

**RECORD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR
COLLEGE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates records management system in College of Medical Sciences, University of Calabar. The study was carried out using survey research design to find out the type of records created, use and maintenance of records and the storage facilities available. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was 66, frequency and simple percentages were used to determine the type of record created, used and maintained. An investigation on the storage facilities available with measure to protect vital records was made. The finding revealed that, paper, disk and electronic mails were the records format created, used and maintained. There is inadequate storage facilities and the measure put in place to protect vital records are grossly inadequate as many of the records created in paper form are kept on the floor, under the table and on the table. The study recommends provision of adequate infrastructural facilities for record storage and good measure put in place to protect vital records.

Keywords: Records, Record management.

Introduction

In every organization, such as universities, records are created to provide a background information of events. Records serve as the memory of an organization, in that it shows what was done, how it was done, why it was done, when it was done and who did it. International Standard Organization (ISO) (2001) defines records as information created, received and maintained as evidence. It also constitutes information by an organization or person in pursuance of legal obligation or in the transaction of business.

Records can be in any format – paper files series, digital records and content of websites. They may consist of letters, forms, report, correspondence, memos, document, circulars, minutes, files of mark sheet, finance paper, certificate, transcript and CDs. This is supported by Popoola (2014) who defined records as all information regardless of medium, including official files, correspondence, minutes, research files, annual reports, maps, photographs, computer disks, e-mail and other documented materials. Workers in the university cannot be expected or relied upon to remember, or report on past policies, discussions, actions and decisions accurately at all times. Because of this inaccuracy of individual recollection of event, there is need to document our information in order to preserve knowledge. This is collaborated by Lawal (2002) who maintained that record is an account made in an enduring form especially in writing, that preserves the knowledge or memory of event or fact.

Usman (2013) sees record as any document or other sources of information compiled, recorded or store in written form or in film or by electronic process. He is of the opinion that university records are major assets that have value beyond the immediate environment. Therefore the loss of university's records usually jeopardize or destroy evidence of students' achievement. This is corroborated by Poopola (2014) who defined records as being created, collected and stored by university as evidence of its legal existence. He maintained that records are asset of the university because of their economic value. Since records are assets of the university, it then follows that university records has a potential value for historical and evidential research. Hence, such records must be managed well. In the context of university records, records can be defined as documents regardless of its format which facilitate university activities in the area of teaching, learning, research administration and business which are thereafter retained for a period of time or preserved to provide evidence of its transaction or activities. According to Abioye (2015), record are generated in the course of discharging the function, meeting the mandate,

vision and mission of a university. The author maintained that records serves as evidence of the activities of the institution and its collective memory. Based on research over 90% of the university records are still in paper form. For proper retrieval of information in a timely and efficient manner it is mandatory that university records are organized, arranged and managed properly.

Record management, according to International Standards Organization, is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transaction in the form of records. Popoola (2015) asserts that record management is the systematic control of an organization or institution records throughout their life cycle, as it increases institution effectiveness and facilitate easy and quick information retrieval. A well organized records management programme does not only save the time to retrieved such records for prompt decision making, but also a lot of money could be saved for the college, (Abioye and Habila 2014). Sound record management system in a university will assist the administration realize transparency, accountability and good governance in their conduct of business operations.

Literature review

Record management is the methodical control of an organization records throughout their life cycle in order to meet both operational and business needs of the organization as well as their fiscal requirement. Alegbelye (2008) submitted that record management is the application of systematic control over information which is required in the administration and operation of the institution activities. The author pointed out that, valuable records are preserved and made available while needless records are disposed of in a timely fashion. He maintained that record management promotes economy and efficiency within an organization.

Adbulraham (2005) researched on the management of record for effective administration in university in North Central Nigeria and reported that records creation, records retrieval, records scheduling, filing and correspondence management were done manually. Cupboard, wooden shelve/cabinet, steel shelves, drawers for flat file, box file and top of tables are storage facilities made available. Compliance with international standard, adequate storage facilities under good environment, computerization of all universities records, periodic checks to ensure proper management are all identified as strategies that will enhance the

effective management of records. The study recommended that adequate space, security devices and storage in a good atmospheric condition that will extend the life of records should be provided.

