge, values, theory, and practice on a particular topic are combined with acceptance of the nature of reality, methodology emerges (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:3). A constructivist research paradigm has been chosen for this study, which is informed by the pertinent qualitative methodology (Creswell 2007:66). A qualitative research methodology was used in this study to incorporate arising questions and techniques, data that is typically gathered in participant settings, data analysis that builds from participant input to a general topic, and the researcher's creation of an interpretation of the data's meaning (Creswell 2014). How people interpret their experiences, lives, and worldviews was something the researcher was very interested in learning about (Creswell 1994:145).

According to Bryman (2012:187), the population of the study is essentially the universe of fragments from which the sample will be drawn. The UFS employees who were the University Registrar's staff members, College staff members and Support staff members were the study's target population. A representative sample was chosen from the academic staff, the registrar's office, the unit in charge of managing archives and records,

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and support services, 11 people in total, all of whom worked for the UFS, were included in the study. A sampling is a portion of the population that is selected for study; it is a small subset according to an investigation, it is a population subgroup (Bryman 2012:187; Leedy & Ormrod 2013:206; Bless; Smith & Sithole 2013:165, Kumar 2011:193).

The researcher intended to select participants and study locations because they purposefully informed an understanding of the research problem and the study's central phenomenon. As a result, deliberate sampling was used in this study (Creswell 2007:125; 2014:239). Purposive sampling was used by the researcher because he was familiar with trustworthy experts who could supply the data needed for the study. As a sampling frame, the UFS staff organogram (2020) was utilised. Given that it did not exclude any components of the universe of the units under investigation, this sampling frame was adequate (Bless; Smith & Sithole 2013:166). However, Chapter 3 of the study dealt with more specifics of the research methodology (Research design, instruments, and other related matter on methodology).

1.12   Ethical considerations

By abstaining from bias and either providing or refusing a treatment, the researcher made sure that ethical considerations were identified (Creswell 2014:135; Kumar 2011:246). Respect for someone's willingness to participate must be based entirely on their own volition and a thorough understanding of all the details. The protection of the subjects' identity, particularly in survey research, is the overarching concern in ensuring the subjects' interests and welfare, to which the researcher subscribed when inviting informants to participate in the survey (Babbie 2013:35). Additionally, the research project complied with the University of South Africa's (2016) policy on research ethics, which among other principles calls for "respecting the autonomy, rights, and dignity of research participants, promoting beneficence, and guarding against doing harm to the participants in research." in particular to people, kindness, and upholding the law.

The researcher complied with the relevant POPI Act, No.4 of 2013 regulation in South Africa, which highlighted the significance of safeguarding participants' personal information from harm, loss, damage, and unauthorised access as specified in the Act.

The data gathered from research participants was used solely for the research's primary goal and not for any secondary or illegal purposes beyond those that were approved by the participants. According to Unisa's policy on research ethics, the researcher made sure that research subjects were not subjected to any form of exploitation.

The researcher complied with the policy and was granted ethical clearance by the UFS research development department gatekeepers (research ethics policy). In order to conduct the research project at the university and its community, the researcher filled out all the research ethics answers and added the research project supervisor to the UFS RIMS (Research Information Management System). The scientist evaluated the Covid-19 participants' safety was at risk, and social isolation was being watched in accordance with South African government regulations. When interacting with participants, the researcher maintained a 1.5 m distance between them and washed and sanitised their hands frequently. By ensuring that there was no emotional distress, cultural embarrassment, loss of work time, breach of confidentiality, reputational harm, etc. that would have negatively affected the participants, the researchers ensured risk mitigation.

1.13   Dissertation outline

1.13.1 Chapter 1 Introduction and background to the study

The main topic of chapter one was the significance of conducting the study. The chapter emphasised the importance of getting support from top management as well as the overall significance of establishing the records management program in the UFS.

1.13.2 Chapter 2 Theoretical framework and literature review

The theories, principles, directives, models, and concepts related to the management of public records was covered in this chapter. The foundation for the research was provided by Chapter 2.

1.13.3 Chapter 3 Research methodology

The beginning, middle, and end of the entire research project was systematically explained in Chapter 3. which entailed explaining how data was collected from the start of the study to its conclusion.

1.13.4 Chapter 4 Data analysis, presentations, discussions of the research findings

The results were presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

1.13.5 Chapter 5 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter of the study provided a summary, conclusions, suggestions for further research, and recommendations.

1.14   Summary

Ultimately, a key component of a records management program is the management and preservation of records (Ngezana & Muchaonyerwa 2019:1). Getting the active support of an institution's top management is the most crucial factor in establishing a records management program. It is difficult to argue against the fact that a good records management program must have the backing of upper management (Kaczmarek 2006:24). Most frequently, this is an educational process meant to increase awareness (Katjiveri-Tjiuoveri and Lukileni 2013:103). According to these authors, this should be supported by sensible laws, carefully crafted regulations, and an active implementation strategy. Additionally, in order to effectively coordinate the records management functions, universities without records management programs should set up such units (Phiri 2016:274).   As a result, it's crucial to make sure that records management units are staffed by knowledgeable personnel in records management, including digital records management (Phiri 2016:274).

Better records and information management will eventually result from engaging university departments in projects that are centred on their immediate information needs (Kaczmarek 2006:25). The author goes on to say that this improvement happens by

fostering a stronger partnership between the University Archives and Records management, and the people who create the records, encouraging them to collaborate closely on compliance and disposition or transfer.

The next chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the researcher provided an introduction, background details, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, and the significance of the study. This chapter's objective was to review the information that served as the basis for the current study into the development of a records management program. Every study must rely on the body of information already known about a certain subject (Rowley and Slack 2004:31). These scholars also insist that in order to identify topics that can profit from further research, it is critical to analyse both earlier and more recent literature. A literature review is a summary of a topic that supports the identification of a specific research field (Rowley and Slack 2004:31). Rowley and Slack (2004:32) claim that the following are important justifications for literature reviews:

- establishing the body of literature to which the research will contribute and placing the research within that body of literature;

- defending the selection of a research topic, question, or hypothesis;

- increasing theoretical and terminological knowledge;

- facilitating the creation of a bibliography or list of the sources used; and

- suggesting possible study methods; and in going through and assessing the data.

An extensive summary of previous research topics is called a literature review (University of South Africa 2020). Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016:15), on the other hand, assert that a literature review should work to avoid unintended and unnecessary replication. A competent literature review's reviewers should be unbiased, logical, and refrain from condemning other academics when they fall short of the researchers' expectations (Kemoni 2008:104). Most academics agree that since science involves the gathering of information through time, it can be viewed as cumulative (Onwuegbuzie and Frels 2016:3). As a result, we must constantly evaluate and build upon the information we already have in a particular field of interest. Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016:3) assert that

if we do not apply what we already know, we shall unnecessarily "re-invent the wheel" as a beginning point, which is an idiomatic metaphor for human ingenuity and inventiveness. In reality, regardless of the subject area, the most common way to learn is through reviewing the literature to see what has previously been done (Onwuegbuzie and Frels 2016:3; Kumar 2011:31; Rowley and Slack 31:2004). The researcher can begin reading pertinent literature as soon as they choose a studyable research issue, claims Creswell (2014:60), who agrees with the aforementioned supposition. Relevant and significant records management literature was reviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects that was explored in the study. Studying the various knowledge gaps in pertinent earlier research can also be beneficial to the researcher, as mentioned by (Chaterera 2013:27). In a nutshell, a literature review is used for the following things:

- It provides a theoretical framework for your research.
- It enables you to make links between previously conducted research and the topic you wish to examine.
- You can use it to show how your discoveries have advanced our body of knowledge. already known in your field. It aids you in incorporating your study findings into the field of knowledge already in existence (Kumar 2014:32).
- It combines and summarizes what is understood about a topic (University of South Africa 2020).

The citations above demonstrate that reading the literature helps researchers choose a research methodology that has been used previously and is appropriate for their goals as well as situates their study within the context of an existing body of knowledge. In order to address the research questions and reach the planned aims, this part examines the work that has been done in the field of records management programs. The UFS Annual Report 2018 and presentations from benchmarking exercises (UNISA 2019) and conference papers were among the sources the researcher used and analysed. Other sources included academic and professional publications, published books, previously finished master's and doctoral theses, and dissertations.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A theory can be viewed as a logical framework that arranges ideas to encourage comprehension and insight (Fox & Bayat 2007:29). According to Kemoni (2008:105), theories were first formed by observation and then confirmed by observation. Isaac Newton is one instance, who created the theory of gravity after observing an apple fall. Regarding the selection of a topic, the conceptualisation of the literature review, the design technique, and the analysis, the importance of theory-driven thinking and behavior is emphasised (Grant & Osanloo 2014: 12). The theoretical framework serves as a roadmap for the entire dissertation investigation. It is crucial to have a framework when doing a dissertation investigation (Grant & Osanloo 2014:12). Ngoepe (2016) claims that models for records management are essential for the delivery of records management services. The researcher utilised the Records Life Cycle Model since the main goal of the study was to create a records management program for all of the university's records, from production through disposal.

Many governmental entities develop records management initiatives without taking the models suited for implementation into account, Ngoepe (2016:338) advised. According to Ngoepe, Force and Zhang (2016; 2016:338) there is a risk of continuous degeneration or perhaps collapse if proper models are not developed and used. Since the primary objective of the study was to develop a records management program for all of the university's records, from creation to disposal, the researcher used the Records Life Cycle Model. According to Ngoepe (2016:338), many governmental organisations design records management projects without considering the models best suited for implementation. If appropriate models are not created and employed, there is a risk of ongoing deterioration or perhaps collapse, according to the author. Records are a company's lifeline (Force and Zhang 2016:247).

2.2.1 Records Life - Cycle Model

Fox and Bayat (2007: 29) assert that theory is the justification for classifying ideas in a way that leads to understanding and insight. In 1940, Brooks (1940:224) made the first mention of the idea of "life history documents" in response to the growing storage

problems brought on by the massive volume of records. A few years later, Brooks (1940:226) transformed the concept into the "life history of certain bodies of records," which saw the foundation of the life-cycle model (Lin 2015:24). The model included the organisational functions, process policies, document materials, produces, and intersections of these components that make up document life histories (Lin 2015:24). While Makhura (2005:31) emphasises that records have a life cycle, just like a live thing does. Chaterera (2013:19) concurs with Kemoni (2007:107) that the Records Life Cycle Model is a foundation for developing a successful records management program because "it becomes the foundation of the development of suitable mechanisms tools, systems and methods required to best organise each stage of a record life cycle." In order to examine how records are created and used, which is the reality of an effective records management program, the researcher employed the Records Life Cycle Model as the framework for this study (Chaterera 2013:19). Records management strategies are essential for companies to handle the transactions covered by the life cycle of records, which is comprised of the production of the transaction, consumption, maintenance, and disposition of the documents and records (Ramlee 2018:228). Understanding the life-cycle model, which could be regarded as the Continuum model's framework, is crucial for a new records manager (McEachreon 2012:10). The life cycle model is an expansion rather than a replacement of the continuum model, according to the author as well as the fact that the life cycle model is logically growing to include a wider variety of information formats. The previous archives management literature overemphasised the levels of task division and their ease of implementation, which facilitated the gradual emergence of archive orthodoxy and the dominance of life cycle thinking in practice (Lin 2015:25).

The National Archives, notably the National Archives in Ottawa, have reportedly given the "life cycle" model of records management and archive relationships a lot of support (1985-1986:44). However, McEachreon (2012:10) contrasts the life of a live thing to that of a record by contrasting the records life cycle model to the systematic control of records from the beginning to the grave. Additionally, the author emphasises that even digital or electronic records have a life cycle, including stages of formation (birth), usage (life), and eventual decomposition or destruction disappearance (death). This model is based on the assertion that it is likely to split the life cycle of a record into eight clearly defined

stages, beginning with the stage of records administration, according to Atherton (1985-86:43). In this study, records management systems not only complied with internal criteria but also provided the framework for transparency throughout the full records life cycle (Cerrillo-Martnez and Casadesus-de-Mingo 2018:256).

Figure 2: depicts the eight stages of the Atherton-supported records management life cycle (1985-86:43).

Following is a quick explanation of the eight major stages of the records management life cycle model that shed light on the current investigation:

Records are made or received: they experience a life cycle. During this stage, their tangible forms (paper, digital, magnetic, or photographic) are established. Records are acquired or produced in this manner and given a unique identifier in the form of a reference or file number in order to increase their irretrievability.

Classification, use, and upkeep: To manage both paper and electronic records, state institutions must employ the functional subject filing system, which consists of an approved file plan and a sufficient storage system (NARSSA 2007:15). According to Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:92–93), a records classification system/file plan offers a mechanism to identify what records are present and where to find them. Records can be divided into categories in records management based on the topic, record type (such as

minutes or letters), organisational structure, organisational activities, and the combination of these variables, according to Henttonen (2015:477). In other words, categorization systems identify traits that are not included in the data, i.e., how the records connect to the deeds and people that produced and accessed the records (Henttonen 2015:1). Useful records management practices guarantee that records are maintained in a way that is both economical and effective while they are still being used (Ree 2016:168).

Disposal: According to section 13(2)(a) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, no public records under the authority of any state institution may be transferred to an archive's repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without the National Archivist's written authorization (NARSSA 2021). Transferring records to archives or recycling them are the two methods of disposal: The small but essential body of records roughly 25 percent of all records created that are essential for current state operations and those that merit permanent retention in the state archives are identified with the aid of tools like retention and disposal schedules (Ree 2016:168).

Destroy: Once records are in the semi-active state, they are eliminated by recycling or shredding. According to National Archives and Records Service (2007:26), state institutions must consider the functional requirements, financial accountability, and other statutory criteria. (For instance, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000, and the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000, Public Finance Management Act, 1999 etc.).

Transfer to archives: Public records determined by the National Archivist to have archive significance must be kept by a state institution for 20 years after the date of creation, according to Section 11 (2) of the National Archives and Records Service Act No. 43 of 1996, as modified.

2.3 Records management for the university

The majority of colleges if not all of them don't know how to deal with the increasing volume of records that the growth of higher education has generated (Procter 2002:49). In its whole or even just a thorough records management program in general, the University of the Free State (UFS) has never had a proficient records management

program. The UFS does not maintain its documents in accordance with the recommendations of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. Oliver (2007:86) discovered that staff members at the Australian University believed the archives/records section served as a repository for records that had passed away, even though the university's records management policy explicitly referred to records throughout their existence. Records managers should aim for and expect rewards including legal and regulatory compliance managing the administration of records, revised corporate governance principles, significant organisational openness, and accountability, according to Bailey (2011:67).

Legal adherence and effective management are intricately intertwined (King VI 2009). Since law and good governance are intertwined, it is doubtful that the two can be separated entirely (King VI 2016). Records are the most crucial information assets because they demonstrate company activity (King VI 2016). A company needs a structure of corporate governance since it is essential to its success, and in most cases, a company without one is viewed as lacking a soul or conscience. It is almost as important as the business's primary strategy (Nadaf and Navi 2017:66). Also, these scholars in addition to preventing corporate scandals, frauds, and the institution's potential for legal and criminal liability, it has been emphasised that good corporate governance is crucial for business. Corporate governance is meant to increase a company's accountability and halt significant disasters in their tracks. Nadaf and Navi (2017:71) claim that unethical corporate governance practices can cause a company to lose money, enhanced corruption and cause reputational damage which is bad for the economy.

The UFS heavily relies on data management systems to handle the mountains of information produced every day. The 2017 Data Management Maturity (DMM) evaluation provided recommendations for an operating framework, which the Data Management Governance division of ICT Services was entrusted with implementing. In this framework, the roles and institutional frameworks that must be in place to establish data management governance were detailed (University of the Free State website 2020). To manage the mountains of information generated across all three of its campuses, the UFS is heavily reliant on information systems that leverage information technology (Bloemfontein,

QwaQwa & South). These information systems have all been put into place in accordance with established, documented standards and security (UFS website 2020).

The majority of the time, supporting applications and core systems share databases; however, this network of data dependency is easily the cause of data replication, duplication, discrepancies, non-aligned data fields, etc. Controlling information aids in the preservation of crucial information and prevents the accumulation of ephemeral records, according to Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro, and Lukileni (2014:107). In the context of the computer industry, distinctive software systems create, manage, and store digital data using confidential techniques without separating records from other kinds of data to avoid duplication or to establish and maintain an intellectual control (Duranti 2010:79). Administrators have also begun to equate a system's major responsibility with smaller, usually insignificant supporting duties that are not necessary to the universities' purpose due to the ability of information systems to alter data (Duranti 2010:87). Effective records management could cut down on money wasted on redundant electronic data. Because of this, most case studies highlight the necessity of better records management integration in the development of electronic information and communication systems International Records Management Trust (IRMT2009).

The University of Huddersfield is enhancing the retention, promotion, and distribution of program specification, according to Bailey's (2011:50) pilot study on system implementation at six universities. This was discovered using the university's electronic and document management systems. During a study at the University of Nottingham, the researcher piloted the use of the university's enterprise content management system as an electronic documents management system for the management of student case studies. Mountains of generated legacy records need to be assessed and managed in order to lessen the unnecessary load of the overheads (Bailey 2011:50). Techniques for disaster recovery and data backup are employed to protect privacy and give users control over their data in compliance with industry standards. The University of Namibia was not the only institution lacking in efficient record-keeping systems, according to Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro, and Lukileni (2014:105); Iwhiwhi (2005) had also discovered this to be the case with Nigerian universities. Additionally, it is crucial for the effective management

of university data because the South African government adopted the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) argued Chinyemba & Ngulube (2005). The University of KwaZulu-Natal has a distribution system in place for retaining records in the lack of a centralized role for records administration (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005).

According to these researchers, the data is generated by the many business units and these specific organisational units store and manage the UKZN records. This is also true within the UFS, where departments and colleges manage their records without the assistance of the archive and records management staff. It is crucial to note that many organisations do not have clear guidelines for the maintenance of records, and those that do frequently have laxer sanctions for infractions (Bailey and Vidyarthi 2010:280). These researchers assert that a range of sectors, including local governments, the public sector, NGOs, higher education, and a substantial portion of the private sector, are investing an increasing amount of autonomy about people and how they make, use, handle, and discard documents (Bailey & Vidyarthi 2010). Because emails are routinely created in such high volumes, organisations may take reasonable, strict precautions to preserve temporary data but end up destroying crucial archive records as a result. When deciding whether emails should be permanently kept versus those that only must be preserved as documentation of commercial transactions, institutions might lose records and keep those that may not be important (Chikomba 2018:31). The records management division of Unisa integrated Microsoft Office and Unidrive, creating an interface that made it simple to enter email messages into the system using the Outlook client (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

Establishing a clear cognitive connection between these records as they are created and updated as they are utilised is crucial. It is equally crucial to keep these connections between semi-current records, especially those records intended for permanent preservation, in order for future researchers to be able to examine the data (Duranti 2010:79). Iwhiwhi (2005:347) discovered that certain Nigerian colleges focused only on semi-current records while ignoring the whole records management life cycle. The researcher concurs with Iwhiwhi (2005) that a narrow focus on archival gathering has resulted in the UFS archives' neglecting the entirety of the records management life cycle.

Iwhiwhi (2005) and Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) concur that the UKZN was found to be deficient in the required controls over the whole life cycle of the records.

Although a records management program was never put in place at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Kaczmerek (2006:25) also discovered that this was the same situation there. Because there is no records management program, efforts have been fully focused on records-disposition activities since the University Archives was established (Kaczmerek 2006:25). This is not the case at the UFS, where the University Archives mainly focus on providing services to researchers and interest groups in the archival collection and have a modest number of collections from other University communities, like administrative records. At the moment, the UFS employs outside consultants to get rid of records without first getting in touch with the university archivist. Records management is not well-known at the University of the Western Cape, claims Momoti (2017:67). (UWC). Records management might assist university staff members in producing accurate, comprehensive, and authentic documentation that would aid them in making informed judgments if it were acknowledged and valued. There are no official or consistently followed procedures at the University of Oxford, according to Bailey (2011:55) for guaranteeing the preservation of records for the purpose of complying with laws or regulations or for determining the potential historical significance of records sent to the university archives. Additionally, compliance increases when records are kept in line with the laws and regulations governing the administration of records (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107).

The situation is the same at UFS, where the researcher observed the collection in the vaults at the university archives repository. There, a sizable portion of the historical collection makes up only 3% of the overall collection, whereas nearly 97 percent of it is primarily made up of former National Party correspondence and related records. Universities can save money because effective records management policies prevent ephemeral records from being held and retained pointlessly. Additionally, accurate record-keeping practices prevent information and documents from being accidentally duplicated, which saves money in addition to assuring correctness and version control (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107).

2.4 Recommended procedures for managing university documents

Just like in commercial and governmental institutions, records management issues are current in colleges and universities. Records management initiatives in higher education continue to receive neither continuous support nor full attention (Kaczmarek 2006:32). However, the University of South Africa has provided records management with full support in South Africa, where it has a specialized department with a Divisional Head and about three Records Managers who report to her (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). Today, the majority of colleges all over the world use certain software programs to manage their effective records management mechanisms (Miah & Samsudin 2017:1819). The process of setting up a records management program is so difficult and intricate that sometimes it takes longer than expected to finish the work (Ngoepe & Van Der Walt 2010:82). These academics believe that there is general agreement among researchers that few institutions are successful in developing a records management program that satisfies business requirements. The management of records in all formats throughout their lifecycle should be given careful consideration in order to ensure good governance by only keeping data that have administrative, financial, legal, and historical significance (Ellis 2002 :7).

In order to build up methods to identify the crucial records volumes that must be recorded and retained in its systems, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) advise the UKZN to conduct a records survey to identify which records represent its primary duties, operations, and business transactions. At the University of South Africa, top management made a complete commitment to records management in order to accomplish strategic direction, funding, the purchase of bulk scanners, and the scanning and uploading of little over 550000 documents to the Enterprise Content Management system (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). However, UNISA's department of records management encountered external difficulties because of the lack of locally available talents, licenses, system upgrades, integration, and compatibility (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). In South African universities, the Records Management Division is part of a top-level organisation led by the Registrar's office.

The records management section of UNISA oversees institutional business, student business, and digital information using the following methods:

- Create and implement a framework for policy;
- control the life cycle of institution-wide paper-based business and student;
- oversee the production and maintenance of educational digital resources (video, image, audio, etc.);
- offer business functional support for applications;
- offer the Institution bureau scanning services;
- offer the institution shredding services;
- conversion of outdated media, support for the institution's content management and administration, and services for application functional training;
- offer continuity in the event of an emergency;
- offer assistance to regions with records management, content management, and off-site storage; and
- co-ordinate Uniflow and ECM system requirements and updates with ICT.

Organize, hold, and keep records.

Keep records for any potential future legal action.

Create a retention schedule depending on the law.

Create and sustain

Securing records (evidence) to support quality assurance

Create classifications that are information sensitive.

Establish criteria for the permitted physical storage of active,
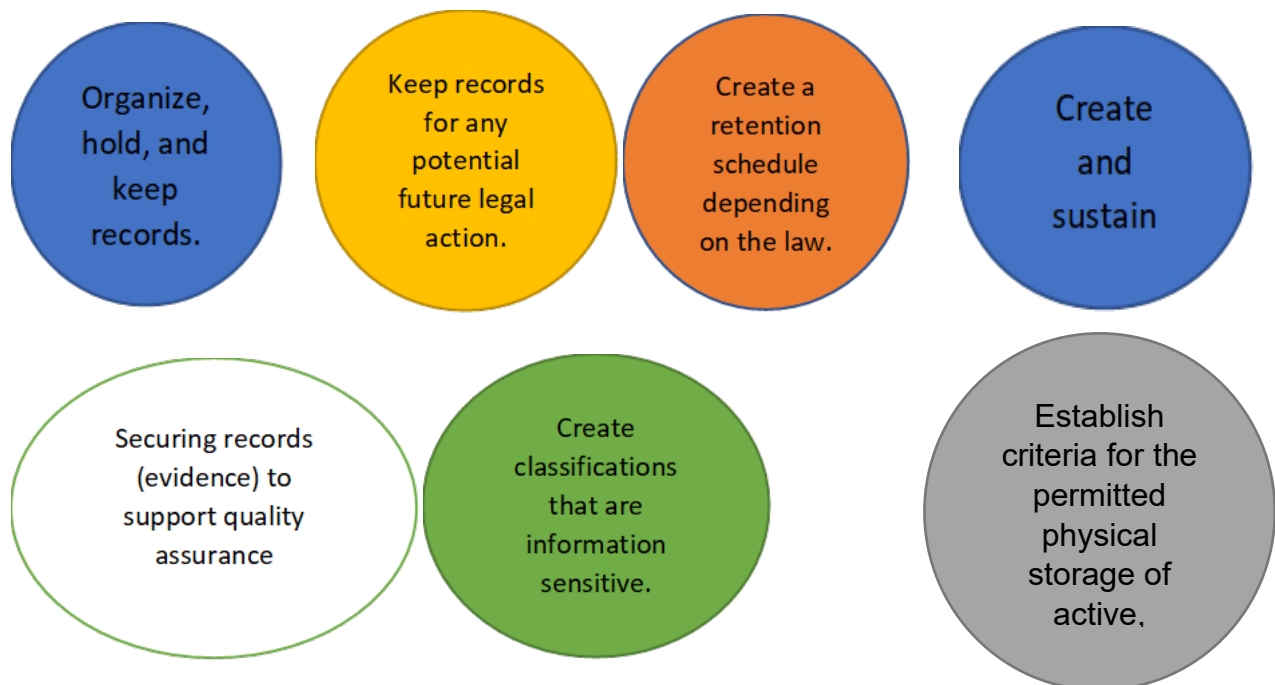
Figure 3: shows the UNISA's Records Management Division's role in the university is stipulated above (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

Table 1.2: shows how the Records Management Division of UNISA is organised into Sections: (More, Johnson, and Kgaladi 2019).

