
ADMINISTRATION OF RECORDS KEEPING IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**ANUDIKE, CHIOMA STELLA.**Department of Social Science Education,
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Abstract

The administration of records keeping in tertiary institutions plays a pivotal role in ensuring operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Effective records management facilitates the smooth functioning of academic and administrative processes, supports compliance with regulatory requirements, and enhances decision-making. This study explores the current practices, challenges, and impact of records keeping in tertiary institutions. It highlights the importance of adopting digital records management systems, training staff, and implementing robust policies to improve records administration. The findings underscore the need for tertiary institutions to prioritize records management to enhance administrative efficiency and institutional performance.

Keywords: Administration, Records Keeping, Tertiary Institutions**Introduction**

Tertiary institutions are centers for academic pursuits as well as places where learning is sought at its maximum. Tertiary institutions be it university, polytechnic, colleges of Education, school of Health Technology translate information in form of records for reading, learning, research administration in the course of its daily activities. In other words, records are created and used for the operation

of their daily activities (Tadaferua & Omehia, 2022). For tertiary institution to function effectively and carry on with its services, there are usually one form of record or the other. Records are synonymous with human activities and have existed since the creation of man. The term “record” was taken from the Latin word “recordari” meaning to be mindful of or be remember. Balalola (2019) defined records as the totality of documents, journals, ledgers, CDS, Memory card, among others, via which information could be retrieved and used as evidence for activities, decision taken or past events. Azim, Yatin, Jensonray & Mansor (2018) *defined records as a vital document that are created, received, maintained and used by an organisation or individual in the cause of discharging legal responsibilities or in the pursuance of business activities*. Ootobo and Alegbeleye (2021) posited records as barometers for measuring the performance of an organisation which means that without records, no organisation can function. Managing records entails proper and adequate storage, filing procedure, retrieval tools and retention schedule. An effective record keeping is essential for administrative effectiveness in an organization. It ensures adequate documentation making retrieval of information easy whenever needed. It also facilitates maintenance and regular reinforcement procedures. It encourages the simultaneous removal from active files or records that are not currently being used. An effective record keeping helps the management of costly and confusing cluster obsolete records which have contouring value. This explain why records are the fabrics with which the structure and function of a purposeful administration is built. Hence, the basic of record management is that record requires managing like other higher education resources.

In the words of Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017), in higher education, record keeping and management are essential. The institution's long-term viability is heavily reliant on the availability of useful records; as a result, records play an important role in higher education management, from the institution's founding to the stages of development, implementation monitoring, evaluation and renewal of its programs and these are vital pieces of information for the institution's continued survival. Proper keeping and management of education records would enhance planning process, serve as historical record, provide knowledge on academic performance and facilitate schools' financial administration. It will equally provide a basis for advisory and counseling service, since effective records management is very vital for the quality existence of the higher education system and national development (Aleru, 2022). Institutions create records to support the activities that they carry out. However, if these records are not managed properly, they will not provide the necessary support and information might be lost causing problems for the institution. To provide an efficient and effective administration that ensures that the business runs as smoothly as possible, there should be proper management of records. However, the primary benefit of utilizing the student record management system in the university or higher education is for educational institutions to effectively track data. However, an effective records management program will ensure that records are available for use when needed.

Goals of Tertiary Institution / Higher Education

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), conceptualized that the goals of higher education shall be to contribute to national development, through high level relevant man-power training, development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and society, development of the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciation of their local and external environments, acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills, which will make individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The goals of tertiary or higher education also include promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service forging and cementing unity and promoting national and international understanding and interaction. In order to achieve the above goals, the Federal Government of Nigeria furthers state that, tertiary education shall pursue the goals through research and development, virile staff development programmes generation and dissemination of knowledge a variety of modes of programmes, including full time, part time, block release, day release and sandwich. These means of achieving tertiary education goals boils down to records keeping as it serves as a means for continuity of information for generations.

Concept of Educational Records

Educational records are information in whatever form which is very necessary for existence and smooth running of educational institutions. Records must be written documents where the activities of the institutions are written, and it must fall within the normal routine of an activity. The implication is that all activities, programmes and functions that are connected to teaching and learning as means of attaining education goals must be documented. These records must be kept in books, files, computers, cupboards, drawers, cabinets or flash drives, and are always made available/accessible for future reference. This is exigent because records as documental statements of facts about persons, facilities, proposals and activities in and about the institution are life-wire for school administration. To this effect, administrative staff of tertiary institutions should not only maintain accurate records but must ensure that all staff keeps accurate records of their activities. Gesmundo, Glorioso, Raviz and Apat (2022) conceptualized that every strategy implemented by institutions such as universities is vital for the order of records. Thus, university policies help ensure that the system of creating, modifying and preserving records runs smoothly. To Koko and Nwiyi (2019), school records are of utmost importance in the management of educational institutions and require serious attention.

Concept of Record Administration/ Management

Management is a term used in place of administration. Most of the time in education, these two concepts are used interchangeably. It is the arrangement of human and material resources available for education and carefully and systematically using them to achieve educational objectives.