Akor (2013) researched on an assessment of records management system in establishment division of two universities in Nigeria. Four research questions were posed, the sample population were 88 staff of the two universities. Questionnaire was used to collect data, and the research questions were answered using frequency and percentages. The finding revealed ineffectiveness in record management practices, incompetent personnel, inadequate infrastructural facilities and constant power failure. Based on the finding, these recommendations were made: training of staff to handle the university records, provision of standby generator as an alternative to power supply, provision of adequate fund and enough infrastructural facilities.

Abioye (2004) researched on record management practices in college of education in Nigeria and reported that studies institution applied the record life-cycle concept in the management of records without putting a functional record management practices in place. The study recommended functional record management practices, improved storage facilities, automation of record, training and retraining of personnel in the management of records and putting in place a disaster management program as a security measure to guide against natural and man-made disaster.

Odu and Atseye (2009) researched on record management practices in the National Achieve Calabar. The study adopted descriptive survey method, a sample of twelve respondents were drawn from the population of fifteen staff. The study revealed gross inadequacies in record management practice, non-use of contemporary storage and security devices. However, the study commanded the use of alphabetical and chronological arrangement of records.

Historical background of the college of medical sciences

The College of Medical Sciences was established in 1978 as a Medical School offering courses in two faculties of Medicine & Surgery and Basic Medical Sciences. While the Faculty of Medicine & Surgery offered only the MB.BCh programme, the faculty of Basic Medical Sciences offered para-medical courses of Anatomy, Biochemistry and Physiology.

The College has dramatically increased in its academic scope over the years and today there are changes both in the number of faculties and in its

nomenclature. A statute approving the change of name to the College of Medical Sciences and clearly defining functions of key officers in the College and its relationship with the Management of the University was approved by senate.

At present, the College has three faculties headed by Deans who are under the Provost as the executive head and with a student population of about 2000. The college is strategically located on the left hand side of the University from the main gate and is rapidly developing to link up with the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital. It wears an ambience of peace and serenity always to depict an environment where serious academic and administrative activities take place. Currently, there are 3 faculties comprising 26 departments offering 10 B.Sc, MB.BCh and BDCh programmes, 3 Masters Degree programmes and 1 doctorate programme.

The faculties are: Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.

The statute which gives guidelines to the workings of the college including its relationship with Principal Officers of the University provides for the following as Principal Officers of the College: The Provost, The Deputy Provost, Deans of Faculties, College Secretary, College Accountant, College Librarian, College Auditor, College Engineer.

It was approved by Senate in 2002 and recently revised in 2013 to increase its academic and administrative scope.

Aina (2003) posited that vital records need to be properly maintained and organized after their creation. Vital records constitute those records that are necessary for: the continuation and reconstruction of the agency operation, the construction of the financial and legal statue of the agency and the fulfillment of financial obligation to employee and outside interest. Alegbeleye (2015). For the continuous operation of the College of Medical Science there is need to evaluate the type of records that are created, used and maintained. It is equally important to check the storage facilities and to evaluate the measure put in place to protect vital records from possible disaster.

Statement of the problem

Part of the primary objectives of the application of records management are the determination of vital records, type, storage, retention and preservation of records of an organization and their security and protection. A lot of

records are created, received, maintained and used at the college of medical sciences, for the continuous operation of the college. Despite the fact that the college of medical sciences yearly spend money on staff to attend seminars, workshop and in-house training on maintenance of record, preliminary investigation still show that both staffs and students seems to find it difficult to access information when needed, this study want to find out what is responsible for this, and whether storage facilities protection of vital records and the types of records created, used and maintained are in anyway responsible, hence this study investigated the types of records created, used and maintained are the storage facilities available for these records and the security measure put in place to protect vital records from possible disaster in the college.

Research questions

1. What are the types of records created, maintained and used in the college of medical science?
2. What storage facilities are provided for the management of these records in the college of medical science?
3. What measures are put in place to protect vital records from possible disaster in the college of medical science?