Records Management Sections				
Business Archives	**Correspondence**	**Matric**	**M and D** Recover student applications intended for M and D enrolment.	**Post and undergrad** Classifies, scans, organizes, and stores students' hardcopy records.
• Offer centralized safekeeping and secure storage for both student and business records, enabling quick retrieval.	Ensure that student records are processed, indexed, and routed as needed each day.	Maintains student records for those who do not meet the requirements for a matriculation exemption.		
• Make it easier to get old exam papers from a third-party service provider.	Verify the quality box's records for compliance and record integrity	Receives, certifies, scans, organizes, routes, and files mail from students.	Distribute dissertations in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.	Maintain private student records.
Posts test questions	Control spam and workflow systems.			

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and answers on Myunisa				

Unidrive

- User education

- File register upkeep

- Inspect content management and records.
- Record classification and

- file/folder opening

Records management at Unisa Approaches: According to More, Johnson, and Kgaladi (2019), a hybrid approach is used to manage student and business records.

- Centralized processing and administration of student records (UNIflow System-Business Process Model BPM).

- Decentralised processing and centralised administration of business records

  (UNIdrive System-Content Life Cycle Management).

- Job descriptions for specialists and generalists.
- ICT records management systems UNIdrive and UNIFLOW for business owners.
- Examining the operating model with a fresh emphasis on governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

The proper completion of the job is ensured by the presence of competent qualified individuals in records management (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005:11). But such days are over because now every employee of a particular institution is affected by the duty of managing records, unlike in the past when it was only the professional records management unit's obligation (National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council 2004:23). The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA 2016)

has further backed up this claim by stating that all staff members are equally obligated to uphold sound records management as a group responsibility. The National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council (NECCC 2004:23) suggests that an institution's staff be equipped with the skills necessary to categorize documents in addition to the fundamentals of records administration. According to Iwhiwhi (2005:354), Momoti (2017:69) and Coetzer and Roux (2017:10-11), policies, procedure manuals, and other guiding documents should be produced as university records control mechanisms. In contrast to these authors, Kaczmarek (2006:24) contends that minimal support for records management still prevails in colleges and universities despite statutory requirements, institutional policies, ongoing or threatened legal action, and frequent news reports involving improper destruction or unauthorized release of records. Before being destroyed without following the Provincial Archives Act, bags and boxes containing information on employees of the previous Transkei and present governments, some from the 1800s and others from 2012, were retrieved in the Eastern Cape (Mgaqelwa 2015).

Records management is consistently neglected, improperly maintained, and not given attention, which results in illogical workspaces, agitated workers, and information loss (Zulkipli 2019). Iwhiwhi (2005:354) further suggests that colleges in Nigeria carry out an assessment of their records in order to popularize best practices for documents retention and disposal and create an integrated records management system that can be implemented. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) found that the majority of customary records series held by the offices were those that provided proof that the University was engaging in its primary activity of knowledge dissemination. These researchers also discovered that because UKZN lacked formal regulations and written guiding materials like procedure manuals, most staff were handling records on their own initiative and only a small number sought help from the university archivist.

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2.5 Standardised records management procedures, standards, and instruments

The development of legally acceptable data and the maintenance of its integrity for extended periods of time need the establishment of policies, procedures, and guidelines for institutions to dispose of records (NECCC 2004:23). A global federation of national standards organisations exists under the name ISO (the International Organisation for Standardization) (ISO member bodies). Typically, ISO technical committees handle the process of creating international standards (ISO 2016). ISO 15489 -1 15489 Concepts and principles from Information and Documentation - Records Management Part 1 The standard outlines the fundamental ideas and guidelines for the conception, acquisition, and administration of records (International Standard 2016).

According to ISO 15489, authoritative business evidence is developed, recorded, managed, and made available to those who need it for as long as it is needed (ISO 2016). This standard clarifies that records are information assets as well as proof of business activity. They stand out from other information assets due to their use as proof in commercial transactions and their reliance on metadata (ISO 2016). To indicate, retain context, and apply suitable rules for handling records, metadata or records are utilized (ISO 2016).

These standard states that managing records includes the following:

- As the business environment and the requirements for their management vary over time, it is important to) create and capture records to satisfy requirements for proof of business activity, and

- take the proper action to safeguard their authenticity, dependability, integrity, and usability.

Any university or organisation must have policies because they establish the goals to be achieved and the procedures for achieving them (Coetzer & Roux 2017:15).

2.6 Policies and Procedures for managing records.

Organisational information governance initiatives are supported by policies, allocated tasks, and procedures for the development, capture, and maintenance of records (ISO 15489-1:2016). A government entity should handle records in accordance with the general policy directives set forth in the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No 43 of 1996 as amended). In order to integrate its distinct processes and procedures with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Act requirements, each public institution must establish its own records management policy (National Archives and Records Service of South Africa 2016). The records management policy, according to the NARSSA, provides the structure which a public entity attests its duty to produce true and accurate documents.

Governmental organisations should create, execute, and maintain a systematic set of records management rules and processes in order to successfully manage records and information (National Electronic Council Coordinating Council 2004:22). In addition to rules, it is essential to have benchmarks and best practices identified in standards in order to achieve consistency in practice (Chinyemba and Ngulube 2005). This is of utmost importance given the contemporary environment, where employees of an organisation manage records in conjunction with paper, microform, and other forms as well as an increasing number of records that were born digitally. However, it is crucial to make sure senior management is on board with the new policy and the resulting changes to the institution's operations since they may set a good example for its implementation (IRMT 2009:59).

NECCC (2004:22) asserts that the following elements should be included in quality policies and procedures:

- Schedules for maintaining records.

- Flow charts for Organisations.

- Flowcharts of business processes.

- Classification techniques

- Techniques for storing records.

- Backup techniques.

- Information on the system.

- Plans for preventing and recovering from disasters.

- Disposition techniques.

In order to unify records management functions at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, records management control mechanisms should also be developed as a jumping-off point for procedures and techniques (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005). In addition, these authors contend that the institution ought to regularly sponsor records administration training in response to advancements in the information industry. In agreement with this assertion, IRMT recommends that all concerned employees receive immediate training as well as ongoing education and training. They also advocate providing and disseminating procedural manuals and implementation guidelines (Wamukoya & Mutula 2005). The similar issue of unmet technical training needs from the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) department was highlighted by UNISA's Records Management Division (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

Additionally, NARSSA advises that all users be familiar with the rules, practices, and resources for managing records and be trained to apply them consistently to all records (National Archives & Records Service of South Africa 2007). The University of Namibia made a key move by creating a Records Management Committee, which was formally

established as a subcommittee of the university Senate (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro & Lukileni 2014:113). According to these writers, the committee's mandate included endorsing and providing recommendations to the Senate on behalf of the institution regarding records management rules, guidelines, and tools, which resulted in their approval by the entire university. To make sure that the institution has an appropriate filing system in place, a file strategy should be created (Iwhiwhi 2005:354). This idea is supported by NARSSA (2016), which advises that in order to properly submit documents into the filing system and safeguard records from loss and damage, users must fully cooperate. There won't be any records to handle without this. According to Matangira, Tjiuoro, and Lukileni (2013:103), the University of Namibia does not have a file system in place. The Unisa File Plan conforms to the following structure:

- **Type:** System of Classification Based on Function (Functional Subject)
    - ✓ Organization in a hierarchy, from broad to specialised.
    - ✓ Function, Activity
    - ✓ Transaction Numerical, Alpha-numerical

- **Process:**
    - ✓ Information Gathering and Analysis
    - ✓ File Plan Design
    - ✓ Implementation
    - ✓ Training

- **Layout:**
    - ✓ Reference Numbers,
    - ✓ Description
    - ✓ Retention
    - ✓ and Sensitivity Classification (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

2.7 Guidelines and Tools for records management

According to Katuu (2020), the first national guidelines for South Africa were established in 2002 by the National Archives in collaboration with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and included a list of authorized software developers and applications that

was colloquially known as Tender 59. The researcher goes on to claim that the 2005 revision of the guidelines commonly referred to as Tender 398 was also produced together by SITA and NARSSA. According to Katuu (2020), no more guidelines have been released since the publication of existing ones. The NARSSA created a variety of good practice guidelines in South Africa, some of which include the following: leaflets with advice, orders directives, policies, and forms. The law's effects on things like commercial off-site storage, electronic documents, emails, public records, and records managers were clarified by the NARSSA. The NARSSA also provided recommendations for enterprise content management, managing electronic records, managing email, and managing metadata, as well as for managing electronic records management and records disposal. The methods used by Unisa's Documents Management Division to dispose of physical files and records come from a disposal inquiry that may be used to get a list of records that are due to be destroyed at a specified time in accordance with the retention schedule:

- Automatically starts a pre-defined disposal authorisation workflow

- When a user approves the review, deletion, or transfer of a document, their name is   automatically logged.

Standards and good practice guidelines (S&GPG) are the refined knowledge held by experts in their fields who are familiar with the organisations they represent, according to Katuu (2020). The definition of a standard as "a prescribed set of rules, conditions, or requirements concerning definitions of terms; classification of components; specification of materials, performance, or operations; delineation of procedures; or measurement of quantity and quality in describing materials, products, systems, services, or practices" by the National Standards Policy Advisory Committee is still relevant today as it was when it was first proposed 30 years ago (Pember 2006:21). Principles and Functional Requirements for Electronic Office Environments, often known as ICA-Req [20–22], is one of the best thoroughly harmonized recommendations that the International Council on Archives (ICA) has created and published.   In the end, the ISO adopted the standards, which are now part of the ISO16175 set of standards (Katuu 2020). Despite the fact that the concepts and principles of ISO 15489 are applicable to a variety of business and

technological environments, these situations may call for diverse strategies for implementing records controls, procedures, and systems (ISO 15489-1:2016). In order to build records controls, procedures, and systems for managing records in any context, this standard defines important concepts and provides high-level principles. The (ISO 15489 - 1:2016) emphasises the advantages of the standard that makes it possible to:

- Effective policy creation;
- educated decision-making;
- risk management for businesses are just a few examples;
- continuity in case of emergency;
- the defense of Organisations and individuals' legal rights and obligations defense and assistance in court protection and support in litigation;
- observance of laws and rules; reduction of cots through greater business efficiency;
- evidence – based research and development activities;
- an enhanced capacity to show corporate accountability, including achieving sustainability targets;
- decreasing taxes by increasing corporate efficiency.

A successful Management System for Records (MSR), as specified by the ISO 30300 series of International Standards, requires the management of records in accordance with International Standard (all sections) (ISO 15489-1:2016). The ISO (15489-1:2016) states that an MSR creates a framework with policy, objectives, and directives for records that relates record management to organisational success and accountability.

Managers and others are urged to use ISO 15489 in conjunction with the ISO 30300 series of International Standards for implementing, running, and improving an MSR (ISO 15489-1:2016).

2.8 Techniques used to enhance record-keeping.

It was suggested by Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro, and Lukileni (2014:113), Coetzer and Roux (2013:37) and Phiri (2016:272) that initiatives be put in place to increase knowledge of all university staff members' record-keeping duties. However, Chigariro and Khumalo (2018:161) proposed that in the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council of Archives (ESARBICA) region, plans be put in place for the administration of electronic documents. These academics contend that governments will invest in electronic records management that will end up being white elephants because they will be unable to produce the results they were intended to, causing records and archives staff in archival agencies to manage them in a disorganised and haphazard manner. According to Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) university archives should assert and carry out their responsibility for managing records throughout their life cycle.

The university is not immune from adhering to the nation's regulations for records management because it is a semi-autonomous entity whose actions are directed by public legislation (Coetzer & Roux 2017:15, Matangira, Katjiveri–Tjiuoro & Lukileni 2013:113). The following guidelines are established by UNISA for its Records Management Division's governance matters:

- Unisa Records Management Policy
- ISO-SANS 15489 Standard
- Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (PoPIA)
- National Archives of South Africa Act No. 43 of 1996
- Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 of 2000
- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 25 of 2002
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019).

UNISA's Records Management Division on its governance matters the following tools further guides are available to records retention:

- Companies Act

- Public Finance Management Act

- Value Added Tax Act

- Income Tax Act

- Basic Conditions of Employment Act

- Labor Relations Act

- Occupational Health Act ((More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019))

The successful implementation of enterprise records management (ERM) software for managing records, primarily for keeping research affairs, is in the opinion of Miah and Samsudin (2016:1895) of utmost importance to meet the requirements set forth by the institution. According to Katuu (2020) an institution's enterprise architecture should be able to provide prototypes that illustrate how business interactions mesh with the IT environment. Pereira (2017:107-108) emphasized that policy and practice can aid the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique in developing a comprehensive records management programme for the effective implementation of the National Archives and Records Management Act in collaboration with state agencies in Mozambique. Staff employees responsible for records administration should be encouraged to take courses on electronic records management (Phiri 2016:273). According to a study by Phiri (2018:48), certain higher education institutions in Southern Africa use their governance frameworks and other factors for record keeping setting up reliable record keeping systems that allow them to handle their records and documents efficiently. Among other things, rules and regulations, governing bodies, audit, risk, technology, public sector reforms, and workplace culture were recognized as key governance structures and other drivers for record keeping.

According to Katuu (2020), there are no quick fixes or approaches that work for everyone when implementing Enterprise Content Management (ECM) software, and no single technique or standard will be able to address all problems. Documents and other information related to an organisation's activities are organized and stored in a systematic manner called enterprise content management (ECM). The word refers to the strategies,

methods, and technologies utilized throughout the content lifecycle (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019, UNISA).   In addition, Katuu (2020) facetiously compared the installation of ECM to riding a bicycle since you will fall if you stop pedaling. In order to determine whether a system, method, or approach is effective, Mohlala (2020:21) cautioned that the evaluation process is essential. Key takeaways from the Malaysian university's development of the EDRMS application for academic users were presented by Miah and Samsudin (2016:1986). These researchers created an internal EDRMS application for academic users and used a bottom-up methodology to collect data using manual traditional methods in order to find matches with important semantic web (SW) technologies.

2.9 System for managing electronic documents and records was adopted (EDRMS)

In state institutions, the electronic document management and records management system (EDRMS) is able to provide an effective document management and records management solution (Aziz, Yusof & Mokhtar 2019:1). These academics contend that EDRMS, as an application system, supports the manual and electronic generation, usage, and preservation of documents and records to create organized workflows. Modern organisations spend a lot of money and energy on technology-based systems to help with the strategy to support company operations (Katuu 2020). While the total number of research records available from various sources is growing, Miah and Samsudin (2016:1896) issued a warning that relevant standard ERM software systems like EDRMS still suffer from unworkable alternatives for accommodating academic users' needs.   Universities and other higher education institutions struggle with a number of challenges related to keeping their academic records and pertinent digital assets (Miah & Samsudin 2016:1895). These academics went on to claim that the majority of colleges today use particular software programs for their efficient records management procedures. Many IT experts have long rejected document management and electronic document management systems (EDMS) (Romania 2008:87).

Over the past several years, the majority of large institutions have made investments in a variety of detached management technologies. It was clear that South African institutions made significant technological investments, but human resources must also be considered because technology may not be able to address all records-related challenges (Phiri 2018:50). Many institutions have failed to implement electronic records management systems, according to Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro, and Lukileni (2014: 115), simply because they rushed to buy an electronic system before normalizing the paper-based manual system and simply transferred their mess to the computer. Di Biagio and Ibiricu (2008:178) contend that putting up a corporate information policy, registering system user support, and receiving full backing from Executive Management are all necessary for an effective implementation of Enterprise Content Management. This was demonstrated at the University of South Africa, where on August 10, 2010, Principal and Vice Chancellor Professor Makhanya accepted the adoption of ECM along with his Management Committee (Mancom) (More, Johnson and Kgaladi, UNISA 2019).

According to Alshibly, Chiong and Bao (2016:296) personnel inside an Organisation will not believe in a system or project if top management leaders do not demonstrate any support for or interest in it. Di Biagio and Ibiricu (2008:178) go on to say that in order to create a high records management standard that is compatible with user practices, it is crucial that system functionality and fundamental concepts are successfully and promptly communicated. This will increase knowledge of potential future benefits and encourage the use of document and records management techniques that bridge this gap. But according to Katuu (2012:39) ECM has an advantage over its forerunners ERMS and EDMS in that it has the backing and endorsement of a professional organisation, Association of Information and Image Management (AIIM), which claims that it all encompasses strategies, systems, and procedures for managing content. The researcher also noted that reports indicate that studies in document and records management were carried out by institutions has evolved over the last few years from words like IDMS and EDMS to ECM.

According to Katuu and Kamatula (2012:39; 2018:66) ECM strategies and solutions give the institution the ability to manage unstructured material anytime it exits, and they also give end users the chance to collaborate by publishing, removing, presenting, and being active online. This claim that ECM is more focused on collaboration and information exchange is supported by Kamatula (2018:66). As a result, it enables institutions to improve their business processes and enable information retrieval, locating, and quick access Mohlala (2020:1). Few or no countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to Asogwa (2012:202) have records managers and archivists who are prepared for the management of electronic documents. According to Kamatula and Kemoni (2018:46), the government institutions and organisations should hire personnel with the necessary ICT knowledge and apply best practices for network and system administration.

According to Katuu and Ngoepe (2015:140) managing born-digital content should pay attention to content coming from other disparate information systems in corporate architecture as well. Due to the increasing growth of digital content, it was necessary to develop appropriate digital content management methods and techniques that would help institutions overcome problems with the inefficiency of information access and distribution (Mohlala 2020:2). The SANS (ISO) 15489 Records Management Standard, SANS (ISO) 23081 Metadata for Records, and SANS (ISO) 15801 Trustworthy and Reliability of Records Stored Electronically are a few standards that have received full approval from NARSSA. These standards apply to good records management (NARSSA website). According to Kaczmerek (2006:26), the University of Illinois created a new post for an archivist in response to the rising number of institutional records created in digital or electronic forms. Issues with university records with the introduction of an enterprise-wide system employing compatible software to provide integrated information systems for staff, student, and financial affairs were among the criteria that the archivist for electronic records was required to investigate.

According to a study by Phiri (2018:50), the majority of South African universities have made significant investments in technology since it enables them to efficiently organise

their recorded data. EDRMS is vital and appropriate to the situations of records users in hospitals, according to Marutha (2011:197), as it reduces the majority of problems associated with paper records management, such as misfiling, a shortage of storage space, and records sharing. This claim is supported by the UFS's significant technological investment, which has resulted in all financial, human resource, and blackboard notifications using PeopleSoft and Oracle software to manage its recorded data. According to De Mingo & Cerrillo-i-Martínez (2018:258), the existence of records management systems in the public administration makes it even more imperative that processes and procedures be distinctly defined and standardized. Asogwa (2012:203) points out that if developed policies and infrastructures are not backed by knowledgeable and skilled records and archives staff and their consistent training, the administration of electronic archives and records management in institutions may not be effective.

The metadata captured in the file classification scheme includes fields relating to the date the file was created, the date the file was closed, and the previous file reference. By ensuring that the file can be traced to other files pertaining to the same subject matter, this information helps National Archival institutions maintain the archival integrity of the file (International Records Management Trust 2009:70). The metadata that is gathered and complies with metadata standards is what the file classification system is designed to do. The National Archival System (NAS) retention schedule is further connected with this file classification scheme in the system, with information about the file's retention time and disposal schedule contained in the classification scheme.

The capacity to record retention data in IRMT (2009:70), NAS is able to evaluate records at the record creation stage thanks to the ability to record retention information in the e-registry. Additionally, IRMT advises that the e-registry facilitate search, retrieval, and record showcasing across several platforms of interfaces. These users can then search for records using the file name, file number, record profile, or record content. The system provides users with access to all linked documents included in a file or electronic folder regardless of the search interface they have chosen, as long as they have been granted

authorization to view the records, according to the IRMT. Users can engage with this system by exploring recently viewed files or by analysing the hierarchical structure of the file classification scheme, making it versatile and user-friendly. The system further restricts access to records at the file or electronic folder level (IRMT 2009:70).

Oliver's (2007:86) study at an Australian university found that although there was organisational awareness of the need to ensure that electronic records were made available throughout the organisation and that a digital object management system had been recommended as the repository, there was no indication that a need for a specific record keeping functionality had been acknowledged in the system requirements documentation. The researcher also claimed that among the workforce there looked to be little trust in organisational record keeping processes and little individual understanding of one's obligations with relation to keeping records. Asogwa (2012:203) issues a warning that the management of electronic records and archives in organisations may not be successful if the established policies and infrastructure are not supported by knowledgeable and experienced records and archives personnel, as well as the presence of appropriate and ongoing staff training.

3.9 Summary

The foundation for accountability is founded on the records, and governments everywhere are being urged to be open, transparent, and engaged with the public (Zulkipli 2021). As a result, there cannot be an accountability system without records, and there cannot be a responsible government without an accountability framework. For the integrity of the content to be protected, senior management commitment, a strategic project direction, sponsor funding, the purchase of bulk scanners, and adequate security levels must all be in place. As a result, there are various levels of permissions that can be added to a document or an object.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology is presented.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The researcher's focus in this chapter was on the research techniques the researcher used in exploring a university records management program in South Africa, using the case of University of the Free State (UFS). Methodology is defined as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and application of the methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty 2003:3). Research technique, as defined by Gounder (2012), refers to the processes researchers use to approach their work of describing, explaining, and forecasting occurrences. The study methodology, research paradigms, population, sampling, data collection techniques and tools was covered in this chapter. According to Ngulube (2015), methodology is crucial to the research process since it serves as a basic microscope that a researcher stares at before deciding and equipping themselves with knowledge about a subject getting information on a social phenomenon. When knowledge, values, theory and practice on a particular subject are combined with an understanding of the nature of reality, methodology emerges (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:3). The phrases "research methods" and "research methodology" are sometimes used interchangeably (Gounder 2012:10). In addition, Gounder (2012) further states that the main distinction between the two is that research methodology describes how you can carry out your study, whilst research techniques describe how you conduct research into a subject or issue.

3.2 Research approach

Research approaches are methods and strategies for research that extend across the steps from wide supposition to plans of data collection, analysis, and explanation (Creswell 2014:31). According to Gounder (2012:5), when conducting research, one needs to consider the following:

• Is the research being carried out within the parameters of a collection of ideologies (research methodologies).

- Employs methodologies, methods and processes that have been examined for their reliability and validity.

- Is intended to be impartial and neutral.

The questions posed, the plans used, the statistical analysis used, the inferences made, and the goal of the research are all impacted by the research approach used (Bryan 2004:36). Three widely employed advanced research methodologies are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell 2014:32). Qualitative phenomena affecting quality are the focus of qualitative research (Gounder 2012:9). The use of words (qualitative) as opposed to figures (quantitative), or the use of closed-ended questions (quantitative hypothesis) as opposed to open-ended questions are how qualitative and quantitative research differ from one another. While a mixed method combines aspects of qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell 2014; Gounder 2012). A series of interpretive material acts that make the world visible make up the situated activity of qualitative research, which situates the observer in the world (Creswell and Poth 2018). In addition, the universe becomes a collection of representations because of various sets of interpretative practices, which also include recording, fieldnotes, memos to oneself, interviews, and dialogues. Qualitative research relies on the researcher's own observations and descriptions. It is subjective, descriptive, and devoid of facts (Gounder 2012).

Holloway and Wheeler (2002:30) define qualitative research as "a style of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the way they live." The goal of qualitative research is to methodically characterise a scenario, problem, phenomena, service or program. It may also provide information on, for example, community living circumstances or attitudes towards a problem (Gounder 2012). This study used a qualitative research methodology that included arising questions and methods, data collection typically took place in the participant's natural environment, data analysis that built from the participant to a general topic and the researcher's creation of interpretation of the data's meaning (Creswell 2014; Creswell and Poth 2018). To do this, the researcher learnt more about the staff members involved in building a university

records management program in South Africa through the use of a qualitative study design.

To conduct qualitative research, one must immerse themselves in a scenario and attempt to understand it, whether at a business meeting, a community event, or during an interview, whether in a work setting, a public gathering, or an interview (Tracy 2013). Additionally, qualitative researchers deliberately observe and take note of minor clues to determine how to behave, as well as to make sense of the context and develop more general knowledge claims about the culture. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), to explore research problems that address the meaning people or groups attribute to a social or human problem, qualitative research first assumes and uses interpretative/theoretical frameworks. In addition, Creswell and Poth (2018) recommend qualitative researchers to investigate this issue using an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, data collection in a natural setting sensitive to the people and locations being studied, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and identifies patterns or themes. The researcher was interested in learning how people interpreted their experiences, lives, and worldviews (Creswell 1994:145). The offices of the participants served as the researcher's natural setting, according to qualitative researchers who frequently gather data in the field at the location where participants experience the subject under study.

3.3 Interpretive Research Frameworks and Associated Philosophical Beliefs underpinning the study

To comprehend reality, acquire knowledge and learn about the world, paradigms are used (Tracy 2013). Furthermore, a researcher's paradigm might vary depending on ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), axiology (the value attached to fields of study and theorising), or technique (strategies for gathering, collecting, and analysing data). Whereas (Willis; 2007; Tracey 2013) contend that a paradigm is an all-encompassing belief system, point of view, or framework that directs investigation and application in a particular discipline. A research paradigm is a set of fundamental beliefs and acceptances that guide a researcher's actions and their interpretation of the universe as a system of reason (Babbie 2014:31; Wahyuni 2012:69; Mukwevho 2017:86; Creswell 2009). As opposed to Chilisa and Kawulich (2012) who

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see a paradigm as a way to describe an earth view that is based on philosophical presumptions about the nature of social reality (known as ontology). What we believe about the nature of reality is called ontology (Willis 2007:9). Axiology, or what we accept as true, is the study of ethics and value systems that are related to our acceptance of what we know, or what is known as epistemology (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:1). Since different people have varied opinions on these issues, it is essential for the researcher to comprehend the main reasons and points of view that make up the paradigms (Tracey 2013:38).

The nature of knowledge and truth are questioned by epistemology (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:1). Punch (2014) asserts that paradigms have both an ontological (concerning knowledge of the real world) and a blueprint dimension (concerned with procedures for building knowledge of reality). Thomas Kuhn was the first to use the term "paradigm" in 1962 to refer to a shared substructure that provided a group of scientists with an appropriate model to test hypotheses and identify solutions (Thomas 2009:292). Four well-known worldviews or perspectives that researchers bring to the discussion are as follows:

- Post positivist
- Constructivist
- Transformative and
- Pragmatic (Creswell 2014:35).

While Tracey (2013:39) adheres to the following four paradigms:

- Positivist and post-positivist
- Interpretive
- Critical
- Postmodern / poststructuralist

According to Creswell and Poth (2018:5) paradigm interpretative frameworks may be postpositivism, social constructivism, transformation, and postmodern. For this study, a constructivist and interpretive research paradigms was adopted which was informed by

the qualitative approach that was relevant for this study (Creswell 2007:66). Interpretive paradigm is considered as constructivist, naturalist, humanistic, and anti-positivist which emerged in contradistinction to positivism for the understanding and interpretation of human and social reality (Shah and Al-Bargi 2013:254). The author further posits that since research is guided by the researcher's desire to understand social reality, all is interpretive. Constructivist acknowledges that reality is complex and multifaceted. Interpretive research offers a perspective on a situation and analyse it in order to get insight into how a certain group of people makes sense of their circumstance (Shah and Al-Bargi 2013:254). This study employed a qualitative research approach to involve arising inquiries and methods, data generally collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from participants to general topic, and the researcher creating interpretation of the meaning of data (Creswell 2014). The researcher was keen in understanding how people made sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world (Creswell 1994:145).

3.4 Research design

Research design truly involves theoretical, methodological, and ethical concerns that define both the design and the goals of the research, going much beyond just choosing the procedures that will be used to collect data (Collins & Stockton 2018:4). According to Marshall and Rossman (2016:215), selecting the environment, place, population, or phenomenon of interest is crucial to the design of the study and acts as a direction for the researcher. Due to the study's relatively small scope, the researcher was able to collect all pertinent situations, events, or individuals thoroughly and intensively (Marshall and Rossman 2016:215). As depending on one source of data was often insufficient to generate this in-depth understanding, the researcher independently gathered and combined a variety of data types through document analysis and participant interviews. There are a bewildering total of five consistent methodologies available to qualitative researchers conducting qualitative research, including ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case studies (Creswell and Poth 2018).

Using a case study of the University of the Free State as the qualitative research method, the researcher was able to analyse a current phenomenon (the case) in its actual setting,

even though the distinction between the "case" and setting may not be obvious (Yin 2014). According to Willis (2007:240), the phrase "case study" encompasses such a wide range of research methodologies that describing a comprehensive framework is challenging. Case studies are an approach to study, particularly around assessment, where the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of a case, frequently a program, event, process, or a person or people (Creswell 2014:42; Willis 2007:239; Tracy 2020:61). Case study research, according to Yin (2014), is a qualitative design in which the researcher investigates a real-world, contemporary bounded system (a case) or many bounded systems (cases). Case studies have several benefits, but perhaps the most important one is the ability to include different viewpoints, data collection methods, and interpretive techniques (Marshall and Rossman 2016:69).

Cover time through thorough data gathering from a variety of informational sources (such as observations, interviews, audio-visual material, papers, and reports), and then present a case description and case-related themes (Creswell and Poth 2018). Case studies are naturalistic because they are about real people and situations, and a large portion of the data collection takes place in real environments. They are particularistic because they focus on a specific context, such as one person, a family, an office, a company, a classroom, or an apartment building Willis (2007). The case study was used by the researcher to better understand the UFS situation and determined how excellent records management practices could improve good governance and ensured compliance with legal requirements for records and information management. In this study, the researcher's goal was to comprehend the records management methods within the UFS. Case study research has a long, illustrious history across numerous fields (Creswell and Poth 2018). To shed light on the subject at hand, case study researchers employ a number of data gathering instruments or procedures, such as interviews, participant observation, surveys, and analytic approaches including dense description, narrative discourse, process tracing, and grounded theory (Tracy 2020:62). Examining these issues in relation to case-based research is what makes up case study methodology (Denzin and Lincoln 2018:600).

The chosen single case study proved to be efficient, appropriate, and rational for the in-depth understanding of the "case." The researcher was also driven by the benefits of qualitative research, such as the fact that he was a full-time worker with a rigorous schedule and did not have the luxury of spending all day in the offices of participants as he worked in management. Second, qualitative research is great for examining settings that personally intrigue you but about which you have never had a "legitimate" reason to inquire (Tracy 2013:5). Third, qualitative data offer insight on cultural practices that could otherwise be ignored in formal surveys or experiments, in addition to personal curiosity or disciplined voyeurism. Fourth, qualitative research can highlight important concerns that can afterwards be investigated using more organized techniques (Tracy 2013:5). Fifth, qualitative research is incredibly effective at uncovering implicit, intuitive understandings of a society (Tracy 2013:5). To empower people to tell their stories, hear their voices, and reduce the power dynamics that frequently exist between a researcher and study participants, researchers perform qualitative research (Creswell and Poth 2018). While case studies are mostly ignored by postpositivist save as a source of inspiration for "real" research, both critical and interpretative researchers frequently employ the case study approach (Wills 2007:239). Due to its many benefits, including those listed below, the researcher employed the case study design as an interpretative researcher. It allowed the researcher to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting:

- Because it takes a holistic approach, it bolsters the notion that much of what we can learn about human behavior is best understood through lived experience in the context of society.
- It can be conducted without a present hypothesis and goals, unlike experimental research (Willis 2007:240).

3.5 Population

 A population is typically a collection of pieces or cases that meet certain characteristics and from which we hope to extrapolate study findings. A population is essentially the universe of fragments from which the sample is to be drawn, according to Bryman (2012:187). To ensure effective and efficient operations that relied on an evidence-based

decision-making process, the study intended to assess how the UFS was managing its records by collecting comments, views, insights, and replies from university staff members. Employees of the UFS, including the University Registrar staff, Departments and Colleges, Support Workers (Student Housing and Residential Services, Marketing and Communication and Protection Service), Library and Information Services staff, made up the population. This helped in getting different viewpoints from other jobs held inside the university and their backgrounds. When a specific population is the subject of the study, the researcher should outline a plan for sampling that community (Marshall and Rossman 2016:219). The total population for this study was 11 participants who were all employees of the UFS. The researcher selected only the main campus staff members of Bloemfontein and omitted the South and QwaQwa campuses because all transactions were approved by main campus. The sample size in qualitative research is not only to investigate a few sites or individuals but also to collect extensive detail about each site or individual investigated (Creswell and Poth 2018).

3.6 Sample

A sample is a portion of the population that has been selected for study; it is a segment of the population (Bryman 2012:187; Leedy & Ormrod 2013:206; Bless; Smith & Sithole 2013:165; Kumar 2011:193). A sampling plan, in contrast, is described by Tracy (2013:134) as the strategy for specifically selecting sources for your data. Following the initial choice to concentrate on a particular site, population, or phenomena, successive sample choices are made in waves (Marshall and Rossman 2016:222). This is due to the fact that how the sample was chosen has a significant impact on how accurate the researcher's results are (Kumar 2011:25). Purposive sampling refers to the deliberate selection of the instances (or sample) in qualitative research (Kim 2016:95). The absolute best qualitative researchers least, use intentional sampling, which is selecting data on purpose to match the project's study objectives, aims, and specifications (Tracy 2013:134). The intention or aim of choosing these cases is to have those that will produce the most pertinent and abundant data, or information rich given your study topic (Kim 2016:95).

Therefore, the researcher used purposeful sampling in this study (Creswell 2007:125; 2014:239). A researcher should be aware of the range of the potential population and its variability before selecting a sample based on all pertinent criteria (Marshall and Rossman 2016:220). The researcher chose a sample to accomplish two main sampling goals: avoiding bias in sample selection and achieving the highest degree of precision with the available resources (Kumar 2011:25). The method used to choose the researcher's sample has a significant impact on how accurate the results are (Kumar 2011:25). Specifically, the University Registrar's staff members, Departments and Colleges staff, Support staff (Student Housing and Residence Services, Protection Service and Marketing and Communication), and Library and Information Services staff were selected as a purposeful sample from the community of UFS employees for this study. The UFS institution was used as a case study in this study since sample size in qualitative research depends on a variety of intricate criteria (Marshall and Rossman 2016:219). The selected participants had stories to tell about their lived experiences pertaining to record keeping practices within the UFS and had purposefully informed an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon being investigated (Creswell and Poth 2018).

3.6.1 Recruitment of participants

Additionally, a lot of qualitative research only use interviews. How should you recruit under such circumstances? (Tracy 2020:108). When it comes to time for interviews, researchers must first identify subjects who are open to speaking with them. In other words, access requires more than just receiving permission from an organisational gatekeeper: researchers need to identify people who are willing to provide their time and stories, and they must also make accommodations for participants, rules, and time constraints (Tracy 2020:116). The number of participants that were recruited for this study was 11 UFS staff members. This necessitated developing resilience and adaptability. One of the first things the researcher did think about his research area to choose the inclusion criteria. Interviewed candidates met the following requirements:

- to have a senior position that serves as a gatekeeper;
- to work with data, records, and information and

- to perform administrative tasks.

The goal of the research was to learn from members of management, administrative staff members and Academics (Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Managers Practitioners and Lecturers) their perspectives on the implementation of an extensive records management program for the UFS. The researcher made use of the Research Office to recruit participants. The researcher liaised with the Research Office and kindly requested them to cascade the information of the study and details to prospective/targeted participants especially to staff members in the selected departments. The researcher was fully aware of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) and was not getting anyone's details. However, emails were circulated to the various departments pertaining the study through the Research Office. The researcher's details were then forwarded and those interested to voluntary participate in the study contacted the researcher where the researcher then recruited the participants based on the criteria of the targeted participants. The researcher believed it was crucial to hear the perspectives of administrative workers, even though other senior and junior staff members were also interviewed from the administration of record. Eleven people who fitted the researcher's criteria were what the researcher hoped to find (Tracy 2020:109).

3.7 Research instruments

Data collection is required in empirical research. The researcher might first enquire as to whether they are aware of what data are to appropriately gather qualitative information. An initial finding is that the term data can be both singular and plural (Yin 2016:137). The author goes on to say that although most academics might prefer the plural form, both usages are appropriate. A strong qualitative sampling approach, designing tools for recording data, anticipating ethical concerns associated with obtaining permits, addressing problems when they arise in the field, and securely storing data are all necessary for data gathering (Creswell and Poth 2018). According to Kumar (2011:162), qualitative research does not use predetermined tools. Instead, extensive interviewing is both a means of data collecting and a study design in qualitative research, with many people developing interview guides as a research method that is used to obtain data. Four techniques are frequently used by qualitative researchers to collect information:

- Participating in the situation;

- Directly observing;

- Thorough interviewing and

- Focusing variously on document and material culture analysis (Marshall and Bossman 2016:276).

As a tool for gathering data, the researcher employed an interview guide that he created utilising open-ended questions. Instead of depending solely on one data source, the researcher chose to use a variety of data collection techniques, including conducting interviews and document analysis. The interview guide often includes a tiny fraction of key words on a little piece of paper that are tailored to the subjects deemed to be immediately pertinent to a particular interview (Yin 2018 147). The interview guide was not construed in any way as a questionnaire, but rather, each important word was followed by a few brief probes and words reflecting follow-up queries. The guide was simply serving as a list of reminders; it did not contain a list of the questions that were asked aloud to participants. Data for a case study is gathered via interviews, field notes, and personal observations in addition to other interpretive methods if they are internal or external (Mojapelo 2017:59). This study aimed to be robust and dependable in that it used a variety of data collection techniques, including comprehensive interviewing, information gathering from secondary sources, and data gathering from UFS personnel (Kumar 011:127).
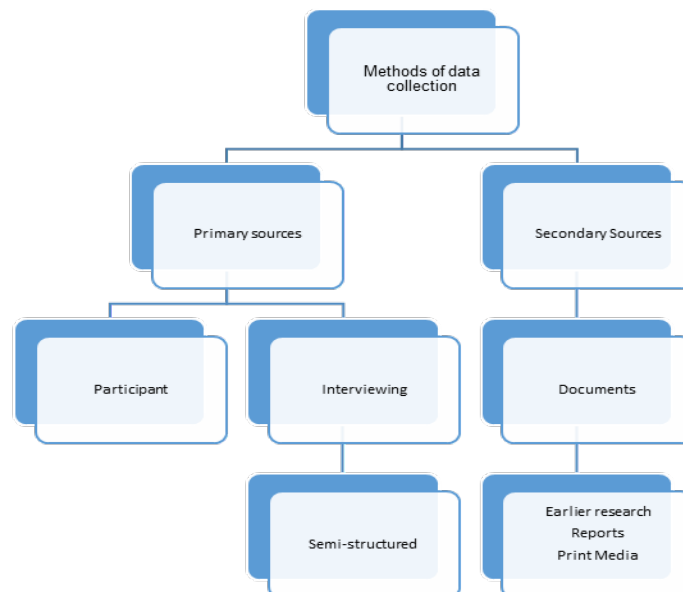
Figure 1.3 Depicting the researcher's chosen variety of data collection techniques, including comprehensive interviewing, information gathering from secondary sources, and data gathering from UFS personnel (Kumar 2011:127).

Information regarding a scenario, person, problem, or event that is gathered using the first strategy is said to have been obtained from primary sources, whereas the sources used in the second approach are referred to as secondary sources (Kumar 2011:139).

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interview is one of the most important sources of case study evidence (Yin 2014). Conversations having a purpose, interviews can be structured in a variety of ways depending on their goal (Tracy 2020:156). Perhaps because they directly elicit the thoughts of the people we want to examine, interviews are the most popular form of data gathering in qualitative research investigations (Saldana, 2011). According to Yin (2016:140), interviews can take a variety of forms, however for the sake of simplicity, the researcher may consider all forms to fall into one of two types, (i.e., structured, and semi-structured interviews). In-depth interviews are a mainstay of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman 2016:285). Qualitative interviews clarify subjectively lived experiences and opinions from the respondents' perspective and offer chances for mutual discovery, knowledge, reflection, and explanation through a path that is organic, adaptive and frequently energising (Tracey 2020:156). Tracy (2020:157) claims that while some interviews are loosely structured, ordered, and planned, others are free-flowing, spontaneous, and meandering. Interview schedules are frequently used in structured interviews. For this study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview because it was more adaptable and natural in nature, allowing the researcher to schedule it for a specified period (Tracy 2020:159). In an effort to comprehend the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world, the researcher used the semi-structured interview approach to carefully script the interaction between himself and the participants, (i.e., the registrar's staff members, Staff members in the departments and colleges, support staff at the following departments Marketing and

Communication, Protection services and Library staff) (Creswell and Poth 2018). Instead of taking place over a long period of time or in numerous sittings, the researcher used briefer case study interviews, many of which only lasted an hour or so (Yin 2014).

The data produced by the participants in the semi-structured interview was rich, extensive, detailed, and contextual, which was one of its advantages. Additionally, in-depth interviews gave the interviewer the chance to obtain more information and depth, as well as clarification on any potential ambiguities. Comparatively to structured interviews, the conversational style of qualitative interviews offers the chance for two-way interactions in which a participant may ask the researcher about a broad topic (Yin 2016:142). Because of this, questioning rarely takes place within a formal interview, apart from thereafter.

3.7.2 Field Notes

In addition to seeing and conducting interviews, field notes are frequently obtained from documents and materials that are readily available (Yin 2016:168). The study also made use of qualitative field notes taken before, during, and after interviews. For these materials, note-taking was done in a manner like that used for interview notes by the researcher, with the emphasis once more being placed on writing down the precise words and phrases. No matter your research position or setting, fieldwork involves carefully documenting and interpreting data using fieldnotes, the textual and visual format for subsequent research reports (Tracy 2020:17). Qualitative field notes taken during and after interviews were also used in the study. Field notes are written "in" the field (Sanjek 1990:64). As stated by Saldana (2011) live observation or an on-location video recording can be used to create field notes. By actively and rationally recounting, synthesizing, and interpreting activities and behaviors in the field, fieldnotes offer creative representations of the data obtained. Keeping qualitative field notes improves data and gives analysis a rich context (Creswell 2013). Fieldnotes are the tangible depiction of the filed-work event, and they eventually grow to be associated with the actors and events of the scene (Tracy 2013:116). Marking the seating arrangements, assigning numbers to each place, and

creating sketches that helped the researcher to comprehend himself afterwards were quick ways to document this situation (Yin 2016:173). Even years after the initial field visit, rich, thick, and thorough fieldnotes allow the researcher to revisit those interactions and re-enter the milieu. Tracy (2013:117) recommends scheduling time to write up raw records, preferably within 36 hours of the field visit, to ensure that the researcher writes high-quality fieldnotes. This is crucial since raw records' codes, snippets, and shorthand lose their meaning after more than a day and a half (Tracy 2013:117). The researcher next began expanding on the field notes as quickly as feasible following each field encounter or interview (Yin 2016:174).

3.7.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Data management, description, interpretation, and assessment are all included in the term "data analysis." Data analysis, the process of making meaning of the unprocessed data produced throughout the research, is required for this. The study findings were presented in thematic form based on topics that regularly recurred in the data gathered from the interviews and were analysed using thematic content analysis. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), thematic analysis is a process in which newly emerging themes are categorized, related, and used as a guide for writing up the study findings. Projectivity is impossible since data analysis deals with a sample size and is therefore subjective (Gounder 2012:22). Data coding and categorization was done in a systematic and exacting manner as part of the data analysis process. The researcher recorded the meanings, experiences, or events that formed the participant's sense of the social world and how individuals interacted with one another using this type of analysis, making it appropriate for this study. Multiple realities about stakeholders' perceptions of decolonization were developed through the analytical and methodical categorization.

3.8 Reliability and Validity of the Data collection tools

When developing and evaluating technologies for data collection, researchers' main scientific considerations are reliability and validity (Babbie & Mouton 2001:119). While qualitative reliability mandates that the researcher's methodology be consistent across several projects, qualitative validity requires that the researcher examine the accuracy of

the findings using a specific procedure (Creswell 2014:251). Leedy and Ormrod (2013: 91; Bryman (2012: 169). Validity requires reliability as a prerequisite, according to Ngulube (2003:203). While a dependable instrument always operates in the same manner, reliability refers to the stability and consistency of a researcher, research tool, or approach throughout time (Tracy 2016:228). Although there are several definitions and standards for trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the most well-known. Determining the procedures that were taken to ensure credibility for the current study was crucial.

The use of triangulation promoted reliability. First, methodologically, by conducting in-depth interviews with a large number of people and utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. The researcher's role was to provide a "rich description" of the study's participants and methodology to allow the reader an opportunity to decide whether or not the researcher's conclusions were generalizable to other contexts. Consistency is a sign of dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) the choice of a study design and the elaboration of research questions. The research tool (interview guide) was pre-tested in accordance. Participants' information was recorded, subscribed to, and safe-guarded. The following validity strategy were employed by the researcher, per Creswell's (2014:251) advice comparing information from various sources, determining its veracity, and using the evidence to support themes logically; by returning the final report, a specific description, or a theme to participants and asking them if they agreed with it, an employed member checked the accuracy of the qualitative findings; clarification of the researcher's prejudice in the study; good qualitative research included comments from researchers about how their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin, will frame their understanding of the findings. This was accomplished by delivering unfavorable or contradictory information that also run opposite to the themes. Spending a lot of time in the field allowed the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied and to convey information about the site and the people that gave credibility to the narrative account.

However, because most evidence was used to support the theme, the researcher also presented information that was contrary to the theme's general perspective (Creswell

2014:252). The researcher spent a lot of time in the field; by doing so, the researcher gained a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied and was able to provide information about the location and the participants gave the narrative account credibility. The more experience a researcher has working with participants in their environments, the more accurate or valid the findings will be (Creswell 2014:252). Dependability was accounted for by the careful attention given to the formulation of research questions, choice of research design, ethical issues, and data collection methods. Each decision was justified considering the study's objectives. Accuracy and objectivity were dealt with via confirmability. It was the researcher's responsibility to prove, through confirmability, that the information and interpretations of the results were obtained from facts and not from his own imagination.

3.9 Ethics

Ethics are more than a collection of abstract guidelines or guiding principles that serve as the overarching force directing our study; rather, they are a fundamental component of rigorous research (Marshall and Rossman 2016:130). Researchers must think about potential ethical difficulties that may arise throughout the design and planning stages of a qualitative study and determine how to resolve these issues (Creswell and Poth 2018). The researcher will need to uphold one important personal quality throughout their whole career, much less when doing any research study: they will need to bring a strong sense of ethics to the research (Yin 2016:41). The author also makes the argument that adhering to standards of ethics is a question of scientific integrity. In addition, as in other fields, Yin (2016:44) advises that difficult research does not necessitate taking an oath; rather, people must be able to tell from your actions, demeanor, and research methods that you are making an effort to produce research that is fruitful, including clarifying the point of view being presented. The moral ideals of respect for people, goodness, and fairness serve as the foundation for ethical research practice in any inquiry effort (Marshall and Rossman 2016:132). The researcher adhered to procedural ethics, which are moral behaviors that institutional review bodies specify as obligatory or universal, including:

- do not harm;

- get informed consent;

- avoid fraud and

- protect privacy and confidentiality (Tracy 2013:243).

By avoiding bias, providing, or withholding a therapy, the researcher made sure that ethical considerations were identified (Creswell 2014:135; Kumar 2011:246). Respect for someone's willingness to engage must be founded entirely on their own volition and a thorough understanding of all the details. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), respect for people includes how people and their data are handled during the research process. As a result, we must take steps to protect participants' privacy and make sure that the consent process is transparent, including their right to withdraw from the study. These authors also caution that a concern for participant wellbeing requires researchers to provide proper participant protection, which necessitates the need for proof that we do not put people at risk. Justice relates to the requirement to treat everyone fairly and equitably, and as a result, we must carefully analyse recruitment, justifications for sampling methodologies, site selection, and the factors that should be taken into account when choosing a location (Creswell and Poth 2018).

The preservation of the subjects' identity is the primary concern when ensuring the welfare and interests of the subjects, particularly in survey research, which the researcher adheres to while asking informants to participate in the survey (Babbie 2013:35). The study abided by the University of South Africa's (2016) policy on research ethics, which includes in accordance with other guiding principles, it is necessary to "respect the autonomy, rights, and dignity of research participants, promote beneficence, prevent harm to research participants in particular or to people, and non-maleficence, as well as defend justice." The researcher applied for ethical clearance approved by the University of South Africa's College of Human Science Research Ethics Review Committee to the UFS gatekeepers' research development section and abided with the rules.

Privacy and the right to partake in the research study

If a researcher tells a story about an "elderly boss who stole from the company," participants might be able to identify the identity of the researcher quickly if there is only one "elderly" boss. Researchers should carefully consider how certain actors might be identified even if their name is a pseudonym (Tracy 2013:243). Participants were notified of their right to privacy and the opportunity to opt out of the study, and the researcher did not force them to divulge anything with which they are uncomfortable.

Informed consent

The phrase "procedural ethics" also applies to consent; frequently, insufficient consent yields subpar data. Respondents will try to defend themselves if their relationship with the researcher is tense or exclusive (Tracey 2013:243). Although establishing and sustaining trust with participants is important, they must also be aware of the voluntary nature of their participation and be aware of how to withdraw. The researcher gave each participant a brief explanation of the study's objectives before to the first interview. Before performing a study on-site, researchers must obtain permission and describe to gatekeepers or other authority figures how their research would create the fewest disruptions to the site's activity (Creswell and Poth 2018). The gatekeepers were requested to grant the researcher's request after UNISA supplied an ethics certificate research ethics committee at UFS. So that participants were not misinformed about the purpose of the study and how it was carried out (e.g., through interviews, documents, and so forth), participants were made aware of the investigation's overall structure (Creswell and Poth 2018).

Confidentiality

Additionally, participants have a right to privacy. Researchers should secure research data (for instance, by keeping it in closed offices or on password-protected websites) in order to protect participant identification and privacy (Tracy 2013:243). The researcher secured and protected the data collected from the individuals with a strong password in my computer on the cloud.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a step-by-step breakdown of the study's methodology. The inclusion of a case study in the qualitative research design allowed the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of how to set up a records management programme. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and document analysis.

The research results and findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented findings on establishing a university records management programme drawn from the data collected from eleven staff members at the University of the Free State (UFS). Staff members were drawn from different Faculties and Departments including Economic and Management Sciences, Humanities, Education, Housing and Student Residents Affairs, Library and Information Services, Communication and Marketing, Protection Services, Student Academic Record and Transcript Administration and Office of the Registrar. This chapter aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the University of the Free State manage its records?
2. What records management practices can be recommended at the UFS?

Findings are presented based on the themes that the researcher identified from analysing the data analysis.The researcher presents data through direct quotes from the participants because of their richness and responsiveness to shared views with regards to university records management program establishment.

This chapter began with a synopsis profile of the interviewees (pseudonyms) and then it discussed staff members understanding of recording management.

4.2 Introducing the participants

While each participating staff member's experience was distinct, it also distinguished that of other staff members in different ways. All the staff members were in the employment of the university for two years and more and were permanent employees. All the staff members had tertial qualifications and were working directly with records of the university. Each staff member's profile is provided below followed by a table with each staff member given a specific pseudo name.

Siphokazi is a 27- year – old, black female Senior practitioner the Student Housing and Residence Affairs, working with student accommodation in the university. She has been in the institution for five years.

Puleng is a 49 – year – old black female and is part of management in the Protection Services, working records at the office of the Senior Director Protection Services. She has been in the employ of the institution for the past eleven years.