Methodology

This study is a survey research, the instrument used to collect data for the study include direct observation, interview and questionnaire administration. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study the questionnaire was pre-tested among the personnel in the university librarian office. Ten copies of the questionnaire were administered to ten respondents. The population of the study comprises 72 record managers from 4 faculties and 24 departments in the college. The sample comprised 66 records managers. This is believe by the researcher to be large enough to ensure realistic conclusion and appropriate generalization.

The instrument used for this study was constructed by the researchers, the instrument tagged record management system in university questionnaire. The questionnaire had five sections to elicit responses from record managers. The instrument was administered in the faculties and 23 departments. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentages in answering the research questions.

Results

Table 1: Types of records created

Types of record	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Paper	66	100
Tapes	2	3.9
Firms	-	-
Disks	18	27
Electronic mails	14	21
Others	-	-
Total		

To answer research question 1 the types of records were analyzed. Simple percentage statistical analysis technique was used. The result is presented in table 1, 2 and 3. From the above result in table 1, 66(100%) were records created in paper while 18(27%) were created in disks, 14(21%) were created in electronic mails and 2(3.9%) were created in tape. Records created in paper was the highest which was 66(100%). This indicates that a lot of space will be required to store the record to ensure the continuous operation of the college. The finding of Akor (2013) will be useful for the study, he reported that enough infrastructural facilities should be provided for record management.

Table 2: Records used

Types of record	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Paper	66	100
Tapes	10	15
Firms	-	-
Disks	20	30
Electronic mails	5	6
Others	-	-
Total		

From the Table 2 above the result showed that 66(100%) of the records used in the college were in paper form while disk was 20(30%), tape 10(15%) and electronic mails 5(6%). This showed that majority of the records used in the college are in paper form.

Table 3: Records maintenance

Types of record	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Paper	66	100
Tapes	10	15
Firms	-	-
Disks	20	30
Electronic mails	5	6
Others	-	-
Total		

The result on table 3 showed that records maintained in the college are paper 66(100%), tape 19(15%), disk 20(30%) electronic mails 5(6%). The record store in paper form will require big storage facilities to be able to maintain them for the continuous operation of the college.

Table 4: Types of storage facilities in use in office

Types of storage facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Metal shelve	60	91
Wooden shelve	45	68
Folder	21	32
Box	6	9
Sack bags	40	60
On the table	63	95
Under the table	60	91
On the floor	45	68
Others	0	0

The results on Table 4 address research question 2. 60(91%) of the records are kept in metal shelve, while 45(68%) are in wooden shelve, 40(60%) are kept in sack bags. 60(91%) are kept under the table and 45(68%) are kept on the floor. This shows inadequate infrastructural facilities and this is in line with Akor finding who reported inadequate infrastructural facilities and Odu and Atseye (2009) who reported gross inadequacies in record management practices and non-use of contemporary storage facilities.

Table 5: Measure put in place to protect vital records from disaster

Measure put	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Photocopying	4	60
Book/document lamination	-	-
Jackdaw folder/boxes	-	-
Burglary proof	40	60
Maintenance of IT	40	60
Back up file	42	64
Fire detection	3	5
Smoke detection	-	-
Heat detection	-	-
Others methods	-	-
Total		

The result on table 5 shows that 40(60%) respectively were the measure taken in photocopying, burglary proof, maintenance of IT to protect vital records from disaster. Back up file is 42(64%) fire detection 3(5%). From the report there was no provision for smoke detection, heat detection. 40(60%) recorded for photocopying, burglary proof were grossly inadequate. This result shows that no adequate measure is put in place to protect vital records. Abioye (2004) recommendation is in support with this study that disaster management programme should be put in place as a security measure to guide against natural and man-made disaster. It also in agreement with Odu and Atseye (2009) who revealed inadequacies in security devices.

Recommendations

In view of the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Provision for disaster management programme as a security measure to protect vital records and guide against natural and man-made disaster.
- Provision of adequate storage facilities for records.

Conclusion

College of Medical Sciences is envisioned to turn out graduands who provide a positive impact on the society and are able to compete favourably in all areas of medicine and its practices nationally and internationally, hence record created, used and maintained should be managed properly and effort should be made to see that the records are secured to enhance the continuing operation of the college and accuracy of information on past events.

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