Quintin is a 36- year – old white male and is a lecturer in the Department of History under the Faculty Human Sciences and is working with student records. He has been in the employment of the institution since 2020.

Fix is a 52-year-old black male and is part of management in the Library and Information Service Department deals with supplier's records for library information resources. He has been employed in the institution for since the past eleven years and reports to the Director Library and Information Services.

Thobile is a 35-year-old black male lecturer in the Department of Economic and Management Sciences deals with student assignments and test scripts records. He has been employed since 2020 and is reporting to the Senior Lecture Accounting Services Department.

Brenda is a 50-year-old white female and is also part of management in the Department of Library and Information Services and is responsible for student's and supplier's records. He has been in the employ of the UFS for twenty-two years and reports to the Director Library and Information Services Department.

Sam is a 50-year-old black male who is a Chief practitioner in the Department of Library and Information Services and is responsible managing patron's records in training of library users. He has been in the employ of the institution for the past twenty-six years and reports to the Deputy Director Library and Information Services.

Herman is a 49-year-old black male and is also part of management in the Office of the Registrar responsible for Records Management Division in the institution. He reports to

the Deputy Registrar: Governance Top Management and has been in the employ of the UFS since 2020.

Ashia is a 31-year-old black female practitioner in the Faculty of Education and is responsible for administering Honours student records and the general rules of the institution. She has been in the employment of the UFS for the past four years and reports to the Dean of Education.

Celine is a 55-year-old white female and is also part of management in the Department of Academic Record and Transcripts Administration in the UFS. She has been employed by the institution for the past twenty-five years and is responsible for the management of student academic records, examination scripts administering qualifications of students. She reports to the Deputy Registrar: Student Academic Services.

Sikho is a 44-year-old black male practitioner in the Department of Communication and Marketing in the institution and is responsible for the financial transactional records from the service suppliers. He has been in the employ of the UFS for the past two years and reports to the Assistant Director: Communication and Marketing.

4.2.1 Participant Profiles

Table 2: Showing the demographics of the participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	Years of service	Rank	Department	Race
Siphokazi	Female	27	5 years	Senior Practitioner	Student Housing and Residence	Black
Puleng	Female	49	11 years	Part of Management	Protection Services	Black
Quintin	Male	36	3 years	Lecturer	History	White
Fix	Male	52	11 years	Middle Manager	Libraries	Black
Thobile	Male	35	2 years	Lecturer	Accounting	Black

Brenda	Female	50	22 years	Part of Management	Libraries	White
Sam	Male	50	26 years	Chief Practitioner	Libraries	Black
Herman	Male	49	3 years	Part of Management	Top Management Registrar's office	Black
Ashia	Female	31	4 years	Practitioner	Dean's Office Education	White
Celine	Female	55	25 years	Middle Manager	Academic Record and Transcript Administration	White
Sikho	Male	44	2 years	Practitioner	Marketing and Branding	Black

4.2.2 Staff members' understanding of record-keeping practices

This section presented and analysed data on the UFS staff members' understanding of records management and record-keeping practices. As a result, this section focused on the primary knowledge of record keeping practices. Staff members' understandings of the best practice of records management and what it meant. Furthermore, immediately after staff members' understanding of records keeping processes the researcher went on to discuss their responses on the management of university records. The targeted participants in this study had diverse designations and roles, they had similar attributes as they were all managing and creating records in their operational activities. In understanding records keeping best practice of the staff members of the UFS, the researcher coded themes and divided them into sub-themes based on the research questions of the research study:

- Managing university records;
- Best Practice in managing records and
- Preventive measures for records.

4.3 Managing university records

While requested by the researcher to indicate whether the university has any policy for records management in the UFS, most of the participants indicated that there was no Records Management Policy. Policies play a crucial role in any university or organisation since they link out the targets to be attained as well as guidelines for implementing them (Coetzer & Roux 2017:15).

4.3.1 Policy

State institutions are required to develop a policy that regulates records management activities and officials are then compelled by the policy to practice proper records management (Ngoepe and van der Walt 2010:93). Scholars such as Ngoepe and van der Walt (2010:93) opined that for the policy to be effective, it must be endorsed by the head of the state institution as well as the top governance structure and should be communicated and implemented throughout the institution. Only three participants out of eleven participants indicated the knowledge of the presence of the records management policy, two were staff members from the Office of the Registrar (part of management) whereas one was from the Library & Information service department (Chief practitioner). However, all the other participants indicated that they did not know the existence of the records management policy in the university, but highlighted understanding of how to manage their records using best practice and their own initiatives. In the absence of an established policy environment and without written procedures to guide development, the participants were asked how practices and procedures for records management were developed in their offices.

One participant, a lecturer at the department of History indicated that there was no policy in place for the management of records that he was aware of, however his department has internal rules to manage its records. He noted:

Not familiar, but there was a departmental review every five years, the report of what has happened in the last years, we could not get all the information of the past five years and we relied on our own computers. A policy in the department

where every lecture is sent to the Departmental administrator. We created our own policy to store our own information and records, but I believe there is one the University may have somewhere but I am not aware of it (Eugene, white, male, History Department).

Eugene's views were that there may have been a records management policy available for the UFS, but he had not seen it or being made aware of it. However, this could also be contrary to the assertion by Herman a staff member responsible for records management that he rolled out an awareness campaign to the UFS staff members on the RM Policy. Records management policy provides the framework through which a public institution attests its obligation to create authentic and reliable records. To be able to successfully manage records and information, governmental bodies should develop, implement, and maintain a systematic set of records management policies and procedures (National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council 2004:22). Furthermore, to policies, there is a necessity to have standards available which identify best practices and benchmarks to attain consistency in practice (Chinyemba and Ngulube 2005). This is of paramount importance taking into consideration the current environment in which an organisation's employees are no longer managing paper-based records alone, but also the escalation of records born digital in concurrence with paper, microform, and other formats. As institutions of higher learning conduct their core business, which is teaching, consultancy, innovation research and services to the community, the institutions create and use various records in physical and electronic formats (Annie, Chisuta, Mbutoana and Rita 2018:1).

One participant, Herman, part of management and responsible for Records Management Division (Office of the Registrar), indicated that there was an approved policy in place and that training was conducted through workshops for staff members of the university. He noted:

Yes, Records Management Policy has been approved in 2021, we ensured that we comply with the instruction received from the Information Regulator that all Institutions of Higher learning need to have a Records Management Policy that governs the management of records. In short, we do have a policy for the

management of the university records (Herman black, male from Records Management Division).

The researcher wanted to gain insight as to whether there is any policy for records management in the UFS. The results indicated that out of eleven participants only three indicated that they were aware of the records management policy existing in the university, two participants indicated no knowledge of the existence of the policy whereas, six participants indicated that there was no records management policy, but demonstrated knowledge of how records should be managed even retention periods.

Likewise, another staff member who was also part of the Registrar's Office part of management and was responsible for managing student academic records and administering transcripts observed:

There is Records Management Policy falls under, it does not fall part of my responsibility, it falls under student records there is two parts, i.e. Student Records which falls under me most records are student academic transcripts from the Faculties or another Department and the person that deals with the physical records on how we store it and how we scan it or if it is data that is not sitting on Campus Solutions is a software we use for student administration is Mr. Herman (part of management) who is responsible and I know they were busy developing a records management policy and I know they drafted one last time I checked it was under review I have not seen it yet (Celine, white, female, part of management at the Department of Student Academic Record and Transcript Administration).

Celine's acknowledgement of the existence of the records management policy which she indicated that it fell within the Student Records which according to her, she had not seen yet the policy though Herman who was responsible for the development of the policy insisted that it was approved. According to Bailey (2011:67), legal and regulatory compliance governing the management of records, refined standards of corporate governance, sizeable organisational transparency and accountability have for time been inseparable and will for time continue to be rewards to be expected from and strived for by records managers. Ngulube (2005) argue that records management programmes operate within the framework of policies, rules and procedures that give guidance to

practice. The purpose of rules and guidelines to provide an environment conducive to proper records management. Policy is essential to provide broad guidelines in which procedures may be developed (Ngulube 2005). The need for policies, procedures, and guidance for institutions to dispose of records is paramount in ensuring that the creation of legally admissible data and the preservation of its integrity for longer periods is in place (NECCC 2004:23, Ngulube 2005). Ngulube and Tafor (2006:64) argue that standards have been characterised as one of the best indicators of the state of development of a discipline.

4.3.2 Responsibility of records management

Records management is a shared responsibility among users, senior managers, and records management staff. All staff members of an institution are responsible for recording the actions and decisions that they take in accordance with their official duties, and the safeguarding of that information until it passes out of active operational involvement (Smith 2007:187). The purpose of this section was to establish whether records management responsibilities had been communicated to all staff members at the UFS. One participant, from the Department of Student Housing and Resident Affairs had this to say about the responsibility of records management in her department:

Not me, my line manager and his line manager are the ones responsible for the management of records he is the one in control of the Image Now as he has access to it (Siphokazi, black female from Housing and Residence Affairs).

Siphokazi's views were that the responsibility of managing records rested with her superiors, (i.e.) her line managers whereas when the researcher probed her as to what criteria informs her to manage records, she had this to say:

For us example Housing and Residence, we usually for example we collect or receive correspondence in the form of paper from the students, we have a form that we receive from the Provisioning Department (UFS section responsible for scanning documents on Image Now) we will then write down the student numbers

on the form and put down that page on top which is usually signed by my line manager and that is how it is archived.

Scholars, such as Bailey and Vidyarthi (2010:280), argue that be it in local authorities, government sector, NGO, higher education or a large proportion of the private sector an ever rapidly and possibly degree of autonomy is invested on personnel and the manner in which they create, use, manage and dispose of. Ngoepe and Ngulube (2013:6) discovered that state institutions that did not have records-management units indicated that records management were the responsibility of each unit and in some cases of records creators. Records management responsibilities should be clearly defined and assigned in a public body and made known throughout the institution. Responsibilities for undertaking records management roles should be set out in a performance agreement, job description or similar document (Lowry and Wamukoya 2014:154). Roles and responsibilities can be set within a framework of competency standards and job specifications drawn up from it. The availability of a records-management unit in governmental bodies goes a long way towards assisting with the implementation of policies and securing information assets (Ngoepe and Ngulube 2013:6).

However, as happened in the past that the responsibilities of records management were the sole responsibility of the professional records management unit, gone are those days as now the role of managing records impacts on every employee of a particular institution (National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council 2004:23). This assertion has been further endorsed by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA 2016) in that sound records management is a collective responsibility which all members of staff have an equal obligation to maintain. At the University of South Africa, a full commitment from top management for records management was bought to achieve strategic direction, funding, procurement of bulk scanners and had just over 550000 documents scanned and uploaded to the Enterprise Content Management (University of South Africa 2019). Consequently, UNISA department of records management however, experienced external challenges pertaining to skills availability locally, licenses, system upgrade, integration and compatibility (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). Records

Management Division in South African universities falls under a top structure headed by the office of the Registrar.

Similarly, another staff member who was an academic from accounting department when asked about whose responsibility was for the management of the university records this is what he had to say:

> *Lectures will manage records based on the modules and students they supervise and send to the Office Administrators and sent to the HoD. I personally use UFS hard drive, teams (Thobile, black, lecture at Department of Accounting Services).*

Thobile highlighted that as lecturers they sent student assignments and tests records to the office administrators to file as well to the HoD to sign them off. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), discovered that most customary records series in the custody of the offices were those that furnish evidence to ensure that the University was carrying out its core activity of conveying knowledge. These scholars further found that in UKZN, most employees were managing records using their own initiative and only few sought advice from the University Archivist as there were no established policies and written guiding documents such as, procedure manuals. Some staff members indicated or had given different answers as far as their responsibility is concerned with the management of the university records.

Likewise, Sikho, another staff member from the Department of Communication and Marketing division, indicated that it was his responsibility to manage and kept safe all departmental financial records on a safe. He noted:

> *In terms of my responsibility is to keep all financial records of the department safe, all financial transactions as we deal with suppliers and then if my customers find out how much I buy a particular product from my suppliers there would be chaos hence my office is located separated from the shop (Sikho, black, male, Practitioner from Communication and Marketing).*

Sikho's views were that access to his departmental financial records was minimal as he ensured that financial records were locked safely for safekeeping purposes. A tendency exists amongst staff in most governmental bodies to take personal ownership of records and to keep them out of central storage areas where they are accessible and the information they contain can be shared. Hence the collapse of record keeping systems and registries all over the public service and the tendency to pile records in the offices of individuals. State institutions need to control and manage records according to the legislation promulgated by government to enable government and the public to have timely access to accurate and reliable information (NARS Records Management Policy Manual v.1. 2007). While there are no standard structures, at times records management responsibilities are delegated to administrative officers who often have responsibility for a sector of records, such as student records or finance and administration records.

Elsewhere the literature suggests that at the UKZN within a school or faculty, the records are centrally managed under the school or faculty manager or administrator who has overall responsibility for the records of his or her unit (Chinyemba and Ngulube 2005). Records management problems experienced by state institutions are amongst others the following: officials are not using the central records office but keeping the records in their own offices. This results in information not being readily available at the central point preventing sound management decisions from being made based on authentic, reliable and relevant information. The officials who are keeping records in their own offices are not using the approved file plan(s) but are either piling the records in their offices or are compiling and using their own personal file plans. Flowing from this there is no central control over the records, and it is difficult to determine if records of transactions are created in the first place. It is difficult to pinpoint which are the authentic official records.

Due to the lack of central control over records and the lack of records management awareness amongst the staff, records are destroyed without disposal authorities being issued for them. This tendency is creating a risk that state institutions could be held legally liable when information is requested in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 or when written reasons for administrative Justice Act, 2000. Furthermore, state

institutions could also be at risk when records are needed for legal action (Records Management Policy Manual 1st ed. V.1.4. 2007). This risk was also experienced at the former University of Durban-Westville where a student made a court application demanding to see his examination scripts (UKZN rejects marks allegations 2004), though the student lost his case at the Pietermaritzburg High Court, the case demonstrates the possibly consequence of not providing information timeously (Ngulube 2005).

4.3.3 Legislation governing records management

The basis of all records management authority is comprehensive and up-to-date legislation. Records legislation must be ensuring complete protection for all public sector records, in whatever format, and provide the governing institution with comprehensive authority for securing and protecting records (Smith 2007:15). Whilst those of us managing records and looking after archives cannot be expected to provide legal advice, we need to be aware of the relevant obligations (Crockett 2016:31). In this section, the purpose of this question, the researcher wanted to establish whether staff members had any knowledge of any existing legislative framework governing the creation, capture and disposition of records and overall management of records that the UFS complies with.

One staff member, Celine who was placed at the Registrar's office for Student Academic Records and Transcripts administration and served as part of management, she had this to say:

> *Yes, apart from the Higher Education Act we are required to comply with POPIA, the POPI Act and we have got a diligent process to ensure that we comply with this Act, the Higher Education Act states clearly that when it comes to the academic transcripts of the students and academic results the universities may never destroy those records. (Celine, white, female, middle manager from Student Academic records and transcript administration).*

At the University of Oxford, Bailey (2011:55) reported that there was no formal or consistently observed procedures for ensuring that records are kept for legal or statutory compliance, or for judging the potentially historical importance of records sent to the

university archives. In addition to this, compliance improves when records are managed within the confines of regulatory framework requirements managing the management of records (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107). Diligent care and attention should be a priority in the management of records in all formats throughout their lifecycle, to ascertaining good governance by only retaining records that have administrative, fiscal, legal and historical values (Ellis 2002:7). It is worth acknowledging the fact that in many institutions' frameworks governing the management of records are not clearly articulated with less harsh fines imposed for transgressing them if such frameworks are indeed in place at all (Bailey and Vidyarthi 2010:280).

Similarly, one staff member also part of management in the Office of the Registrar, Herman was responsible for the university records management had this to say:

> *Yes, I think there is because remember among other things the creation of the Records Management policy is also in line with the prescripts of the NARSSA so flowing from the NAARSSA Act. We also had to make sure that we comply in terms of how we go about creating and managing our records, generally yes there are legislations managing the records creation (Herman, black, male from Records Management division).*

Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2014:105) discovered that the absence of proper record-keeping practices was not exclusive to the University of Namibia only, this was also the case with Nigerian universities as discovered by Iwhiwhi (2005). Additionally, the passing of Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) by the South African Government has made it very crucial for the adequate management of university records (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005). At the University of KwaZulu-Natal, there is a distribution system of managing records with the absence of central authority responsible for the records management function (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005). The situation at the UKZN, according to these scholars is that the records created by the business units are stored and managed by the respective business units. This is also the case within the UFS as departments and colleges keep and manage their records without the intervention of the Records Management Division personnel. Most of staff members demonstrated no knowledge of any legislative framework governing the university records as most when

probed by the researcher indicated that they were using their own initiative and best practices to manage records.

One staff member who was a lecturer for accounting department he had this to say:

> *POPIA, though a bit unclear on how it would apply in different cases. The UFS spent a lot of time in advertising and a lot of work needs to be done by the university on POPIA. Thobile, black male, from accounting department).*

Thobile's view was that the UFS spent enormous time on advertising the POPIA and believed that a lot needs to be done on the University's part on how it impacts on the student records. Legislation has a tremendous impact on how records, including those that are created and stored in networked environments, are managed in any country. Scholars, such as Ngoepe and Saurombe (2016), opined that the enactment and implementation of comprehensive, up-to-date archival legislation is a critical prerequisite for the establishment of an effective, integrated system for managing records. These scholars further argue that archival legislation provides the essential framework that enables a national records and archives service to operate with authority in its dealings with other organs of state. Consequently, laws alone are not enough to ensure the implementation of decisions, without political will, even good intentions well captured by legislation become meaningless (Lowry and Wamukoya 2014:123). These authors further argue that South Africans developed access laws that make excellent reading on paper but without the right political support these laws become meaningless paper tigers. Ngoepe and Saurombe (2016:25), blamed the status quo of the weakness of the African countries' archival legislations as being made worse by the fact that they were inherited from colonial masters. Nadaf and Navi (2017:71), warn that poor and lack of corporate governance norms in the organisation can lead to profit loss, corruption and a tarnished image also hurts the entire economy and reputation.

Corporate governance is of supreme importance to a company and as in most cases an institution lacking a system of corporate governance is often regarded as a body without a soul or conscience almost as important as its primary business plan (Nadaf and Navi

2017:66). These scholars further acknowledged that good corporate governance helps to prevent corporate scandals, frauds, potential civil and criminal liability of the institution and is also good business. Bailey (2011:67), argue that legal and regulatory compliance governing the management of records, refined standards of corporate governance, sizeable organisational transparency and accountability have for time been inseparable and will for time continue to be rewards to be expected from and strived for by records managers. Consequently, scholars such as Ngoepe and Saurombe (2016:24-25), warned that the weaknesses that are found stem largely from the inflexibility of archival legislation in the face of the challenging nature of records in the digital era. The Sub-Saharan Africa region is facing challenges of managing its records (Nengomasha 2013:3). There is always a link between good governance and compliance with the law (King VI 2016). Good governance is intertwined with the law, and it is completely not apt to entirely unhinge government from the law (King VI 2016). Information on records are the most crucial information assets as they are the evidence of business transactions (King VI 2016).

4.3.4 Training on Records Management

Records management is a shared responsibility; thus, creators of records should be equipped with the necessary skills to capture and manage records (Ngoepe and van der Walt 2010:98). The purpose of this section of the question was to establish whether the UFS conducted regular records management training, and who facilitated the training. The researcher was further keen to find out from the participants as to whether there are training on records management that they have attended or offered by the UFS. Records management is a shared responsibility between users, records managers and managers thus, all creators of records should be equipped with the necessary skills to capture and manage reliable and authentic records.

Some staff members indicated that they have never attended a formal training for records management, however, are using their initiative and experience they gained working with records management. As observed by scholars such as Lowry and Wamukoya (2014:15),

many institutions have no trained professional records managers and, as such records are not filled systematically. This becomes a major problem when records become due for transfer to archival institutions, as each file then needs to be appraised individually to determine its value (Lowry and Wamukoya 2014:15). One staff member who was based at Protection Services indicated that though she did not attend any records management training offered by the university, she had attended some courses at a college that had some information on records management. Puleng noted:

> *Not at the university. But I did go to Boston College and did some communications office management courses. Yeah, that's where one was taught about filing that you have your alphabetical? alphanumeric, your numerical filing (Puleng, black female and part of management from the Protection Services).*

Puleng demonstrated that apart from not being offered a training on records management by the university she had basic knowledge of how record keeping should be done. It was evident from the answers that the participants have given, that courses on records management training is needed for staff members at the UFS working with records and information management to equip themselves with the skills necessary to execute the task diligently. The presence of competent qualified personnel in records management make certain that the job is successfully executed (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005:11). The National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council (NECCC 2004:23) recommends that an Institution's personnel will have to be capacitated not only on the basics of records management, but also in the ability to categorize records. However, building capacity through training as observed by Lowry and Wamukoya (2014:27), there is no instant, global solution to this challenge of capacity building. These scholars further observed that in developed countries such as Canada, Australia, France, or Germany, for instance university records and archives programmes provide pre-appointment educational options, and university and college-based continuing studies courses make available post-appointment training and upgrading opportunities. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), further found that in UKZN, most employees were managing records using their own initiative and only few sought advice from the University Archivist as there were no established policies and written guiding documents such as, procedure manuals.

Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2014:113) and Coetzer and Roux (2013:37) and Phiri (2016:272), recommended that there should be strategies to raise awareness to all university staff of their record-keeping responsibilities.

Ngoepe (2016), is of the view that staff members should be trained in the main records management unit to enable them to gain the necessary skills to manage records properly and facilitate the interchange of staff when necessary. Consequently, skills and knowledge of records management techniques and procedures have a direct effect on the performance of records and archives management activities (Ngulube & Tafor 2006:63). Elsewhere in African nation's staff had limited training or experience on record keeping work, and hence record management was allowed to deteriorate (Asogwa 2019:199). To improve records management practices in state organs, personnel working with records need to be provided with in-house training on records management (Makgahlela 2021:164).

Similarly, another staff member from the Department of Library and Information Services who was part of the Library Management team indicated that tough he had not attended a formal training there were in house training conducted by his department of the electronic system to manage records. He noted:

> *I cannot remember anything except for our Wednesday Information sharing sessions where staff members would be sharing information. For instance, telling staff members about the usefulness of Shared Folder only internal arrangement that is not formal (Fix, black male, and is part of management in the library services).*

Fix indicated that apart from the information sharing for capacitating the library staff members on the best method and effectiveness on utilising Shared Folder where staff members were encouraged to share their documents online using the platform.

The training programme should ensure that the benefits of managing records are widely understood in the institution. However, the goal of records and archives training should

be to build individual, institutional and regional capacity: to increase the skills, knowledge and abilities of the practitioner so that he or she may better manage the materials in their care, which then results in the protection of authentic, accountable, reliable documentary evidence, available for public use in keeping with the goals of access and openness. A state institution may elect to enlist the services of a consultant to provide records management training if the supplier is well versed in the requirements of the National Archives and Records Service Act, 1996 as amended. Consequently, people with assigned responsibilities relating to the creation, capture and management of records should be competent to perform these duties (ISO 15489-1:2016:10). Competence should be regularly evaluated and training programs to develop and improve such competencies and skills should be designed and implemented where necessary. The training program should be ongoing and include training requirements, policies, practices, roles, and responsibilities for managing records and should be addressed to all members of management and personnel, as well as any other individuals responsible for any business activity involving the creation, capture and management of records (ISO 15489-1:2016:10). The training programme should be supported and promoted by senior management.

Likewise, another staff member from the Department of Marketing and Communication who was a practitioner indicated that his previous work experience with records management had assisted him in ensuring that he used his expertise and own initiative to manage records and assisted the auditors when looking for information. He noted:

> *No training, nothing, I manage my records based on my expertise, personal experience, and knowledge and when you deal with the auditors you know what they want (Sikho, black, male, Practitioner from Department of Communication and Marketing).*

Sikho demonstrated that he had knowledge and understanding of the best practices in records keeping as he articulated the importance of knowing what information the auditors were looking for during the auditing period. Scholars, such as Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2014:107), discovered that good record-keeping practices ascertain information and records are not unnecessary duplicated, which not only serve as a save-

costing measure, but also maintaining the version control and accuracy. These authors further deposit that in addition to this, compliance improves when records are managed within the confines of regulatory framework requirements managing the management of records (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107). Bailey (2011:55), reported that at the University of Oxford there was no formal or consistently observed procedures for ensuring that records are kept for legal or statutory compliance, or for judging the potentially historical importance of records sent to the university archives.

Likewise, one staff member had this to say:

> *We have done a lot of trainings and workshops since the policy was approved and this remains a continuous process from time to time where we engage our staff members on the RM policy that one of the activities we conduct.*

By judging on the response of the staff members that were interviewed, this assertion above from this staff member of the Office of the Registrar's Records Management division could somewhat be misleading based on the responses that other staff members had given. Records management knowledge and skills are now deemed basic requirements for all state institution's staff, and each entity is required to provide related training (Lin 2015:32). The University should provide training to employees who perform records management duties as training them is one method of motivating through maintaining high productivity (Wena 2003:54). The ultimate success of any training initiative is to make the training and the trainer redundant (Lowry and Wamukoya 2014:40).

Similarly, one staff member Brenda, was part of management had indicated that there was no training that she attended for records management offered by the UFS.

She noted:

> *No, I have not seen or attended any course.*

Brenda indicated that she had never heard or seen or attended any records management training in the university since she had been in its employ. The researcher wonders where Herman has conducted the number of trainings on the awareness of the Records

Management Policy, he claimed he had conducted to staff members. Like the rest of other profession, records and information management requires skilled and well-trained staff to manage records effectively and efficiently in any institution (Annie, Chisuta, Mbutoana and Rita 2018:2; Coetzer 2012:108).

Likewise, another staff member who was also part of the Registrar's Office and responsible for Academic records and Transcript Administration of student records, indicated that she trained her staff members on the job training kind of in-house training. This is what Celine had to say:

> *Its more on the job training as far as some had to do with how we comply with POPIA as we are always working with student data and even newly employed staff part of the job training is to how to manage information they work with daily and on what they can do with the data and who is allowed to access the data, who is allowed to change data. We also train our staff on relevant acts impacting on our work, like the Higher Education Act, POPIA and other Acts, obviously on PAIA in terms of Higher Education Qualification Frameworks and we are in the process of reviewing our standard operating procedure we started last year we are not done as we have a huge project that is coming up for the entire student administration system which is not just a software it everything that goes with it. We link our operating procedures to whatever relevant legislation or policy that is in place for our business processes (Celine, white female, part of management from the Student Academic records and Transcript Administration).*

4.4 Best Practice in managing records

Records management matters are contemporary in colleges and universities just as they are in private and public institutions. Therefore, tertiary institutions conduct a lot of transactions which lead to the creation of numerous types of records ranging from admission, assessment, human resources, financial, memos and other communication records. State universities are public organisations which must be accountable and transparent, and as such can only be achieved through the presence of proper records

and archives management systems. Concurrently, records management programs carry on lacking undivided attention or consistent support in higher education (Kaczmarek 2006:32). Equally so however, in South Africa, the University of South Africa has given records management full support in that, it has a dedicated department with a Divisional Head with approximately three Records Managers reporting to her (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). Most around the globe universities in our times utilise specific software applications in managing their successful mechanism in records management (Miah & Samsudin 2017:1819).

4.4.1 Filing of university records

Filing is about placing individual records in a certain order (for example chronological) inside a file cover, together with other records that also that also relate to the same business, case, or project (Crocket 2016:48). Records classification systems provide a way of having intellectual control over all the records of an institution. They provide a means of knowing what records exists and where they are kept (Ngoepe and van Der Walt 2010:93-94). An intellectual control is provided in the file plan and the schedule of records other than correspondence systems where records are listed individually either through a hierarchical subject in the case of a file plan and according to the type of document in the case of the schedule. The purpose of this section of the question was to establish whether the UFS had an approved records classification system and whether staff members were managing records according to it. When requested to indicate the classification systems that are used for the management of university records.

One staff member a practitioner, Ashia indicated she classified records according to the field of specialisation. She noted:

> *We classify according to the specialization field that we have. We are four specialization fields its Curriculum Studies, Early Childhood, Management and Psychology, and we sort them according to their subjects, manage to that and the*

students apply according to that program (Ashia, white female, practitioner at the
Department of Education).

Ashia demonstrated understanding of how the filling and classification of records was done as she took the researcher to how she gave file reference to the correspondence from the students by using subject specialisation to file her records. Proper classification of records is crucial as sometimes students may query marks and grades allocated to them, or their assessment marks may be missing. Records classification and indexing links records to their business context by associating them with categories in a business context by associating them with categories in a business classification scheme (ISO 15489-1:2016:17). Records classification includes the following:

- linking the record to the business being documented, at an appropriate level (for example to a function, activity, or work process).
- providing linkages between individual records and
- aggregations, to provide a continuous record of business activity.

Records classification can be applied to individual records, or at any level of aggregation (ISO 15489-1:2016:17). A record may be classified more than once, at different times in its existence.

Likewise, another staff member who was part of the Office of the Registrar (Top Management) responsible for Academic Records and Transcript Administration (Student records) Division, indicated that her Unit files according to student number on the system and did search by using the same student number to retrieve student records. She observed:

Anything in Campus Solutions the key search filed is student number is also allows
you to search with other data to find the student number and the rest of the data
so anything that is related to a student will be linked with the student number and
the student number is the key value that you search on the Software system even
on Image Now which is the software we use to store our student hardcopy records
for digital storage key value is the student number it's like your identity number as
an individual if you want information at Home Affairs they will need your identity

Celine, further highlighted that they had records dating back from the day the university awarded qualifications and sometimes records prior 1980, but some they did not have, because it was not all computerised and sometimes a student studied with the UFS in 1970. Her division does not have their qualifications even if you try and find it in the storage nothing was archived there were no finding aids like indexing to try to find. She indicated that they had put processes to scan them though sometimes a specialist is needed as some records are fragile with the ink perishing as there were documents there that are 50 years old. Her division is also scanning the old graduation certificates and stored them on the Shared Drive. The participant highlighted that the qualification certificates were filed in bulk filers, hanging tracks so that they did not bend the files, filling was alphabetic as it was easier for them and the fastest way to retrieve and was lever arc files. She further highlighted that her division stored them there and put them in boxes and after five years they stored them in the storeroom. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), recommend that the UKZN embarks on a records survey to determine which records represent its primary tasks, operations and business transactions in order to set up procedures to recognise the vital records volumes that must be recorded and preserved in its systems.

Similarly, another staff member who was also part of the Office of the Registrar (Top Management) and responsible for the university Records Management Division pointed to the absence of an approved file plan to classify the university records as they pushed for the approval first of the RM. Herman highlighted:

Honestly speaking now, we do not have our file plan approved yet one of the things that makes us not having a fully functional file plan because we wanted to first push the issue of the RM policy and hopefully before the end of the year it will be approved (Herman, black male, part of management from Records Management Division).

Herman demonstrated understanding that an institution first needed to have a Records Management Policy approved, prior to having a classification system in place. The UFS should in general and to be specific Herman who was responsible for records management in the University (Records Management Registrar's office) should fast track the approval by UMCO of the File Plan, on an intensive awareness campaign to rollout the implementation of the file plan. The management of active records requires a filing system to be implemented which comprises of the physical location, classification and indexing methods used, filing sequence, filing procedures, supplies and equipment (Annie, Chisuta, Mbutoana and Rita 2018). Thus, as a record goes through various lifecycle phases, the UFS needs to establish a recordkeeping system as a mechanism to manage records regardless of their format within the institution in accordance with established principles and accepted models of records management. Upon approval of file plan by the powers be, the UFS should introduce a standardised UFS classification and filing system in every unit. This should be revised and updated to adequately reflect the functions and activities at the University. Chigariro and Khumalo (2017), warned that the NUST therefore, must manage its records as assets which support the objectives of the university. Chigariro and Khumalo (2017:72), further argue that a records management programme provides a primary means of creating and disseminating knowledge, training, and tools about best practices in creating and managing all types of university records. Ngulube (2005), discovered that the University of KwaZulu-Natal has a distributed system of managing records with no central authority responsible for the records management function.

Likewise, another staff member demonstrated that she filed according to her departmental units, scanned and stored her files on Image Now System. Siphokazi noted:

I am speaking under my department and for us it will be Housing and Residence Bloemfontein campus so we put a way that get the information easy and access to Image Now is only restricted per department as another department cannot have access to our records. We file according to the department.

Siphokazi indicated that her department filed according to campuses, as well as different campuses would have different file reference numbers for her easy retrieval of the information. She further highlighted that her department filed according to the student numbers for example, Housing and Residence per student number that one would have application, cancellation, records of renewal of accommodation. She further indicated that she was speaking on behalf of her department and for them it would be Housing and Residence Bloemfontein campus so they put a way that get the information easy and access to Image Now is only restricted per department as another department cannot have access to their records as they file according to department. She highlighted that they file records on arc lever files numbered according to the student residents for example one would file like this, 2022.

4.4.2 Storage of University records

Records management involves selecting and managing appropriate records storage, be it physical, onsite, offsite, or even outsourced, or digital in the form of servers, drives, tape libraries or residing in the cloud (Crockett 2016:33). In South Africa, state institutions are required by the NARS directives to keep their records in a spacious office area centrally located and known as a records centre (Ngoepe and van der Walt 2010:94). Records storage area should be a place where records will be stored. There should be enough space to allow for movement of people and should be well lit and if possible, be stored in steal filing cabinets and placed on steel shelves (Wena 2003:55). Some staff members indicated that they store the university records in different online platforms on their computers' hard drives and in some Information Management System (OneDrive, Campus Solution, SharePoint, Image Now, PeopleSoft, Blackboard etc.) and other staff members indicated that they store them in their offices and storeroom. To manage the mountains of information generated across all three of its campuses, the UFS is heavily reliant on information systems that leverage information technology (Bloemfontein, QwaQwa & South). These information systems have all been put into place in accordance with established, documented standards and security (UFS website 2020). Most of the time, supporting applications and core systems share databases; however, this network of data dependency is easily the cause of data replication, duplication, discrepancies,

non-aligned data fields, etc. Records Storage is concerned with the storage of records that are no longer constantly referred to but are occasionally needed for business (Ngulube 2005). These are semi-active records. These records often safeguard crucial organisational interests hence the need to keep them for as long as they may be needed. Ngulube (2005), argue that keeping these records implies identifying them so that they can be separated from active records and then storing them away from expensive office space.

One staff member indicated that she kept her divisional records online on Campus Solutions server data of the university in the following software systems, Image Now, Oracle and Blackboard. She noted:

> *They are kept on the campus solutions server data sites on Oracle, spread over there Student Blackboard to Image Now and sits on the cloud Information Communication Technology section can give you much detailed information. And with physical records you can go ask the ASD records management I know he keeps them offsite.*

Celine's views were that Herman (part of management) in the Records Management division (Registrar's Office) was the one responsible for managing physical records and the researcher should sort such question to him. Wema (2003) suggests that keeping active and inactive records together poses serious storage and retrieval problems. The offsite storage should never be seen as the solution to the problem whilst it is expensive to store unneeded records off-site (NAARSSA 2007:29).

Likewise, one staff member who was also part of the Office of the Registrar and he was responsible for the Records Management Division of the university highlighted two processes. He noted:

> *In the case of the UFS we have got two processes under which records are currently kept, one we have records that are kept with our offsite by a service provider (InfoFile) for physical records storage and for your information we also have various departments keeping departmental records sometimes this year we*

will embark on a process of identifying those particular departments as well as the records they are keeping as part of creating awareness on RM. We discourage employees keeping their records on their departments and remove them from those departments and move them to the offsite storage as we have a contract with the service provider as well as electronic records for safety purposes (Herman, black male and part of management from the Records Management Division).

Herman demonstrated an understanding of the role of utilising the offsite storage already outsourced by the UFS to enhance the intellectual control of inactive records transferred to an offsite storage which would minimise departments from keeping records in their departments. On the other hand, management of semi-active and inactive records involves selecting storage facilities, what records to keep and for how long to avoid destruction of records of lasting value, developing procedures for transferring records and deciding on destruction procedures. Moreover, disposing of obsolete records reduces the volume of records stored in campus department (Chigariro and Khumalo 2017:70). There are no official or consistently followed procedures at the University of Oxford, according to Bailey (2011:55), for guaranteeing the preservation of records for the purpose of complying with laws or regulations or for determining the potential historical significance of records sent to the university archives. Additionally, compliance increases when records are kept in line with the laws and regulations governing the administration of records (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107). The situation is the same at UFS, where the researcher observed the collection in the vaults at the university archives repository. There, a sizable portion of the historical collection makes up only 3% of the overall collection, whereas nearly 97 percent of it is primarily made up of former National Party correspondence and related records Universities can save money because effective records management policies prevent ephemeral records from being held and retained pointlessly.   Additionally, accurate record-keeping practices prevent information and documents from being accidentally duplicated, which saves money in addition to assuring correctness and version control (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2014:107).

Likewise, Siphokazi another staff member indicated that she sent records for scanning after receiving the student information to the Provisioning department which dealt with the scanning of records and documents. She noted:

Sent to the Provisioning department (responsible for scanning) my line manager would just say send these records for scanning (Siphokazi, black female senior practitioner at the Housing and Residence Affairs).

Siphokazi's views were that after she had received records or information from her stakeholders, she sent it to the Provisioning department for scanning and safe keeping since she did not have a storeroom in her department to keep records. Establishing a clear cognitive connection between these records as they are created and updated as they are utilized is crucial. It is equally crucial to keep these connections between semi-current records, especially those records intended for permanent preservation, for future researchers to be able to examine the data (Duranti 2010:79). In the context of the computer industry, distinctive software systems create, manage, and store digital data using confidential techniques without separating records from other kinds of data to avoid duplication or to establish and maintain an intellectual control (Duranti 2010:79). Administrators have also begun to equate a system's major responsibility with smaller, usually insignificant supporting duties that are not necessary to the universities' purpose due to the ability of information systems to alter data (Duranti 2010:87). Effective records management could cut down on money wasted on redundant electronic data. Because of this, most case studies highlight the necessity of better records management integration in the development of electronic information and communication systems (International Records Management Trust 2009). Whilst non-current records that are ultimately due for destruction do not require the very high standard physical environment that is secure from unauthorised access and ensures that they are accessible and readable for as long as they are needed (Crockett 2016:33).

Similarly, Sikho another staff member, indicated he used a separate storeroom from the Department of Provisioning as well as in his office to keep and store the departmental records. He noted:

We have another storeroom at the Provisioning department, and other records are stored there and as well in my office (Sikho, black male, Practitioner from Communication and Marketing).

Sikho's views indicated that the UFS did not have a centralized records centre that would eliminate departmental employees in keeping the university's records in their offices and scattered storerooms. Therefore, records cannot be left in offices whose mandate is not records management as there might not be proper control measures to secure records from theft and loss. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has a distribution system in place for retaining records in the lack of a centralized role for records administration (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005). According to these researchers, the data generated by the many business units and these specific organisational units store and manage the UKZN. This is also true within the UFS, where departments and colleges manage their records without the assistance of the records management division. The UFS should establish records centre whose main purpose will be to house inactive or semi-current records. Wena (2003:50), defines a Records Centre as a facility for the low-cost, short-term storage and processing of records pending at their disposal or transfer to the Archives. By doing so, these records will be easily retrieved for occasional use or be kept there pending their ultimate destruction or transfer to archival storage. This will benefit the UFS as when the records become inactive, they will be appraised and transferred to a records centre as they will be then processed and kept in an archival manner. Wena (2003), further advised that when the records are transferred to a records centre then the creating office is issued with a transfer list of files it has deposited. Records transferred are treated as confidential and no one can get access to them without the written authority of the deposing department as such records cannot be made accessible to the public until the elapse of the time specified, or unless stated otherwise by the powers that maybe. Wena (2003), suggests that the value of a records centre to an institution is therefore beyond question or imagination.

4.4.3 Records retention and disposition

Disposal can mean destruction or removal to archives. In accordance with section 13(2)(a) of the National Archives Service Act, no public record under the control of any

state institution may be transferred to an archive's repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without a written authority issued by the national archivist. The implementation of a disposal authority enables a state institution to dispose of its records regularly (Ngoepe and Van Der Walt 2010:98). The purpose of this section of the question was to establish whether the UFS had any retention schedule and how the staff members are disposing records. Most staff members understood the retention period for the different records of the university that they manage as most indicated that you keep specific records for specific periods as some indicated you keep them for five years and others three to six months depending on the specific records they manage. A retention programme is also necessary to ensure disposal of ephemeral records and to permit the transfer of records of enduring value from active maintenance to archive repository (Ngoepe 2016:344).

Records retention schedules identify an institution's records and establish periods of time for which the records are to be retained, taking into consideration their administrative, fiscal and historically significance (Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2013:115). Retention schedules specify how long each type of record is to be held in an institution. The UFS need to draw up a records retention schedule and promote its adoption throughout the institution. This will help staff members responsible for the records management at the UFS in making decisions on records which are to be disposed of from their departments. Records which are not of archival value should be destroyed when they no longer serve a useful operational purpose and do not need to be kept for legal or contractual obligations (Crockett 2016:35). This must be done in such a way that they cannot be accessed again and there are no copies left. Consequently, the retention period must be managed and monitored efficiently to avert any problem at any phase of the cycle, the entire records system even the institutional administrative structure could be adversely affected (Kulcu 88:2009).

Whilst four staff members indicated that they were using a shredder to destroy the university records, they also highlighted that it depended on the confidentiality of the

records. Whereas other staff members indicated that they had not yet disposed records, while one staff member indicated she complied with regulations managing the disposal of student records. Ngulube (2005), is of the view that a records retention and disposal programme is crucial to the management of the records of the institution. The scholar further explains that a retention schedule programme provides a timetable and consistent procedures for maintaining the institution's records, moving the records to inactive storage when suitable and destroying records when they are no longer valuable to the institution.

One staff member, Ashia indicated that she destroyed her departmental records through shredding confidential records and storing the copies in her computer's UNIdrive system which was highly protected on the cloud. She also indicated that she did have a retention schedule for her departmental records as she kept student registration forms for five years. She noted:

> *Through shredding, confidential records, copies are stored in the computer and cloud. We store everything on Unidrive i.e., Cloud which is highly protected. Yes, five years for registration that we need to keep it in our offices for five years (Ashia, white female, Practitioner from Communication and Marketing).*

Ashia's views on the retention period of records clearly demonstrated her understanding of the obligation to retain specific records for a specific time as per the laws governing the management of records and information. The absence of record retention schedules suggested that some of the records that were no longer needed by the system were kept, and those they were still needed by the system might have been destroyed. There could be an implication that the University might have been losing valuable evidence and vital memory as records disposition had not been developed systematically. The literature supports this statement in that Wena (2003:47), warned that absence of, and failure to implement disposal plans or schedules, which create a mammoth growth of records in various departments, the majority of which are not available at the Dar Es Salaam university. The scholar further opined that these records continue occupying office place and equipment. A records and archives management system will ensure that records management is integrated, whether the records management activities are centralised or

decentralised. The UFS will have to make it a point that records management activities are integrated and administered by a central office.

Similarly, two staff members, Quintin and Thobile who were both academics (lecturers) in the departments of History and Accounting respectively, indicated that they used their best practice and own initiative for retaining student records such as keeping tests and assignments for a specific period. They both indicated that they shred confidential student records such as sick notes. Thobile noted:

> *I would also say best practice for instance for six months for tests (assignments) and exams (final exams) we may keep them longer like five years (Thobile, black male, Lecturer from Accounting Department).*

Thobile's views on the understanding of the retention period for keeping student records was demonstrated on the way he gave specific retention period for tests and assignments scripts. The staff member further indicated that there was no retention schedule available however he used best practice and own initiative methods to manage the university records. The staff member indicated that he destroyed records by shredding confidential records such as student medical certificates. Some metadata for records will be required to be retained beyond the minimum retention period for the record with which it is associated. Disposition processes should support these requirements (ISO 15489-1:2016). The following principles should govern the destruction of records:

- destruction should always be authorised.
- records pertaining to pending or actual litigation or legal action or investigation should not be destroyed while that action is underway or anticipated to arise.
- records destruction should be carried out in a way that ensures completed destruction, like any disposition action, should be conducted (ISO15489-1:2016).

Similarly, another staff member Quintin shared the same sentiments as those of his colleague Thobile who was also a lecturer. He noted:

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Best practice e.g., six months for tests to exams we keep them longer. Depends on the confidentiality (sick notes we shred it by destroying, tough there is a shredder in our department but not sure what is used for (Quintin, white male, senior lecturer at the History department).

Ngulube (2005), discovered at the UKZN that every office on campus was disposing of records from their offices, which means that every office on campus was disposing of records, yet no one had any idea of what they were threw away. This assertion by this scholar is reminiscent of the answer that the researcher recorded from one staff member, Brenda of the UFS in the Library department who is part of management. She indicated that she threw manual records in the dustbins. She noted:

Throw them in the dustbins if is not confidential, not good if electronic is kept in the spreadsheet in the system as I am not good at disposing records. I keep the electronic I do not dispose, and I am nervous if it's a right thing to do. (Brenda, white female, forms part of the library management committee).

Brenda's views that throwing records in the dustbins was astonishing as this could had serious implications if such records were to be needed in litigation and could not be located without any evidence of their disposal according to disposal schedules. Tough Brenda indicated that when it came to the retention of her division's records, she applied her own initiative and best practice as there was no retention schedule available for the UFS. She noted:

No, I use my own initiative as best practice.

Brenda's views of using her own initiatives as best practice in the absence of a retention schedule for the entire University are shared amongst by other staff members in the UFS whom the researcher has interviewed. The researcher's findings could suggest that, in the absence of guidelines of records retention schedules, practices and procedures were created through individual initiative. The UFS did not have a records retention schedule to manage its records, this is a major challenge as presence of retention schedule allows records practitioner to monitor records that are due for disposal. This major challenge is

not peculiar to the UFS only, elsewhere in a Turkish Hacehepe University there was also a major problem on the records systems which lacked retention schedule or a campus-wide records management program (Kulcu 2009:92). Ngulube (2005), suggested that the UKZN should also develop records management manuals to provide a reference point for practices and procedures while assisting to standardize records management activities. It is particularly quite crucial that all those in charge of records, specifically in faculties and schools, be aware of access requirements and the mechanisms for compliance with that access be provided at the UFS. The UFS should also pay undivided attention to its electronic records management environment. The researcher recommends that the Records Management Division (in the office of the Registrar), particularly the Assistant Director records management assume his rightful role in the management of records throughout their life cycle. The staff member responsible for the university records management's involvement is essential throughout the life cycle stages of the records.

Likewise, one staff member Celine from the Academic records and transcript administration division she indicated that she kept student records for five years as per the stipulations from regulations of POPIA and being compliant of the HEA. She noted:

> *Yes, POPIA says keep it five years it also depends on the kind of data and there is a Higher Education Act which is quite clear that when it comes to student academic transcript you never destroy that information (Celine, white female, a middle manager at Student Academic Records and Transcript Administration, white female, part of management).*

Celine's views were that she was supposed to keep student records and information as long as possible and could destroy records like registration forms after five years and qualification certificates her division had not destroyed anything. She noted:

> *We are supposed to keep them as long as possible obviously we can destroy documents like registration forms after five years but the data itself and when it comes to certificates we have not destroyed anything to date however, we are allowed to*

destroy some certificates as we are discussing now with our internal auditors and the Registrar to come up with a retention schedules for those records as when we destroy them we source the external service provider through our Finance department and we have a transfer list of what was transferred to the service provider and then they give us a destruction certificate. We have lots of documents that we feel we need to destroy through following proper channels and sometimes these service providers charge us money for keeping records that are not even worth keeping.

Celine above emphasised the importance compiling a transfer list when transferring records to an offsite storage as to have a record of what was transferred to the service provider and being issued with a destruction certificate. What Celine pointed out here reflects literature, where Wena (2003), suggests that the university of Dar Es Salaam establishes records centre whose main purpose will be to house inactive or semi-active records. By so doing, these records will be easily retrieved for occasional use or be kept there pending their ultimate destruction or transfer to archival storage.

Likewise, staff member Fix who was a middle manager in the Department of Library indicated that with the experience he gained in interacting with the auditors he was familiar with the retention period of records. He noted:

From the interaction I had with auditors made me aware of the retention schedules like orders paid after five years should be disposed and no need to keep those records if it is considered of no value and there is no need to keep because you have kept the record for long. The auditors advised us to keep the information for the period of five years (Fix, black male, part of management at the library services).

Fix views on the disposal of records were that he did not have a shredder in his office, however depending on the contents or confidentiality of the information on records he shredded manually. He noted:

When it comes to that one, I do not even have a shredder and is depending on what are the contents or confidentiality of the information sometimes I shred it

manually, as there are no formal guidelines as to how to dispose of information, what I also know is that we are not allowed to throw information away we are advised to call the services of the Assets Department when there's lots of paper and they are the ones who know where they take the information to.

Fix further indicated after being probed by the researcher to elaborate further as to where the Asset department may be taking the records to. Fix further noted:

When I started working here we used to have big box in each office coming from the Asset department I think it had a "recycle" signage on it resembling a post box and when it is full we would normally call them to collect the boxes we used to do that a lot as we were relying and generating a lot of paper then but now we have come to reduce the printing and using of paper as most of our staff members now use electronic records and that has reduced the printing hence we no longer have those big boxes as I do not even have a printer in my office as everything I do is paperless.

Fix's views of understanding disposal process of records were demonstrated on the information that he had given to the researcher as he succinctly elaborated on the processes leading up to final disposition of records by a service provider appointed to do so. The University should also pay serious attention to its electronic records management. The University Records Management division is the repository of expertise of records management procedures and the fact should be publicized to departments, faculties, and all other communication platforms of the institution.

Likewise, Siphokazi, another staff member who was a Senior Practitioner indicated that she is using her own initiative and understanding thus, she knows the records she sent for scanning would still be available even one could get them back even after six years. She noted:

I am just using my own initiative and understanding but I know the records we have sent for scanning are still available and you could get them back even after six years, I do not have insights on how long the overall university keeps its records, I am sure paper records are discarded and with the scanned one it's a different one

Siphokazi's views on the disposal of records clearly demonstrated the challenge that the university staff were facing when faced with a plethora of ephemeral records to dispose of as procedures and formal guidelines for disposing records were absent at the UFS. Literature from scholars such as Ngulube and Chinyemba (2005), discovered that because UKZN lacked formal regulations and written guiding materials like procedure manuals, most staff members were handling records on their own initiative and only a small number sought help from the University Archivist. Zulkipli (2019), opined that records management is constantly neglected, improperly maintained, and not given attention, which results in illogical workspaces, agitated workers, and information loss. Some university offices develop and apply their own records management systems as revealed in a study conducted by Kulce (2009:93), at a Turkish university, this coincides with the practice that was occurring at the UFS based on the responses the researcher recorded from the staff members that were interviewed.

4.4.4 Records maintenance and access to records

Records and archives need ongoing management, recordkeeping systems such as physical file stores and digital drives can become disorganized and unreliable when they are not consistently added to according to the method of institution (Crockett 2016:32). The purpose of the question in this section was to establish the accessibility of records in the UFS. Current records are usually primarily of interest to a selected group or groups of people, regardless of whether the records are archival or not.Therefore, institutions and record creators and users save or file records systems where they can be accessed by everyone who needs to see them or for access to be controlled and limited as required (Crockett 2016:30-31). Providing access involves assisting people use the records, providing the environment and supplementary resources for users, complying with legal and societal obligations, and protecting the archives and records when being utilised. The Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), is the legislation that gives effect to Section 32 of the Constitution, in which the right of access to information is entrenched.

Section 32 of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state or held by any other person that is to be used for the protection or exercising of any right. Finding aids such as file lists (classification schemes), and metadata, can be used to facilitate and control access to records and archives, regardless of their age or status (Crockett 2016:31). In support of this statement, Kulcu (2009:96) is of the view that one of the most common tools used to access the records is the direct use of active files in all university systems.

Almost, all eleven staff members interviewed by the researcher indicated that they were all responsible for the maintenance of university records, with only two participants shifting the responsibility to other departments and only one staff member Sam was not aware as to whose responsibility was. Celine, another staff member indicated that Herman (records management), was responsible for the maintenance of the physical records while citing ICT (Information Communication and Technology) as being the ones in charge of maintenance of electronic records. While Siphokazi indicated that the Provisioning department (Scanning department) is charged with the maintenance of university records. It is crucial to note that many organisations do not have clear guidelines for the maintenance of records, and those that do frequently have laxer sanctions for infractions (Bailey and Vidyarthi 2010:280).

The researcher had observed that with the absence of clear guidelines on records maintenance, the UFS staff members charged for the maintenance of records are found wanting and end up resorting to applying their own initiatives as best practices. The maintenance element involves strategies for managing records of various retention periods, media formats, material conditions (i.e., records of different materiality and vulnerability to deterioration), and access needs (i.e., record retrieval by state institutions' staff and citizens and the maintenance required to reduce damage and deterioration), (Lin 2015:37)

One staff member, Siphokazi, from the Student Housing and Residence Affairs indicated that she was not charged with the maintenance of her departmental records instead the Provisioning department was charged with their maintenance. She noted:

The provisioning department (responsible for scanning) is them.

Siphokazi's views and the understanding of the maintenance of university records rested with the Provisioning department. However, the literature consulted by the researcher highlights that it is essential that records showing the University is carrying is carrying out its mandate be maintained (Ngulube 2005). In the area of management, it is possible that records not captured or maintained by the departments, faculties may be maintained by the office of the Registrar's Records Management division which has an expertise in record keeping practices. Scholars such as Ngoepe and Ngulube (2006), agree that the availability of a records management unit in state institutions goes a long way towards assisting with the implementation of policies and securing information assets. It is ideal to manage the transactions, information and knowledge required to encourage an institution, in this regard, records can easily be retrieved when requested by auditors or a third party (Ngoepe and Ngulube 2013).

Likewise, another staff member who was also a part of the office of the Registrar and responsible for student academic and transcripts administration indicated that Herman: Records Management division who was also part of the office of the Registrar and ICT (Information Communication and Technology), oversee the electronic records. She noted:

For physical records yes ASD Records Management is in charge and with electronic records ICT supports us, but we own and manage the data systems to put in in context the Registrar is the owner of the Campus Solution system and ICT tends to support us in terms of maintenance of the software's and the actual hardware even though we own and manage the system ICT supports us as they are the owners of the software and hardware and the ownership is split. If it comes to physical records like students' qualification certificates that we issue out as we still issue out hard copies, we are planning to go digital in the next five years

(Celine, white female, part of management at Student Academic Records and Transcript Administration).

Celine's views when probed by the researcher on the issue of records that were in her unit which were not digital, she indicated that she stored them in her departmental offices. She noted:

> *They are stored in our Qualification Board in our offices and access is only limited to specific staff members in my division and not every staff member has access and specific with the transcript of student and there are security monitors.*

Celine's views and understanding of managing access to records was concerned with making records accessible and useable to record users within and outside the institution. Ngulube (2005), opined that the records of an institution can only be useful to the institution if they are accessible to the members of the institution who need to use them. This implies that they are readily available when required as records creators and users will know where to file or save records and users will be able to retrieve records accurately and easily (Crockett 2016:31). Access is also concerned with planning to comply with access requirements whether from within the institution or from without. This is particularly significant considering the recent passing of POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act), in South Africa. Wena (2003), discovered at Dar Es Salaam university that with an increase to the use of computers, a lot of records are created electronically in university offices, departments and institutes. Some of these records are stored on hard drives and CD-ROMs but there is no clear policy as to how semi-current electronic records should be handled. Concurrently, Ngulube (2005), discovered at the UKZN that the presence of personal computers in every office and local area network shows that the University is increasingly making use of digital records; they are continually being generated in electronic format and may exist only in that format. The information age holds many challenges and issues for those of us who care about looking after and using records and archives (Crockett 2016:29). Ngulube (2005), further indicates that the results recorded from the UKZN research project showed that the management of electronic records was unsatisfactory and vital records were in danger. The UFS mostly relies on data management systems to manage piles of information that is generated daily. Following

the recommendations of the 2017 Data Management Maturity (DMM), assessment, the Data Management Governance division at ICT Services was tasked with designing an operating framework. The UFS is solely relying on Information systems utilising Information Technology to manage piles of information generated in all its three campuses (Bloemfontein, QwaQwa & South).

All these information systems have been implemented according to defined and documented standards and security (UFS website 2020). In most instances databases are often shared between core systems and ancillary applications, however this network of data dependency easily gives rise to data replication, data duplication, data discrepancies, and non-aligned data fields. Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2014:107), argue that keeping information under control assists in preserving crucial data and avert acquiring ephemeral records. Distinguishably software systems generate, manage and store digital data using propriety technologies that evolve not to isolate records from other types of information to avert replication or to set up and maintain an intellectual control, conditional of the computer industry (Duranti 2010:79). Moreover, the ability of information systems to manipulate data has convinced administrators to be linked with the main task of a system host lesser, frequently insignificant, activities that are not key to the Universities mission but support functions (Duranti 2010:87). Sound records management could save up wasted money on redundant electronic data. Consequently, case studies mostly indicate the necessity for better integration of records management in the design and implementation of electronic information and communication systems (International Records Management Trust 2009).

The UFS employs various numerous systems which are not integrated to accommodate all requirements of record-keeping best practices. The main issues challenging the properties of electronic records include integrity, authenticity, and accessibility (Lin 2015:22). Records systems should be capable of continuous and regular operation in accordance with authorized policy and procedures. The creation, capture and management of records should be systematized through the design and routine operation

of records systems (ISO 15489-1:2016). With the numerous systems and software that the University utilising to manage information on records and data has not been implemented through records systems, records controls, policies on managing records and procedures or a combination of these. Implementation should be supported by assigning roles and responsibilities, training, monitoring of the operation of systems and monitoring compliance with policies and procedures (ISO 15489-1:2016).

4.5 Preventive measures for records

In this section, the researcher wanted staff members to indicate which measures that are in place for the protection of records against its enemies such as theft, fire, disaster recovery plan and how do they prevent deletion or alteration of records. Reasons to protect records is fundamentally with the belief among scholars in the field of records management that records are the key resource of institutions which should be managed by them, there are many reasons which highlight the need for the protection of the records and some of these are as follows:

Organisational events and audit trails which explains who did what, when and why are documented in records. Thus, records become assets for the institution. Financial undertakings are documented in records. If they are not recorded, the financial management of the organisation cannot achieve significant audit trails. Financial deceit will be untraceable and those who are responsible for it cannot be upheld without records. In the absence of records, those overlooking financial management of the institution cannot be blamed for their dealings.

Institutions must keep the records to show their liability to the public. Records are valuable in these circumstances. In the time of culminate or disaster and retrieval strategies are essential to safeguard the records which are necessary for resuming the operation of the institution. Maintenance of records are needed by the ISO-15489 and by the best practices recognised internationally. Electronic records are susceptible various hazards. Thus, they should be kept in a place to make sure that they can be easily stored and secured to move into a much secure avenue which can be retrieved later (Zulkipli 2021:3).

4.5.1 Protection against theft

Almost all the staff members interviewed indicated that offices, filing cabinets are locked all the time and online systems are password protected and one needs good credentials to be able to access information on records or data, apart from two staff members. Herman and Sam's view are slightly different from the rest of the staff members as the former cited difficulties in controlling exercise over data in the custody of its owners whereas the latter demonstrated no knowledge.

One Records Management division's staff member mentioned how he believed that various department within the UFS were employing their own sufficient measures to prevent records from being stolen. Herman noted:

> *A bit difficult as we have two streams of records storage areas at the university as we have this one currently stored within the departments which is a bit difficult to exercise control over these ones as it is data owners themselves keeping those records, I believe different departments are having sufficient measures in place to prevent documents from being stolen (Herman, black male, part of management).*

Herman's views were that he had challenges in exercising control as far as storage of records are concerned since various departments were keeping the information on records and data in their offices and believed that they employed their own measures to protect records. The UFS Records Management division headed by Herman should ensure that the approved RM policy is implemented, and awareness be conducted throughout the institution. The policy among other things will surely state and address the ownership of the University records and data, accessibility, preservation methods (i.e., for both physical and electronic platform), criteria for selection of records archiving and determination of record types due for disposal. Policy would have given clear guidelines on the security of all information systems and resources. Aspects requiring attention such as the following:

- General physical security;

- Control over the removal of resources from their place of custody or from the control of the responsible person;

- The protection of privacy and confidentiality;

- Protection against unauthorised access (NAARSSA 2006-2:6).

Another challenge at the National University of Science and Technology of Zimbabwe associated with the absence of a records management programme is the loss, theft and destruction of records (Chigariro and Khumalo:2017:74). Ngoepe (2014) warns that state institutions who lack of proper record-keeping is at risk of information loss when individuals resign or leave office.

On the same note, other staff members were of the view of locking their offices, filing cabinets, activating the alarm system and strong user credentials in the form of protected password would deter any intruder in gaining access and possible stealing records and data. Ashia had this to say:

> *In our offices we cannot if someone breaks in the office but on the system is protected as we are using One Drive which is protected by DUO and with Image Now you will need to have good access, authorized credentials, and a certain role to be able to access it. ICT is very strict when it comes to un-authorized access. Only SAS people Academic advisors have access to our records and computers not everyone (Ashia, white female, practioner from Department of Education).*

Ashia reflected above on how the unauthorized access to the UFS staff offices was strictly controlled and access to the online systems had also strengthened its protection by ICT with the security software with DUO software. This software only gives access to the University platforms if you have good credentials as it is uploaded to one's mobile device or in the case of a mobile device not compatible with DUO software then a portable device is issued which resembles a panic button. The researcher is of the view that this DOU software is good enough as it allows only users with good credentials to access online

UFS systems remotely and deter any intruder who might need to gain access unlawfully. Likewise, another staff member, Celine shared her views:

Well as far as possible because I mean the data system is in the system obviously you need to have access to log in and the ICT has got pretty good firewalls, and security around our student data systems. There are few attempts I know some people tried to hack our system that our ICT was so fast to shut down our system and we even knew who it was. We reported the culprit so we have not heard an instance outside the campus only people within the campus fortunately was nabbed and we have controlled access, CCTV cameras monitoring our space 24/7. There is also an alarm system after hours the protection services switch it on and our offices are locked and we have gates and security and strict access up to so far (Celine, white female, middle manager).

Celine's views were shared amongst most staff members that were interviewed as most highlighted the strong presence of ICT and always being alert and sending warnings of possible spam messages to staff members to deter any possible hackers to the system. Therefore, records cannot be left in offices whose mandate is not records management as there might not be proper control measures to secure records from theft and loss. Scholars such as Chigariro and Khumalo (2017:75), warned NUST to avoid losses of records, there is a need to establish a proper records and archives management programme. Rights and permissions should therefore be constantly monitored and updated routinely, and restrictions should be reduced or removed where necessary (ISO 15489-1:2016:15). On the security measures in place to prevent unauthorised access to the records, the study revealed that the UFS's strong restrictions were placed on the use of records. Access to records is always subjected to password access restrictions.

4.5.2 Protection against fire

Fire is one of the most damaging dangers to records and archives. Every fire has a small beginning and a precise cause and moreover, any combustible material will ignite when heated to a certain temperature and a naked flame is not always necessary to promote this ignition (Cunningham 1968:411; Roper and Millar 1999:7). Even power failures or

electrical faults, leaks, or drainage problems, or mishandling and human error can lead to an emergency. Scholars such as Stender and Walker (1974:521), warned that fires, floods, and earthquakes have robbed us many of the legacies of the past, fires to be specific, have destroyed many historical records. A great threat in a records centre or archival institution is not the fire itself but, if the fire is suppressed, the water damage caused by the attempts to extinguish the flames (Roper and Millar 1999:7). The authors reported that on November 8, 1800, a fire in the War Department robbed historians of much of the record of this department for the first decade of this nation's history. The purpose of this section of the questions was to establish whether the UFS has measures in place to combat should fire breakup. This section of the question the researcher wanted to establish if the UFS had measures in place to prevent fire damage to the records. Some staff members indicated that they had fire extinguishers and backup plans to prevent the UFS records from fire.

One staff member who was part of management indicated that she had her data and records backed up and available on cloud. Brenda had this to say:

> *Yes, if the office has to burn or catch fire, the information is backed up on the server and cloud, and computer backs up to thew system on the cloud and the records will not be affected. And its interesting questions you remember the UCT fire issue (Brenda, white female, part of management at Library services).*

Brenda demonstrated basic understanding of preventing her records and information from being lost due to fire that backing up was the last defense she could apply to mitigate the risk of losing her records. In 18 April 2021, one fire broke out around Devil's Peak, a spur of the mountain spread to the University of Cape Town (UCT) South Africa, burning the historic campus library and forcing the evacuation of 4,000 students. The very nature of a records storage unit makes a fire detection and suppression system an essential requirement for an organisation (Makgahlela 2021:151).

Likewise, Celine another staff member who was part of management in the department of Student Academic record and Transcript administration indicated that in her unit data was found on the server rooms which were highly protected against fire as the backup was also available. She noted:

Yes, because all our data sits on our server rooms are protected against fire as we have a back-up system in different locations as well. In terms of office space itself there is a sprinkling system (specialised fire suppression systems) that emits powder not water not in every office but where our staff members are working, and we are still waiting for the official approval of the Registrar to approve it and we will install it on our vaults to protect the records should fire break-up. And if it happens we lose a record where we can always retrieve it and re-issue the certificate, and we do keep a log on Shared Folder of what is it in our vaults and we always know what is stored in our vaults and what we issue out, and if a student did not attend the graduation we keep the certificate and log that the student did not attend the graduation and we actually signed for the certificate in our position (Celine, white female, part of management at Student Records and Academic Transcript).

Celine's views that her unit had a sprinkling system for fire suppression was a chief discussion topic in the compartmentalization debate as to whether sprinkler systems alone could adequately protect records in a fire (Shana 2002:44). The scholar further warns that using sprinkler systems exclusively is risky, because improper sprinkler design, inadequate maintenance, and storage arrangements changes could jeopardise the effectiveness of this technology. Effective pre-incident planning and standard operating procedures could also contribute to the successful control of fire. Having a well-designed sprinkler system plus separate records storage compartments in place is like a double insurance that records will be adequately protected in a fire compartmentalisation proponents argue (Shana 2002:45). Consequently, sprinkler technology advocates however, attest that large well-maintained systems are the best way to control fire.

Similarly, another staff member Fix who was part of management indicated that at his section there was an allocated staff member responsible for Safety, Health, and Environment. He noted:

Every level in the library has a staff member responsible for the prevention Safety Occupational Health (SHE) there are fire detectors, alarms, first aid kit and we use to

have building plans we are protecting our collection (Fix, black male, is part of management at the library services).

Fix's views that his department had elected or nominated staff members to play part in the SHE team of the university was a great move by his department because building or structural failure like malfunctioning of the sprinkler system, leaking water from the roofs, drainage, storm water failure, poor wiring leading to electrical short-circuits and energy failure could only be adequately monitored by the SHE representative.

Likewise, another staff member Puleng who was part of management from the Protection Service department indicated that her department had fire extinguishers and were inspected by the SHE representatives as she had strong relation with them. She noted:

> *We do have fire extinguishers, occupational safety to inspect and do services as we have a strong working relation with Safety Health Officer. it copies so you keep the manual and then you scan. I think that is a bonus for us as we work hand in hand with the SHE office and when they are conducting safety and evacuation activities, we are part of that team, and they cannot work without us. And we cannot operate without them as well (Puleng, black female, part of management).*

Puleng's views were an indication that the UFS had some form of measures in place for fire prevention and the fire extinguishers were constantly inspected by the SHO as required by the SHE regulations. A great threat in a records centre or archival institution is not the fire itself but, if the fire is suppressed, the water damage caused by the attempts to extinguish the flames (Roper and Millar 1999:7).

4.5.3 Disaster recovery for records

No institution is completely immune from emergencies or disasters, either from natural causes or human action (Roper and Millar 1999:1). Disaster preparedness is a part of the overall disaster management by the institution, and this is done to protect the paper and electronic records from getting damaged manmade or natural disasters (Zulkipli 2021:1). Scholars such as Ngoepe and Van Der Walt (2010:98), opined that having a disaster

recovery plan can assist institutions in the event of a disaster. It is crucial to remember that the first priority in the emergency planning is to protect people and ensure their safety (Roper and Millar 1999:5). These scholars further warn that an emergency can become a disaster if advanced has not been done and immediate action has not been taken. A leak that is not stopped early is an emergency whereas a leak that is leads to flooding throughout the building becomes a disaster (Roper and Millar 1999:6). The purpose of the question in this section was to establish whether the UFS had developed such a plan for records. Interviews with the UFS staff members revealed that there is indeed some form of measures put in place for the entire university to prevent disaster should it occur though only few indicated that there are disaster recovery plans in their departments.

One staff member, Ashia's views indicated that her department should be having one disaster recovery plan as there was a backup for Image Now system. She noted:

> *The UFS backs up its electronic records on the cloud storage and Image Now I assume they have a backup, and it was offline in January this year which I think there was a backup occurring. Yes, I assume we have backup for Image Now (Ashia, white female, Practitioner at the Department of Education).*

Ashia above emphasised the importance of the UFS backing up its electronic records on the cloud and indicated that it was backed up regularly as it was offline in January. Management of records is a set of activities which covers the entire lifecycle of the records; however, is also encompasses the protection of records in case of an emergency like a disaster (Zulkipli 2021:1). Thus, disaster preparedness is made part of the records management so that the records which are vital for the functioning of the business is protected and its easy accessibility is ensured before, during and after the disaster. With the increase in the use of computers, a lot of records were created electronically in university offices, departments, and Colleges. Some of these records were stored on the hard drives, external hard drives, on the cloud and memory sticks, online systems such as Teams, Campus Solutions, PeopleSoft, Oracle, Blackboard, Image Now, Shared folder, UNIdrive etc. However, there was no clear policy guidelines as to how semi-current electronic records at the UFS should be handled. This challenge was made much worse

since the University's records management policy had not yet been implemented and effected because as in the previous sections, this policy was not yet well known by most staff members of the UFS. Once the policy was finally put into use, it would act as a mechanism or tool to assist the University authorities in making decisions on all matters related to storage, maintenance, and disposition of records.

Likewise, another staff member, from the Protection Services indicated that they did have a disaster recovery plan and through the ICT who were ensuring that their information was safe and secured. Puleng had this to say:

> *Yes, we do have one the ICT so much committed in making sure that our information is safe and secured, for instance last year we had a scenario where a colleague's laptop crashed which completely died and he could not retrieve his information, he did not have an external hard driver we managed to get his information back as ICT was able to recover all the information. We also have external hard drive, and it has been preached to us not to keep the external hard drive and the computer in the same place. We download information from the hard drive, and you can leave the hard drive at home so that you have a backup should a disaster occur (Puleng, black female, part of management at the Protection services).*

Puleng's views on the disaster recovery plan were that the ICT of the UFS was doing all its best to capacitate and caution staff members about refraining from keeping external hard drive and their computers in the same place in case a disaster occurs. A "risk assessment" identifies possible disasters and emergencies that might occur in the region or within the institution itself, then it considers how damaging these emergencies or disasters might be to the institution (Roper and Millar 1999:15). The UFS computer system had built-in recovery capabilities as demonstrated by Puleng on her response to the question of the availability of a disaster recovery plan. Scholars such as Roper and Millar (1999:16), warned that one method of viewing the threats to the institution's records and information on a regular basis s to conduct ongoing security and safety checks. The regular inspection of fire extinguishers, security and safety checks should be conducted frequently, and they should be done at various times.

Similarly, another staff member, who was a Senior Practitioner for Student Housing and Residence Affairs, was positive that there was no way that the UFS did not have a disaster recovery plan in place and indicated that even during Covid-19 the UFS had a plan in place, and it was implemented. Siphokazi noted:

The university should and there is no way that the university does not have a disaster recovery plan, for example during Covid 19 the university had a plan, and it was implemented, and we had to run with the Housing and Residence department and come out with strategies on how we deal with the outbreak in the residency yes there is (Siphokazi, black female, senior practitioner at the Department of Student Accommodation and Residential Affairs).

Siphokazi above emphasised the importance on implementing disaster recovery plan as she indicated that even during the advent of Covid-19 virus her department had to run the business and devise out strategies on how to deal with the outbreak in the residency. While the focus is on protecting records and information, it must not be forgotten that information resources are not as important as human lives and Covid-19 outbreak taught us one or two things about this statement. The UFS ICT had proved to be equally equipped with the necessary skills to deal with a disaster recovery as this was established that with technology related risks, such as a theft of computer hardware or system, or power failures that had been reported by one staff member in the previous sections. Indeed, records offices, records centers, and archival institutions often experience power failures, and many people do not consider these as emergencies. It is indeed an emergency, as work must come to a halt and assistance to be logged to the ICT helpdesk to assist the computers and linked to the server and do the rebooting while restoring some of the lost or corrupt information.

Likewise, another staff member who was a lecturer at the accounting department indicated that his department did have a disaster recovery plan and kept duplicates for backup purposes. Thobile had this to say:

Yes, there is plan in the department as I have a duplicate of everything as we backup our records on the cloud, on Teams and on the laptop as well I can easily recover

documents (Thobile, black male, Practitioner at the Department of Communication and Marketing).

Thobile's views were that making duplicates of everything that was important and backing up on the cloud, Teams as well as on his laptop as it was important to consider the effect of each possible type of potential emergency or disaster on records and information sources. The effect of a hazard on records and information will also depend on the quality of the facilities and the nature of protective measures in place (Roper and Millar 1999:) Damage to records and property are obvious consequences.

Likewise, another staff member indicated that as much as she was not sure if the UFS has a disaster recovery plan in place but could demonstrate the understanding of data recovery aspects should a disaster strike. Celine noted:

> *Not probably sure about it, but in terms of data recovery it is available should something happen to our server we have a back-up and it sits on different servers and locations in our campuses, it will sit between two departments because it is not my only department that is affected by it so if something had to happen to the main server, we have backup servers that are continuously updated, with the most recent data and if it happens that our physical records were to be destroyed we can always retrieve as the data sits on our system hence we always ensure that we digitise hard copies so that we have a backup. ICT services so if we lose a hard copy, we have a backup (Celine, white female, part of management).*

Celine's views highlighted how important to have data recovery in the UFS server as a backup to the physical records to be digitised should a disaster occurs. The UFS's ICT department has an approved Disaster Recovery Board Terms of Reference which was dated on the 13 March 2015. The disaster recovery board terms of reference were first approved by the ICT ManCo (Management Committee) back in 2015 and last approved on the 12 May 2017. The Disaster Recovery Board (DRB) of the UFS's ICT department entailed ICT Services staff members and representatives of key UFS departments. DRB is comprised of a variety of UFS leaders with decision-making authority. The DRB must manage all disaster recovery - related issues that have a direct or indirect impact on the achievement of the university's objective. However, the UFS should develop a disaster

preparedness policy which will address the following issues: procedures; activities involved before; during and after the disaster, the type of records and information the UFS holds; the tools of storage to be used during disaster; the supplies for disaster, the responsibilities during the disaster (disaster management team); and a list of specialists who can be contacted after the outbreak of the disaster. The DRB is not fully representative of key records and information management drivers, since it clearly stipulates that to be considered a member, people must have experience in IT (Information Technology), operations and business are included. The roles and responsibilities of the DRB are as follows:

- To determine the critical systems that need to be operational within the shortest time possible, using the resources available, to make the UFS operational after a disaster.
- To oversee the development and monitoring of the implementation of the Disaster Recovery Plan, associated policies, procedures, and codes of practice.
- To keep under review the UFS Disaster Recovery Plan and the testing of associated plans.
- To act as a focus point coordinating and executing the UFS Disaster Recovery Plan.
- To monitor regulations.
- To act as an interchange of information, ideas and best practices relating to disaster recovery and associated risks.
- To review its own terms of reference annually.

The UFS DRB is chaired by the DRB Manager and oversees the management of the committee. The DRB ensures that ICT resource investments made by the UFS are protected against service interruptions, including large-scale disasters, through the development, implementation and testing of disaster recovery/business resumption (DR/BR) plans.

For Fix, it was different, he indicated that since the University of Cape Town (UCT) incident of arson which destroyed rare archival material in the university library and reduced to ruin two heritage buildings Rhodes Memorial restaurant and Mostert's Mill. He noted:

I think what happened at UCT opened our eyes as we have one staff member at the UFS library, a dedicated person was tasked to test and activate the disaster recovery plan. And library was identified as being risky and that focus was on the library as drilling was done at the back of the library as there is a dedicated space for drilling to sensitise staff members. There is a plan for a greater awareness as now we are planning to bring the Mangaung Metro Municipality, the SAPS and there will be a drilling happening to prevent disaster prior to occurring. We have Mr. Thato Block to be contacted by our own representative Mr. Kgotso responsible for this initiative (Fix, black male, part of management).

Fix pointed to the designated SHE champion in the library department as the library was found to be a high-risk area the disaster discovery plan whom he was tasked to test and activate the disaster recovery plan. Regardless of the long-term actions required or the level of emergency planning underway, it is possible to take steps to prevent a potential emergency from becoming a disaster (Roper and Millar 1999:7). An emergency plan will document the steps to be taken, assign responsibilities and outline detailed information that might be critical in a disaster, such as the location of emergency equipment or supplies, contact information for key personnel and steps to take to salvage materials. Scholars, such as Oweru and Mnjama (2014:160), recommend that Records and Archives Management Department should:

- Develop both a disaster preparedness plan and a disaster policy to be modelled on the same lines as provided for in the National Library of Australia (2010).
- Institute disaster preventive measures.
- Raise staff awareness on disaster management issues for the Department.
- Draw up a budget for disasters.

As part of effective long-term record keeping, records management programs are often responsible for disaster prevention planning (Purcell 2012:128). Records management plays a crucial role during emergency planning because it allows the identification of those records vital to business continuity and the development of a strategy to protect them (Crockett 2016:35).

4.6 Interpretation of research findings

In order to address the objectives of this investigation thoroughly, the literature was arranged according to the following three themes:

- Managing university records,
- Best practices in managing university records and
- Preventive measures for records.

This section presented the interpretation of the findings. The researcher weighed up the findings of the current study with other studies, particularly those covered in the literature review. The goal of this section was to highlight that the information contained in university records needed to be managed according to a methodological approach in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the universities in carrying out their mission. The literature reviewed demonstrated that the research on records management in universities and state institutions produced indistinguishable findings. The next section of this chapter presented the interpretation of the findings involved in the first theme were presented.

4.6.1 Theme 1: Managing university records.

The researcher's focus in the preliminary literature review was determining the best practice in records management in South Africa and other parts of the world. The research outputs from scholars, such as Ngulube (2005), Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), and Coetzer and Roux (2012), discovered that university records in South Africa and the other parts of the globe were not well managed. The researcher also looked outside of South Africa in order to understand if university records are not managed well in other parts of the world. The situation was not only unique to South Africa, the research of scholars such as Chigariro and Khumalo (2017), Wema (2003), Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2013) and Bailey (2011) who conducted their own investigations in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Namibia, and the United States of America (USA) on Higher learning institutions were also examined. Studies have shown that delayed retrieval of active records, management policy, up-to-date records retention and disposal schedule and guidelines

for managing electronic records were among the notable challenges (Malake and Phiri 2020).

The studies conducted by Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), Ngulube (2005), Coetzer and Roux (2012) and Chigariro and Khumalo (2017), Iwhiwhi (2005), Kaczmarek (2006) and Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2013) discovered that record-keeping practices in universities do not reflect sound records management. As such, current records management practices in the UFS, a South African public university, did not demonstrate best practice. Institutions ought to adhere to proper records management practices in order to ensure good public service delivery (Malake and Phiri 2020). It is very difficult to function properly without policies and procedures that lay the goals and standards of the university as well as the guidelines for implementing them (Coetzer 2012:97).

4.6.1.1 Records Management policy

Whilst it was assumed that the UFS would have a records management policy, only two participants out of eleven participants (including academic and support departments) indicated that the university had a records management policy. From the majority of participants, it would appear that policies for records management at the UFS are non-existent, in succession implying that records are neglected. Alternatively, if the two participants were correct, then there is absolutely no awareness of the policy at the university as in the previous sections it was revealed by staff members interviewed in the study. In anyway, 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 framework for supporting documents such as procedures, business rules, disposal schedules etc.

It is hard to dispute that a necessary component of a good records management program is a strong support from upper management, this is equally true in business, government, and higher education (Kaczmarek 2006:24). At the University of South Africa, a full

commitment from top management for records management was bought to achieve strategic direction, funding, procurement of bulk scanners and had just over 550000 documents scanned and uploaded to the Enterprise Content Management (University of South Africa 2019). Records management is crucial to all institutions including universities, unless records are managed efficiently, it is not possible to conduct business effectively, and to account for what has happened in the past or to make informed decisions about the future (Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni 2013).

Even in the presence of legal mandates, institutional policies, actual or threatened litigation, and frequent news stories involving improper destruction or unauthorised release of records, minimum support for records management continues to be the norm in colleges and universities (Kaczmarek 2006:24). The above statement resonates with the way UFS staff members indicated that in the absence of guiding documents (like, policies, procedures, records retention schedule, systematic disposal, register of files opened, file plan etc,) they simple throw the records into the dustbins and this did not reflect best practice. It is crucial for universities to follow the ISO Standard for records management policies and procedures which ensures the evidence and information that records contain can be retrieved effectively using standard practices and procedures, and that suitable attention and protection applies to all records (92-93). The scholar further highlight that this would require every employee to know and adhere to the policy for proper records management.

A comprehensive records management program includes policies, procedures, and processes that address significant recordkeeping issues, specifically:

- Determining how long recorded information needs to be kept satisfying an institution's requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with recorded keeping laws and regulations in all locations where an institution has business dealings.
- Management inactive records in a cost-effective manner
- Organising active records for retrieval when needed.

- Protecting recorded information that supports mission-critical business operations. These programmatic aspects are embodied in Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles (Principles), which were issued by ARMA International in 2009 to foster general awareness of records management systems and standards to help institutions in developing effective programs for records management and information governance (Saffady 39:2015).

4.6.1.2 Legislative framework governing records

This section the researcher wanted to establish if staff members of the UFS had any knowledge of legislation and regulations governing the management of records. The lack of knowledge from the UFS staff members for legislative framework and regulations that govern the management of records is worrying as only a few understood the NARSSA and some only indicated the POPIA with only two indicating knowledge of HEA. Even though some staff members indicated knowledge of POPIA some shown confused about its relevance on the management of student records instead the UFS is spending too much time in advertising it, they also advised that the university should do more in conducting workshops on the relevance of POPIA to the work. As a state university, all campus departments are subject to the State Records Act of Illinois as any reframing of the approach to records management cannot lose sight of these mandates. Contrary here in South Africa, the UFS as this study has revealed did not manage its records as prescribed by the National Archives and Records Service Act regulations in fact the UFS was not complying with the regulations as stipulated by the Act, specifically:

- Section 13 (2)(a) no public record under the control of a governmental body shall be transferred to an archive's repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without the authorization of the National Archivist, issued.
- Section 13(2) (b) the National Archivist shall determine records classification applied by state institutions.

Records management issues are present in colleges and universities just as they are in business and governments and this lack of support may be due in part to the academic priorities of higher education (Kaczmarek 2006:32). Compliance is concerned with

ensuring that an institution's practices comply with external requirements, including laws, regulations and industry-specific guidelines that specify retention and security of requirements for recorded information, and with the institution's internal policies and directives for creation, storage, distribution, retention, disposition, and protection of information assets (Saffady 2015:41). Compliance will investigate suspected violations of organisational policies and present the findings with recommendations for corrective action. However, these problems seem not peculiar to the UFS only. In the University of Namibia (UNAM), the absence of standard and formal ways of managing records was not a desirable situation because the records management policy remained a white elephant as not many staff members were aware of it or had knowledge on how they could make use of it as discovered by Matangira, Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2013). Elsewhere, at Simon Fraser University (SFU), there is a comprehensive records management program that includes records retention schedules and disposal authorities, model file classification plan and records management toolkit as revealed by the study conducted by Kulcu 2009:94).

4.6.1.3 Training on records management

Staff directly engaged in the records management function should receive the appropriate training. The immediacy of freedom of information legislation means that staff at the records creation stage have to be careful with their filing and be more aware of file plans, retrieval, and disposal, and all those other records functions that are likely to affect the handling of requests for information (Smith 2007). UFS staff members had never received a formal or capacity building workshop to equip them on the management of university records throughout their lifecycle which is a big challenge as staff members resorted in applying their own initiatives to manage records. Though elsewhere around the world there are great differences between Turkish and Canadian staff in their level of professional education, whilst workers from the former have learned mostly from experience, workers from the latter generally have more formal education in the professional area (Kulcu 2009:94). Consequently, many people can learn theories and procedures from written advice and guidance, but the practice is best learnt by interacting with fellow professionals and by hands on training (Smith 2007:205).

The management of electronic records within the UFS was found to be filled with a traffic of various software systems to manage records and information used by different sections and there is no integrated records management system to manage electronic records created daily. The university should pay undivided attention to its electronic records management and try to introduce an integrated electronic records management system that would ensure that the is systematic integrated mechanism of managing electronic system.

4.6.1.4 Responsibilities of records management

The UFS staff members responsibilities and roles pertaining to records management within the university were not clearly defined as there was no approved policy, yet they indicated that they were responsible for the management of records. The staff member who was responsible for the entire university records management needs to take control of this responsibility and conduct records management awareness campaign to all staff members responsible for records keeping by virtue of being the UFS official records manager. However, with the increasing recognition of the importance of the role of records management in an institution, allocation of responsibility for the function has also become important (Smith 2007:186). The records manager is the person responsible for providing advice and guidance on the management of the institution's records from the moment they are created until the time of their destruction or preservation in an archive (Smith 2007:186).

4.6.2 Theme: 2 Best Practice in managing records

This section of the study, the researcher was keen in answering the research question on what best practices for managing university records would be recommended for the UFS based on the finding of the study.

4.6.2.1 Filing university records

The UFS did not manage its records utilising a classification system to give file reference to records and folders instead staff members interviewed indicated that they were using their own initiatives and best practice to manage university records. The UFS did not have

an approved filing system to manage its plethora of records and information it created daily the study had revealed that. This resulted in staff members utilising and devising their own method of filing university records in the absence of the filing system. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005), warned that universities are information sensitive institutions and as such, generate a lot of large number of records. Unless, the controls are instituted at the point where the records enter the system, unnecessary cost would be incurred and there is danger that the system would be inundated and fail to function properly (Ngulube 2005). Whether physical or digital, records need to be captured in the system in a structured and systematic manner and in the case of current records, this is usually a classification scheme which links records arising from the same function or activity (Crockett 2016:45). There may also be a need for more detailed file lists.

4.6.2.2 Disposal and retention schedules

Disposal is the last phase of record's lifecycle, records in offices or non-current storage need to be managed to identify those that are reaching their retention date or those that need to be transferred to the archives (Crockett 2016:120). The UFS did not have a records retention schedule to manage its piles of records and information it produced daily, judging from the recorded interviews from the participants interviewed by the researcher. Most common retention period for records held as active files in Canada is seven years whereas, in Turkey, records are simple held permanently in departmental units, for lack of retention schedules (Kulcu 2009:97). Staff members at the UFS mentioned that they know that records are kept for five years after auditing and with some indicated that they did not dispose of student records as stipulated by HEA. There was one staff member who indicated that she just threw the records to the dustbins and some staff members mentioned that they shredded them if they were confidential records, such as sick notes of students. When information is no longer needed, its destruction should be documented. This will enable an institution to meet any requests regarding information that has been so dealt with to assure public confidence that official information is being destroyed in accordance with proper procedure and practice (Smith 2007). The most effective tool of documentation is by the use of disposal schedules. It is crucial to be

consistent in the manner retention is expressed as it is also important to explain the way the retention instructions work (Crockett 2016:112).

4.6.2.3 Storage of university records

Even with properly implemented retention schedules, office storage space may not be able to accommodate all the records. The records no longer needed constantly to support the work can be removed to storage which is cheaper and not so accessible. The UFS had enlisted a service provider (InfoFile), for storing inactive records though some departments were storing their records in their storerooms (like utilising the services of Provisioning department) and there was no uniform approach in utilising this service. UFS staff members stored physical records in their offices storeroom, as well as at the Provisioning department and digital records were stored on the cloud, Image Now, Blackboard, Oracle, PeopleSoft, hard drives, UNIdrive, Shared Folder systems. Ngulube (2005), opined that keeping these records implies that separating them so that they can be separated from active records and then storing them away from expensive office space.

4.6.2.4 Records maintenance and access to records

The legal right of access must cover the time at which material will be made available to the public, together with any exceptions (Smith 2007:161). In South Africa PAIA and POPIA have been enacted to advance the legal right of access by individuals to the information held by state institutions. The UFS did comply with the PAIA manual of this Act as it was approved in 2021. The access issue to records and information at the UFS could possibly pose a serious challenge as departments could only have access to their departmental records and the access is only restricted to the only staff members of that particular department. In this case the researcher would mention out the use of Image Now as it was only applicable to certain departments while others did not have the same privilege to access it. The records of an institution can only be as useful to the institution only if they are accessible to the staff members of the organisation who need to use them (Ngulube 2005).

The UFS staff members were responsible for the maintenance of the university records and ICT was responsible for maintaining digital records according to staff members that were interviewed. As much as the participants indicated that they were responsible for maintenance of the university semi-current records, ideally at this point they should be removed from office areas and current systems, so that they do not take up space unnecessary (Smith 2007:77). They should be stored in records centre (InfoFile), as one the participants (Herman), who happened to be a records manager indicated that his business unit enlisted its services as such a place provides more economical storage and maintenance and facilitates systematic disposal. Storage accommodation for records that are active or closed should be clean and tidy and handling procedures should be in place that will minimise damage to the records (Smith 2007:1).

4.6.3 Theme: 3 Preventive measures

Records and information preservation entails a range of management functions and skills which must be in place to protect and preserve records and information, no matter their age or medium. This exercise is primary concerned with seeking ways to prevent damage and or deterioration, minimize damage that cannot be prevented so that records and information remain legible and accessible. The UFS's staff members relied heavily on the capabilities of IT department for backing up their records and implementing tight security around access and on cloud computing. The researcher in this section wanted to investigate as to how protected are the records from theft, fire and in the event of disaster if the university will cope.

4.6.3.1 Protection against theft

Most staff members indicated that there were measures in place to prevent physical records and information from being stolen as the offices are constantly locked, filing cabinets, also there is an alarm system erected to activate to the Protection services should there be an intruder as it is always armed after hours. With regards to digital records staff members indicated that they had tight security access as the only registered users with strong user access.

4.6.3.2 Protection against fire

The UFS did seem to have measures in place for fire prevention systems in the form of fire extinguishers, fire suppression, fire detector and alarm system to alert the university protection services according to the staff members interviewed. The participants also indicated that these fire prevention apparatuses e constantly inspected and serviced regularly. One staff member indicated that at his department they have elected representatives to form part of the Safety Health Environmental (SHE) Officer, this representative is trained to equip the rest of the staff members with safety control measures.

4.6.3.3 Disaster recovery plan

Since records and information is crucial and irreplaceable, disasters such as fire or flood can have a devastating effect. The first step in developing a disaster recovery plan is to analyse the risks and threats (Crockett 2016:184). Most staff members of the UFS that were interviewed in this study indicated that they should be a disaster recovery plan for the university, and some highlighted their own departmental procedures to deal with disasters. One participant mentioned the case of the arson at the UCT as opened the UFS in terms of analysing the risks and treats hence the is a Risk Management Committee which deals with the issues pertaining to risk mitigation. According to the same staff member there were efforts put in place by the UFS in partnering with other disaster recovery units within the entire Bloemfontein city which comprise Mangaung Metro and the SAPS Disaster Recovery Teams. With drilling exercises being undertaken and evaluation being done to test the preparedness should a disaster occur as highlighted by the staff member. Many participants indicated that the ICT of the UFS is very active and vigilant when it comes to the disaster prevention as they are issued with strong user credentials, with constant updates of possible fishing scams and storing the digital records and information on the cloud. One staff member indicated that the UFS ICT always encourages staff members to keep away hard drives from their computers to prevent disaster of losing all their information. The UFS does have a Disaster Recovery Board (DRB) under the auspices of the ICT department however it is not clear if there

was a Disaster Recovery Plan Policy available under this Board. The DRB's objective is to ensure that ICT resource investments made by the UFS are protected against service interruptions, including large-scale disasters, through the development, implementation and testing of disaster recovery/business resumption (DR/BR) plans. Its Terms of Reference was approved by ICT ManCo on the 12 May 2017. The DRB was created under the directive of the ICT ManCo to serve as a supporting structure for the ICT ManCo for reviewing and maintaining disaster recovery plans. It is responsible for to the ICT ManCo, UFS business community and UFS academic community for making informed, responsible decisions in order to avoid unnecessary risk to and negative impacts on the production environment of ICT Services. Its cope must manage all disaster recovery-related matters that have a direct or indirect impact on the university.

4.7 Summary

A records management program is a common counterpart to academic archives, as these programs help identify the institution's official records and schedule them for either eventual destruction or permanent retention (Purcell 2012:113). Staff members of the UFS should however be praised for their efforts in ensuring that the University records are maintained, managed, and protected despite the so many challenges the institution faces. The UFS does not have a records management policy approved or implemented judging by the responses that the researcher recorded from the interviews with the participants. The personnel responsible for the records management of the university Herman should come out of his cage and take control of the records management of the university records as the evidence suggest that staff members in the absence of policies, procedures and guidelines just throw the records in the dustbins. The University will lose valuable vital records and face litigation that could lead to institutional reputational damage should it happen that stakeholders are not issued with the relevant information they request and not complying and adhering to the POPIA could be in trouble.

In the next and final chapter, the research findings will be summarised, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter laid out the data interpretation and discussion of the findings. This chapter summarises, discusses, and integrates the main findings and recommendations of this research. It also presents a summary of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations to establish a records management programme in universities. This chapter discusses the main findings of this research against the themes and questions that were formulated at the conception of the study.

5.2. Summary of the finding

5.2.1 Managing university records

Literature review (Chapter Two) and data analysis from the participants indicate that compliance improves when records are managed within the confines of regulatory framework requirements managing the management of records. Legal and regulatory compliance, improved standards of corporate governance and greater institutional transparency and accountability have been and will long continue to be benefits to be expected from and strived for by Manager: Records and Archives (Bailey 2011:67). Equally so, good record-keeping practices ascertain information and records are not unnecessary duplicated, which not only serve as a save-costing measure, but also maintaining the version control and accuracy. The UFS mostly rely on numerous data management systems (e.g., Image Now, Campus Solutions, PeopleSoft, UNIdrive, SharePoint, Blackboard, Shared Folder) to manage piles of information that is generated daily.

Following the recommendations of the 2017 Data Management Maturity (DMM) assessment, the Data Management Governance division at ICT Services was tasked with designing an operating framework (UFS annual report 2020). This framework outlined the individual roles and institutional structures required to establish data management governance (University of the Free State website 2020). Data governance and

management is the oversight function of data management activities and deals with the monitoring and control of these activities. The oversight function is required to maximise the return on investment in data, while minimising the risks associated with processing data. The ICT Services drafted a policy to formalise the accountability and responsibility for the most critical institutional data. The UFS Rectorate and Council approved the Governance Framework Policy on the Management of Administrative Data 35 in 2020. The Registrar is the policy owner, while the Manager: Records and Archives is responsible for future policy versions. Equally so, improved records management can reduce the cost of storing redundant electronic data. For the purpose of cutting back on needless overhead, accumulated stacks of historical records need to be evaluated and managed. Few record managers would disagree with any of these claims, but the evidence from these projects indicates that the truth might be more nuanced and heavily reliant on a variety of contextual considerations, not the least of which is the volume issue.

The UFS is sorely relying on Information systems utilising Information Technology to manage piles of information generated in all its three campuses (Bloemfontein, Qwaqwa & South - former Vista University).   All these information systems have been implemented according to defined and documented standards and security (UFS website 2020). However, the study discovered that the integrated Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) was not taken into consideration by the UFS ICT or consult records management users and creators. Consequently, case studies mostly indicate the necessity for better integration of records management in the design and implementation of electronic information and communication systems (IRMT 2009). Whereas improved electronic records management could save up wasted money on redundant electronic data. All employees in an institution need to be more aware of proper record keeping procedures because of the growing usage and reliance on electronic records and information, the increased expectations of those who seek out and utilize information, and the speed with which freedom of information requests are processed. (Smith 2007:187).

The study established that there was no direct link between senior practitioners, practitioners and staff in general who are managing records with the ICT staff members

and the records management unit. For instance, Image Now (a system used to record student information pertaining to their administration, residential and housing information, registration, and academic progress) which functions without the records management unit of the UFS. Furthermore, it was established that electronic records were managed in a manner that each individual user could only identify, retrieve, and understand their records when they required them. The records and information were saved/ or stored either by subject, person's name or/ department's name/ or per student number/ or identity number who sent the transaction but without suitable file referencing. Whilst it is evident that born digital records are constantly backed up on the cloud by the UFS ICT department, however there is no guarantee as to how long and to what extent.

In most instances databases are often shared between core systems and ancillary applications, however this network of data dependency easily gives rise to data replication, data duplication, data discrepancies, non-aligned data fields etc. In fact, this network of data dependency easily gives rise to data replication, data duplication, data discrepancies, non-aligned data fields are one of the ironies of modern technology. However, within the UFS despite facing loadshedding, failure of global networking infrastructure, and increasing digital threats in 2020, it enabled ICT Services to maintain a 100% integrity level in terms of all institutional data (UFS 2020 Annual report). No data was lost during the reporting period. Matangira; Katjiveri-Tjiuoro and Lukileni (2014:107) argue that keeping information under control assist in preserving crucial data and avert acquiring ephemeral records. Distinguishably software systems generate, manage and store digital data using propriety technologies that evolve not to isolate records from other types of information to avert replication or to set up and maintain an intellectual control, conditional of the computer industry (Duranti 2010:79). Moreover, the ability of information systems to manipulate data has convinced administrators to be linked with the main task of a system host lesser, frequently insignificant, activities that are not key to the university's mission but support functions (Duranti 2010:87).

The literature demonstrates that there is always a link between good governance and compliance with the law as good governance is intertwined with the law and is completely not apt to entirely unhinge government from the law. In all stages of records life-cycle

management (e.g., the creation/ or capture/ use/ or store and preserve/ or destroy/ or delete) there are rules that should be followed, and the overall information governance of the institution should take the legal requirements into consideration (Sofie Klareld 2016:25). Information on records are the most crucial information assets as they are the evidence of business transactions. In a number of studies that have been conducted on records management in various sub-Saharan African countries, the conclusions drawn from these studies indicate that the problem of managing records continue to increase (Nengomasha 2013:4).

The passing of Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) by the South African government has made it very crucial for the adequate management of university records. Consequently, King IV Code (2016) directs the governing body to ensure that the institution's corporate citizenship efforts include compliance with the Constitution of South Africa (including the Bill of Rights), the law, leading standards, and adherence to its own codes of conduct and practices. Provisions of the Higher Education Act (HEA 1997:32) Section 41 subsection 1 (a-b) stipulates the records to be kept and information to be furnished by council, to keep a complete accounting record of all assets, liabilities, and expenses. The Code further recommends that those charged with governance should ensure that compliance is understood, not only as an obligation, but also as a source of rights and protection (King VI, 2016:30). Furthermore, the advent of modern technologies, social media platforms, and the like have played a crucial role in creating a sense of accessibility between citizen and government, which in turn has led to an influx of public demand for access to state information (Leveille and Timms 2015:155).

- An open government strategy aims to increase government transparency by giving citizens access to both public sector information (that is, publicly funded information that should be publicly available) and information that informs the public, to a reasonable degree, on state processes, activities, and procedures (Levelle and Timms 2015:157). Records management provides a framework that aims to ensure that:
- The record is present – your organisation should ensure that it has the information that is needed so that it can reconstruct activities or transactions that have taken

place. This ensures that the institution is accountable to its stakeholders (whether they are citizens, parliament, or shareholders).

- The record can be accessed – the people in your organisation must be able to locate information when required. This is vital in areas where there is freedom of information legislation, but just as important to support the efficient operation of the organisation's business.

- The record can be interpreted – if required, your institution must be able to establish a record's context, who created it, as part of which business process and how it relates to other records. This is vital part of the organisation's accountability and transparency.

- The record can be trusted – when you and your colleagues are consulting a record, you need to be assured that it reliably represents the information that was actually used in or created by business process, and its integrity and authenticity can be demonstrated. Records provide the "official" evidence of the activity or transaction they document and must therefore be reliable and trustworthy. The reliability of a record is linked to its creation. Who generated or issued the record and under what authority? Can this authority be proved? Not all records have official stamps or seals. The continuous safekeeping of records will also protect their reliability. For instance, if official version of the minutes of a meeting is filed by the Manager: Records and Archives and thus protected from change, the unauthorised version will not form part of the official record. The issue of reliability is essentially important in the context of electronic records and information.

- The record can be maintained through time – your organisation will need to ensure that the qualities of accessibility, interpretation and trustworthiness can be maintained for as long as the record is needed. During its creation a record will develop and change. For instance, minutes of the meeting will be produced in draft form and reviewed by the members of the committee before being approved. Once this process of creation is finished the record must not be susceptible to change. If a record is changed or manipulated in some way, it no longer provides evidence of the transaction it originally documented. For instance, if someone alters the minutes of a meeting after they have been approved, the minutes can

no longer be considered an accurate record of the meeting. This is another issue that becomes more crucial in an electronic context.

- The record will be disposed of as part of a planned system, through the implementation of disposal schedules to ensure the retention of the minimum volume of records consistent with effective and efficient operations. Is your institution keeping more records than it needs? This is the case in very many institutions. The information that does not need to be kept, let's call it rubbish as it gets in the way of the crucial information (Smith 2007:4).

The conclusion for the research questions was presented according to the themes that transpired from the study, these themes are consistent with the study objectives which are: policy, responsibility for records management, legislation governing the creation, capture and use of records and skills in records management, retention and disposition, access and maintenance, storage, protection of records against, theft, fire, and disaster. The UFS does not manage its records according to the prescripts governing the management of records in South Africa. Despite claims by the individual (Manager: Records and Archives) interviewed responsible for records management in the university under the Registrar's office that there was a records management policy, there was no evidence of that policy and/or the dissemination of such a policy to staff members. Only, one staff member indicated that he once read about the policy in the university circular of which he was not too sure about its existence. Legal and regulatory compliance, refined standards of corporate governance and sizeable organisational transparency and accountability have for time been inseparable and will for time continue to be rewards to be expected from and strived for by Manager: Records and Archives (Bailey 2011:67).

The National Archives and Records Service Act (NARSAA) 43 of 1996 Section 13(2)(a), stipulates that no public record under the control of a state institution shall be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without the written authorisation of the National Archivist. The Act's section 13(1) further stipulates that subject to the provisions of this Act, the National Archivist shall be charged with the proper management and care of public records in the custody of a state institution. The UFS needs to successfully establish a records management programme, the records

management policy, retention schedules, awareness of the importance of sound records management, all the necessary guiding documents (such as register of files opened, destruction register, disposal schedules, retention schedule, systematic disposal of records, records procedure manual, records management committee, standardised filling system). The records management unit of the UFS has an appointed Manager: Records and Archives who has expertise and right traits to take control of the entire records management programme of the university. The responsible individual for the records management unit should conduct a records management audit of the records created by the university to successfully draft a standardised file plan that would reflect in identifying the vital records of the UFS. The UFS records management unit must drastically inculcate standards in order to accomplish uniformity in records management at the UFS. It is of paramount importance to scrutinize and verify the university's compliance with policies, procedures, and strategies by doing a records management system audit. The Manager: Records and Archives of the UFS should follow-up with an intensive records management awareness to all staff members of the university starting with the Top management and Senior Managers this would allow him/her to get the attention and his/her visibility so that top management supports the programme of action.

The research findings data from the participants indicated that there was never a records management awareness training that staff members had attended at the university. The findings also show that the University lacks employees with professional qualifications in records administration and does not appear to offer its workers continuous, ongoing training. The presence of competent qualified personnel in records management make certain that the job is executed successfully (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005:11). However, as happened in the past that the responsibilities of records management were the sole responsibility of professional records management unit, gone are those days as now the role of managing records impacts on every employee of a particular institution (NECCC 2004:23). This assertion has been further endorsed by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA 2016) in that sound records management is a collective responsibility which all members of staff have an equal obligation to maintain.

The National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council (NECCC 2004:23) recommends that agency personnel will have to be capacitated not only on the basics of records management, but also in the ability to categorize documents. Records are essential to the business of all institution. Iwhiwhi (2005:354), Momoti (2017:69) and Coetzer & Roux (2017:10-11) are of the view that university records control mechanism such as policies, procedure manuals and other guiding documents should be developed. In contrast to these authors Kaczmarek (2006:24), argue that even in the presence of legal mandates, institutional policies, actual or threatened litigation, and frequent news stories involving improper destruction or unauthorised release of records, minimum support for records management continues to be the norm in colleges and universities. Consequently, the improvement of the record-keeping is essential (Lowry and Wamukoya 2014:45). It documents the work of public authorities and private companies, support their operations, and form the basis for the many services that are provided (Smith 2007:1). Subsequently, in the Eastern Cape bags and boxes filled with information of employees of the former Transkei and current governments-dome dating back to the 1800s and others as recent as 2012 were retrieved before being destroyed without adhering to the Provincial Archives Act (Mgaqelwa 2015). These scenarios emanate from the frustrations that unskilled personnel who manage records were not supported with adequate training and capacity buildings that would equip them with how to manage records efficiently and effectively. Better educating office staff about recordkeeping practices would help in at least two ways. First, it would reduce confusion office staff felt when trying to apply the retention policy and schedule. Second, it would streamline some office procedures and reduce burdens on office staff (Height and Smith 2016:49). Lastly an accelerated support from top management and other business units is crucial for the establishment of an effective records management programme that would enhance sound records management throughout the entire university. This statement is supported by scholars such Kaczmarek (2006:24) and Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:82) as they argue that it is as hard to dispute that a necessary component of a good records management program is strong support from upper management. Without a good records management program, an institution creates unneeded risk for itself when it carries out inconsistent oversight of records creation, storage, and dissemination (Kaczmarek 2006:24). Whereas scholars

such as Ngoepe and Van der Walt (2010:82) advise that an effective and efficient records management programme is essential for the governance of any institution.

5.2.2 The best practices for the management of university records

The conclusion for the research objectives was presented according to the themes that transpired from the study. The themes are consistent with the study research questions which are: filing of university records, storage of university records, retention and disposition of records, records maintenance, and access to records, protection of records against theft, fire and disasters. According to the study findings, the state of records management in the UFS was poor due to the absence of an approved file plan, unlawful destruction of records, no records management procedure manual, lack of records retention and disposal schedules. When records are poorly managed, much time is involved in sorting and locating needed information from large volumes of records (Bakare; Abioye and Issa 2016:49). The study established that some of records management failures were to a great extent due to the fact that the records management unit under the university registrar is ineffective in developing awareness on the important role that records play in an institution. The records management units within state institutions are responsible for developing and managing the implementation of records management strategies and action plans that may assist in managing the intellectual capital of government and establishing and nurturing a knowledge sharing culture (Ngoepe 2016:344).

The participants were of the view that specific records and information has to be retained for a specific period to allow auditors to make audit opinions which demonstrated their knowledge as to why records have to be retained. A retention programme is also necessary to ensure disposal of records of ephemeral nature and to allow the transfer of records of enduring value from active maintenance to a records centre. The findings of the study established that at the UFS, records were not consistently categorised since there was no formal written classification scheme. The absence of an approved file plan for the UFS makes it difficult to provide a continuous record of business activity. There was no standard filing system that was being utilised at UFS. This results in each department, unit or office employing their own personal ways of filing records which often

changed with the coming of a new office bearer. Some of these systems were operating well however, most remained not suitable for records accountability (systematic records management). Properly designed filing system covering the full spectrum of an institutions functions is necessary to arrange records systematically in an orderly fashion so as to aid comprehensive retrieval (Ngoepe 2016:44). Consequently, the delay in records retrieval processes is a manifestation of poor records management practices, which breeds inefficiency (Bakare; Abioye and Issa 2016:61). Whereas Nengomasha (2013:5) reported on a study conducted at the Gaborone City Council by Tsholo and Mjama (2010) that the regular and misplacement of records was due to ineffective tools that monitor the movement of files within the institution. File plan is a useful method of organising information for purposes such as retrieval, storage, and more involved processes of records management such as disposal scheduling (Smith 2007:53). File plan is also a tool that links records to their business context by associating them with categories in a business classification scheme (ISO 2016:14). The act of linking a record to its business context is the process of classification which supports the following:

- the application of access and permissions
- the execution of appropriate disposition rules
- the migration of records of a particular business function or activity to a new environment as a result of organisational structure (ISO 2016:14).

Smith (2007:53) advises that user consultation is crucial for successful implementation of the file plan and support will be required to assist users adapt to viewing, browsing, and retrieving information in a variety of new ways. The scholar further advises that the main purposes of a file plan may be summarised as being:

- providing links between records that originate from the same activity or from related activities;
- determining where a record should be placed in a larger aggregation of records;
- assisting users in retrieving records;
- assisting users in interpreting records;
- assigning and controlling retention periods;
- assigning and controlling access rights and security markings.

Records management matters are contemporary in colleges and universities just as they are in private and public institutions. Concurrently, records management programs carry on lacking undivided attention or consistent support in higher education (Kaczmarek 2006:32). Equally so however, in South Africa, the University of South Africa has given records management full support in that, it has a dedicated department with a Divisional Head with approximately three Managers: Records and Graduation reporting to her (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). Most around the globe universities in our times utilise specific software applications in managing their successful mechanism in records management (Miah & Samsudin 2017:1819). Starting up a records management program is a tremendously complex and demanding function, in such that even the duration of the task is sometimes exceeded if completed at all (Ngoepe & Van Der Walt 2010:82). These scholars are of the view that there is consensus among researchers that many institutions fail to come up with a records management programme that meets the business needs. According to this study's findings, valuable office space was being squandered on the storage of documents that could have been kept in the offsite storage (InfoFile) or other less-priced locations. This also had a significant impact on how these records were eventually disposed of when their retention period had passed. Some departments at the UFS are utilising external recycling suppliers to destroy records and generate revenue without consulting the Manager: Records and Archives of the UFS. They could not be simply disposed of if they could not be quickly identified.

Diligent care and attention should be a priority in the management of records in all formats throughout their lifecycle, to ascertaining good governance by only retaining records that have administrative, fiscal, legal, and historical values (Ellis 2002 :7). The study findings established that some UFS departmental offices developed and applied their own rules and records management systems which leads to redesigning their filing systems and developing their own internal records management programs. The mindset that "my records are in my cabinet in my office" is no longer appropriate. With very few exceptions, records and information created by people while performing their official duties are considered corporate records and information and should be made available to the corporate body. (Smith 2007:216). Integrated records management programs should be adopted without devaluing any of the elements of records management.

5.2.3 Preventive measures for records management

Preventive measures can be used daily to protect not only the vital records in an institution, but all other records and information as well. These measures need to be scrutinized regularly and evaluated to ensure that the organisation is providing a suitable level of protection to its records and information. A visit to an approved retention period for records to ensure the timely destruction/ or deletion of obsolete records, thus decreasing the number of records kept in the offices. Vital records can also be damaged or destroyed by human – induced accidents such as fire or lack of knowledge about the consequences of specific actions (Saffady 2005:62). Participants were requested to indicate or state the availability of preventive measures to protect the records from enemies such as theft, fire, and disasters. It is of paramount importance that the university knows which records it cannot function without, and that measures are taken to ensure these records are safeguarded in the event of a disaster.

  Records in all formats can be misfiled, misplaced, or stolen. The threat of theft is greatest for records stored in the user's work areas where systematic handling procedures are seldom implemented, and security provisions may be weak (Saffady 2005:63). On a positive note, the results of the study indicated that the majority of UFS staff members interviewed demonstrated that the UFS' digital records are protected from theft with strong password credentials on their computers which are constantly updated on regular intervals. The UFS offices were equipped with burglar doors and fitted with an alarm system that is armed after hours, filing cabinets always locked and ITC always being alert with sending warning messages for fishing scams. Electronic records may be accidentally deleted during database reorganisations or by utility programs that consolidate disk space (Saffady 2005:63). Consequences associated with the loss of specific records series, for instance may be devastating, serious, limited, or negligible. Similarly, the likelihood of significant information loss associated with specific threats may be described as very low, low, medium, high, or very high (Saffady 2005:63).

Preventive risk control measures address the physical environment where vital records are stored and used (Saffady 2005:67). The UFS does have measures in place for protection of records against fire, in the form of fire suppression, fire detectors, fire

extinguishers and an alarm system that is linked to the university protection services to send alerts should a fire breaks up. The study discovered that these firefighting apparatuses are constantly inspected and serviced on a regular basis according to the recordings of staff members interviewed. On an encouraging note, the UFS, has appointed representatives as SHO to form part of the SHE and are trained to equip the rest of staff members with the safety control measures as the study has established.

Management of disasters is a continuous and integrated process of planning and implementing risk reduction and response measures by several sectors and disciplines (Kunguma 2022:3). The scholar further opined that both the increase in disasters and arrival of the 4IR have tested the disaster risk reduction and management capabilities of the South African disaster management fraternity. Preparing for a disaster is another component of collection management and the most significant part of emergency and disaster planning is being prepared (Purcell 2012:208). A peculiar hazard that we have just witnessed and experienced which brought the world on its knees was the life-threatening coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) which WHO declared it a global pandemic. According to the Republic of South Africa (2002) and the Republic of South Africa (2005), the DMA and NDMF emphatically prescribe the institutionalisation of disaster centres in each sphere of government and focal disaster management points in organs of the state (Kunguma 2022:3).

The study has established that the UFS has had disaster management plan even prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, as measures were put in place and activities were not stalled as the disaster recovery plan was implemented as per the recordings from some participants. Kunguma (2022:1) is of the view that establishing a disaster information management and communication system (IMCS) is a mandate of the South African National Disaster Management Framework of 2005 (NDMF). The study further discovered that many participants indicated that UFS' ICT is very active and vigilant when it comes to avert any disaster that might threaten the records and information. During 2020, various additional data backup and disaster recovery technologies were put in place to reduce the recovery time and ensure that services running on virtualisation platforms could be quickly recovered in a disaster. These mechanisms also included

synchronous data replication between data centres, as well as the implementation of Druva in Sync cloud. Furthermore, storage requirements have gone down significantly due to newer data deduplication and compression technologies. The rapid, forced migration from a traditional campus-based academic provider to an online academic institution has highlighted a high level of unpreparedness throughout the university. Apart from causing the unalignment of the institution's business continuity plans to reality, the seriously short time frames for transition to an online institution became the key to survival for both staff and students.

Although several attempts have been made on national level to convince the national mobile data providers to be accommodative in terms of data volumes and associated costs, very few made lasting commitments to the national need regarding data for students. The UFS was the first to enter into formal contracts with all national mobile data providers 'outside' any centrally (nationally) negotiated arrangements. These contracts and the data ICT provided became the basis for the UFS data provisioning initiative and are maintained at a price point far lower than the current going rate for data provisioning. The UFS was also the first South African university to provide a managed data-provisioning solution to students and staff through the GlobalProtect Virtual Private Network (VPN). The GlobalProtect app has been in operation since early April 2020. The UFS acknowledges the obligation to ensure the security of all data, information, information systems, equipment, and processes within its ownership and control domain. This obligation is shared by every UFS user, including staff and students who deal with data or information. In November 2020, the UFS received an international award for Advanced Digital Security, following the design and development of a secure, managed data provisioning platform by Mr. Louis Marais. He was recognised as a major international player in the field of digital security.

Furthermore, the University of the Free State was acknowledged internationally in terms of advanced digital security practices. The information security policies have been aligned with ISO 27001, an international standard for managing information security. ICT Services procured and established an in-house competency to facilitate effective data integration. This technically comprehensive facility comprises (i) an operational data store, (ii) an

enterprise services bus (ESB), and (iii) a corporate data warehouse. The ESB was fully operationalised in 2020. The operational data store serves as a central data repository. It has grown organically in the process of eliminating system-to-system integrations in 2020. The corporate data warehouse is in the planning phase.

Management of disasters is a continuous and integrated process of planning and implementing risk reduction and response measures by several sectors and disciplines (Kunguma 2022:3). The UFS has formed joint partnership with other stakeholder who are well versed in the management and mitigation of disasters, such as the Mangaung Metro and the South African Police services to continuously monitor and evaluate the disaster management plan. The UFS ICT has developed systems in place to securely store data and information on the cloud for back-up purposes, as well as encouraging staff members to desist from having both their computers and external hard drives in their possession at the same time. This is encouraging since if a staff member loses his or her laptop during robbery, they may have their back-up saved on his/ or her hard drive, and this could be as well regarded as a preventive measure should a disaster strike. The ICT of the university conducts staff awareness on possible phishing scams and hackers through emails to alert staff members to be vigilant of possible cyber-attack on their information and records. Contrary to this statement the study could not establish if indeed there was a disaster recovery plan policy for the UFS. Whether prevention or protection is involved, risk control begins with heightened security awareness formalised in organisational policy and procedures, which must be communicated to every employee who works with vital records (Saffady 2005:67). The UFS ICT Services should be recommended as they have put measures in place to mitigate any disaster that might occur by having a Disaster Recovery Board (DRB) Terms of Reference in place which has a clear mandate under the directive of the ICT ManCo to serve as a supporting structure for the ICT ManCo for reviewing and maintaining disaster recovery plan. The DRB is tasked with managing all disaster-related matters that have a direct or indirect impact on the university.

5.3   Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations need to be considered:

- Records management programmes function within the framework of policies, laws and procedures which offer direction to practice. The objective of these is to allow for conditions conducive to sound records management. This is extremely significant in an environment, like the UFS, where the responsibility for records management is distributed among individual units with little or with decentralised control. Policy is a requisite to furnish wide rules whereby methods may be formulated. The UFS' records management function should therefore impact across the whole university and not be confined to one central department.

- Furthermore, to policies, there is a necessity for standards to be developed that will identify best practice and benchmarks to ensure an effective consistency in practice. Apart from the policy, there ought to be mechanisms to scrutinise compliance with policies, rules, and procedures. One such mechanism would be the piloting of records management system audits.

- Additionally, manuals for records management should be created to serve as a point of reference for practices and procedures and to help standardize records management operations across the University. In light of recent changes in the information industry, the university should support ongoing training in records management. It is crucial that all persons in charge of records, especially those in faculties and schools, are made aware of the requirements for access and that there are systems in place to ensure that those standards are followed. The presence of qualified staff members responsible for record keeping practices guarantees that the work is executed diligently. Just as crucial as making sure that proper records are recorded is the management of the records after they are created. Workshops and seminars should be organized by the UFS to train staff members on records management.

- Establishing physical and mental control over records that are entering the records system is necessary for proper records management. This is accomplished by

registering each record as it enters the system, arranging it in conveniently accessible locations using classification methods, putting it into files with appropriate file names, and indexing the data in the records. If records are to avoid being lost, they must be tracked down wherever they are and for how long when they are used by multiple people and when they can be transferred outside of the office for usage elsewhere. The Manager: Records and Archives should develop and maintain file plan, develop information sensitivity classification, develop retention schedule (based on legislation and operational requirements) and provide guidelines for physical storage for active, inactive and archival records according to acceptable standards. The UFS records management unit should maintain evidence for possible future litigation mediation, arbitration, or disciplinary hearings, manage, store and retain records and other forms of information.

- All UFS records series should be inventoried, and a retention strategy should be created and put into place right away. The University should also give its top-notch electronic records management environment considerable consideration. A benchmarking exercise should suffice on the best practices of record-keeping and a visit to the University of South Africa's Records Management Division would help the UFS to successfully develop an effective records management programme. Additionally, it is advised that the University Records Management unit take on the responsibility for managing records during their entire life cycle. Departments should be informed that the University Records Management are the repository for knowledge on records management practices. Finally, the UFS' Manager: Records and Archives should establish and implement a university records committee to maintain records-related policies and schedules and establish a point of contact in central administrative offices and colleges for Records and Information Management (RIM) communications.

- The UFS' Manager: Records and Archives should develop university's records management website (or Intranet) which will have a web page dedicated to RIM resources that will provide details on RIM policies and procedures, as well as the university's records retention policy and schedule; contact information; training manuals; transfer forms and a frequently asked questions section. The website's

objectives may include streamlining information flow, responding to many common queries, and offering a point of contact for more complicated inquiries. The Manager: Records and Archives' role will be more effective, and the corporate identity of the records management will be enhanced if at functional levels of the institution (groups, departments, units or colleges) an individual is nominated to serve as the formal contact for that unit with the records manager. The establishment of such network of records champions is crucial for good communications and for ensuring that standard corporate policies and procedures are developed and implemented (Smith 2007:187).

- The UFS records management unit should explore and procure the Electronic Content Management (ECM) and UNIdrive which is a content management solution that will enable and make it easy for UFS staff to manage documents and records of all types and formats in a uniform manner. This will allow tasks and activities such as records capture/create; classify; share/ collaborate; file/store; search/retrieve; access; preserve/dispose; deliver/ distribute. The benefits of using UNIdrive are: Improve access, retrieval and protection of business documents and records; improve provision of evidence during audit checks; reduce time used to search for business documents and records; improve process efficiency with automated workflows and file plans; improve collaborative working and learning across the institution and reduce excessive printing and storage costs.

- The UFS top management should give the necessary support to the records management unit and ensure that there is enough human capital, infrastructure, and budget for the successful implementation of an effective records management programme within the institution.

- The UFS's goal and vision of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of governance and support systems should incorporate record keeping's best practices in the same manner as other governance functions such as audit and risk management. The success of any institution is dependent upon effective records management practices that ensures the right records are availed when needed for effective operation. An effective records management system

facilitates the flow of records throughout an institution to ensure that information is available readily where and when is needed. The role of efficient record-keeping in supporting good governance and accountability and protecting the rights of citizens cannot be overemphasised.

- The UFS' goal and vision of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of governance and support systems should not only concentrate on the financial side neglecting other areas of governance such as records management. The negligence of records management will not result in desired result of improving audit outcomes and sustains the outcomes (Ngoepe 2014:148). Until such time that records management programme is given the attention it deserves by the UFS as a management issue, it will be very difficult to enforce compliance with record-keeping requirements and to develop and cascade the mandatory culture of creating, maintaining, and using records.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Nevertheless, this study has had one limitation that ought to be affirmed. Senior Management, HoD's of the departments and college Heads were not available as they cited the period of data collection was a pick-up time for student registration. However, this did not have a significant impact, hence the study was carried through completion. The study's objective was to establish a records management programme for the UFS. The study was limited to the main campus in Bloemfontein and omitting Qwaqwa and South campuses. Fundamentally, it is recommended that other studies be extended to gather data to support or disprove the claim that university records are not properly kept, it is necessary to replicate this research in other South African universities. The study was restricted to few selected academic and support departments of the UFS. Moreover, this study focused on the establishment of a records management programme for the UFS. The study further recommends a need for research to investigate the role of university archives in establishing a records management programme in other universities in Southern Africa.

5.4   Summary

The study findings established that record keeping and management in higher educational institutions is crucial and cannot be over emphasised. This is so that the institution can continue to function, which is heavily dependent on the availability of relevant records of previous operations. Because the amount of information in a complicated organisation like the university is so great, it is impossible to store all of it in the brain, hence records must be kept. The study's findings established records management programme as an essential mechanism and obtaining the active support of senior management of an institution is the most crucial aspect in setting up a records management program. This is typically a process of instruction intended to increase awareness.

The UFS' Top Management should replicate the University of South Africa's top management that made a complete commitment to records management in order to accomplish strategic direction. UNISA's Top Management sponsored with funding, as a result, the purchase of bulk scanners, and the scanning and uploading of little over 550000 documents to the Enterprise Content Management system (More, Johnson and Kgaladi 2019). This should be supported by solid legal framework, carefully designed regulations, and an aggressive implementation strategy. The study also found that as decisions are made at many levels within the institution, decision-making is an administrative function that invariably calls for information in the form of records. Another major issue is that record-keeping is not sufficiently understood and valued. If it appears that the university is unable to provide students with accurate academic records or provides incorrect information to a prospective student, it may embarrass itself, which could result in reputational harm and possibly financial loss if the prospective student ends up being accepted to another university.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION TOOL(s) (including questionnaire/ interview guide/checklist)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR UNIVESITY ADMINISRATIVE STAFF MEMBERS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Lwazi Daysman Mestile, I am a Masters Student at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria and am currently undertaking Research Project that focuses on "Establishing a university records management programme in South Africa: A case study of the University of the Free State". Thus, this interview schedule seeks information on your personal background and the management of records in your university. I kindly request you to take a few minutes and respond to the questions in this interview schedule to help me obtain the required information that will enable me to complete this research successfully. Kindly be as honest and truthful as possible. Be assured that your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be sorely used for academic purpose. Should you have any questions about this research Project or are keen in knowing the results, please feel free to contact me (Lwazi Daysman Mestile) on 0656401842 or email to daysmanmestile@gmail.com or contact my supervisors at the Faculty in Human Science, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria.

B. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

1. Is there any policy for records management in the UFS?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Whose responsibility is for the management of the UFS records?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Are there any legislative regulations governing the creation, capture and disposition of records and the overall management of records that the UFS complies with?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Are there any tools or mechanisms used by the university for the management of records available?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Does the UFS have a retention schedule for its records?

   _____

   _____

6. How does the UFS dispose its records?

_____

_____

_____

7. What classification systems are used for the management of university records?

_____

_____

_____

8. Has any training in records management offered to the staff members responsible for records management in the UFS?

_____

_____

_____

9. Are you aware of any records management legislations governing the management of records?

_____

_____

_____

C: RECORDS MANAGEMENT STORAGE AREAS

10.   Where are the UFS records being kept?

_____

_____

11. Who is charged with the maintenance of the UFS records?

_____

_____

_____

12. Are personal files stored systematically by Human Resource staff members?

_____

_____

_____

13. Are records put in file covers being given file reference numbers or coding?

_____

_____

_____

14. How do you file the university records?

_____

_____

_____

15. Do you have a register of files opened?

_____

_____

_____

16. Is there a destruction register for records disposed by the UFS?

_____

_____

D: PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR RECORDS

17.   Are the university records protected against theft?

_____

_____

_____

18.   Is there any fire prevention method to protect records against fire?

_____

_____

_____

19.   Does the university has a disaster recovery plan for record management?

_____

_____

_____

20.   Where do you store in active university records?

_____

_____

_____

21.   How does the university ensure records are not deleted or altered?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B:

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

26 September 2022

NHREC Registration# :

Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # :

37155628_CREC_CHS_2022

Dear Mr Lwazi Daysman Mestile

Decision:

Ethics Approval from 26 September

2022 to 26 September 2023

Researcher(s): Name: Mr L.D. Mestile

Contact details: 37155628@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof I Schellnack-Kelly

Contact details: schelis@unisa.ac.za

Title: ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE.

Degree Purpose: MA Information Science

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The **_low risk application_** was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project

    that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing

    to the College Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and

    procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants,

    particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of

    participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the

    Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable

    national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and

    scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the

    following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of

    Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the

    National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes

in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the

original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require

 additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (26 September 2023)

    Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an

    application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 37155628_CREC_CHS_2022 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

 Yours sincerely,

Signature: *Khan*

Prof. KB Khan

CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson

Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature: PP

 Prof ZZ Nkosi

Acting-Executive Dean: CHS

Tel: 012 429 6758

APPENDIX C

22-Nov-2022

Dear Mr Lwazi Daysman Mestile

UFS AUTHORITIES APPROVAL

Research Project Title:

ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN SOUTH

AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE.

This letter serves as confirmation that you have received reciprocal ethical approval, with the reference number UFS-HSD2022/1938 from the University of the Free State (UFS). It also confirms approval to collect data from the UFS students and/or staff members.

Kind Regards

PROF RC WITTHUHN

VICE-RECTOR: RESEARCH & INTERNATIONALISATION

CHAIR: SENATE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

23-Nov-2022

Dear Applicant External

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1938/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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