Similarly, records management is all embracing activity which involves form control, correspondence control, reports management, file management, records inventory and appraisal. In line, Mosweu and Rakemane (2020), described record administration / management as a set of activities required for systematically controlling the creation, distribution, use, maintenance, and disposition of recorded information maintained as evidence of school activities and transactions. Furthermore, record management includes accountability, efficiency via tracking of records, protection of vital information, governance, regulate compliance with policies and laws, support decision making. Olubor, Abdulkareem and Adeyanju (2017), see record keeping and management as one of the essential parts of information as we as the management of the manpower, hardware and software in an organization. Record management is a method of controlling all records throughout their life circles from creation to retention. Effective school administration hinges on good record keeping and management. When students' records are created or received, the user must ensure that they are correctly filed and recorded so that they can be tracked, retrieved and used by the tertiary institution concerned in the future (Azman, 2009). However, on the other hand, Seniwoliba, Mahama and Abilla (2017), asserted that manual recordkeeping is prone to errors and is vulnerable to harm one's business. They further maintained that manual record-keeping is negatively affected by water, fire, and other hazards. It was also reported that the amount of paper kept may be excessive, particularly in Nigeria, where students can request for records of many years. Therefore, Electronic or digital record-keeping has the potential to alleviate the problem of manual record-keeping.

Therefore, an effective management of record serves as the survival of any organization especially higher institutions through the following:

7. Proper keeping of records from the time of creation to the time they will be needed.
8. Keeping of records to ensure that they are genuine and reliable.
9. Providing adequate services to meet the needs of the institution.
10. Providing accurate, reliable and usable documentation for easy accountability.

Noteworthy, record management procedures are based on classification of records of any higher institution which indicates its data or information that will become records.

Records Classification

Oluwalola in Olubor et al. (2017), asserts that record classification can be referred to as grouping of documents or files according to the filing suitability. Higher institutions can adopt any system that is most suitable depending on the type of record, such as students' result, admission letters, student bio data forms, staff data. Among such filing systems are:

5. **Alphabetical filing system:** This method organizes files based on the names of individuals, businesses, institutions, subjects, or geographic locations, in alphabetical order. For instance, student records could be filed alphabetically by last name
6. **Numerical filing system:** This system arranges records by a specific number or code. For example, student matriculation numbers could be used to organize student records.
7. **Chronological filing system:** This method organizes files based on dates. Example is meeting minutes could be filed by date of the meeting.
8. **Alpha-Numerical filing system:** It uses a combination of letters (alphabetical) and numbers (numerical) to classify and organize documents. Example is using the student's last name and a unique ID number for storage.
9. **Subject filing system:** This method organizes files based on topics or subjects. Example is research papers could be filed by research area or discipline.

For any effective records organization, there need to be modern storage facilities and equipment that will help in the arrangement of records. Stewart and Melosco (2002), listed the following record storage supplies:

14. File cabinets
15. Open file shelves
16. Mobile system
17. Containers and accessories such like file dividers and labels, folders, file pockets, filing boxes, notebooks and computer printout binders.

Types of Records Kept in Tertiary Institutions

Various types of records are kept in higher institutions to ensure efficiency of the education managers. These records are grossly grouped into two (2), student and administrative records. Aleru (2022) revealed that for efficient, effective and quality record management to take place in higher institutions in Nigeria and for education administration goals to be realized, the following records are crucial:

D. Student Records

Academic Records includes:

- **Admission Register:** Records of student admissions.
- **Attendance Records:** Tracks student attendance in classes and events.

- **Academic Performance Records:** Grades, transcripts, and other assessments.
- **Disciplinary Records:** Records of any disciplinary actions taken against students.
- **Progress Register:** Tracks student progress and achievements.

Personal Information Records include:

- **Student Dossier:** Contains personal information about students, such as contact details, emergency contacts, and other relevant data.
- **Student ID and Registration Records:** Records of student identification and registration.

Financial Records includes

- a. **Fees and Payments:** Records of tuition fees, other charges, and payments made by students.
- b. **Scholarship and Financial Aid Records:** Records of scholarships and financial aid provided to students.

E. Administrative Records

Staff Records:

- **Personnel Files:** Records of staff members, including employment contracts, performance evaluations, and other relevant information.
- **Payroll Records:** Records of staff salaries and other payments.

Financial Records:

- **Budget Records:** Records of the institution's budget and financial planning.
- **Expenditure Records:** Records of all expenses incurred by the institution.
- **Asset Records:** Records of the institution's assets, such as buildings, equipment, and other property.

Operational Records:

- **Meeting Minutes:** Records of meetings held by the institution's governing bodies and committees.
- **Policy Documents:** Records of the institution's policies and procedures.

- **Legal Records:** Records related to legal matters, such as contracts, lawsuits, and other legal documents.

Research Records:

- **Research Proposals and Reports:** Records of research projects conducted by faculty and students.
- **Data and Publications:** Records of research data and publications.

Historical Records:

- **Announcements and Newsletters:** Records of past announcements and newsletters.
- **Old Student and Staff Records:** Records of past students and staff.

Electronic Records:

- **Digital Files:** Records stored in electronic format, such as emails, documents, and databases.

Other Records:

- **Logbooks:** Records of events and activities.
- **Syllabus:** Records of course syllabi.
- **Lesson Plans:** Records of lesson plans.

How Records Are Kept In Tertiary Institutions

The ultimate aim of keeping records / filing is to put documents into files in a logical order which will facilitate easy and quick access and retrieval when the need arises.

There are two ways records are filed which are Centralized and Decentralized/Departmental Filing.

- f. **Centralized filing** is whereby all the files of an institution are kept and controlled in one room instead of allowing each department to file its own records. Trained personnel called records managers are in-charge of all filing and so filing is done more efficiently. This makes it possible for effective supervision to be exercised over files including the movement and placement of correspondence on files.
- g. **Decentralized or departmental filing** is a system by which each department or section of an organization keeps and maintains its own system of filing which best suits it

Why are Records Kept in Tertiary Institutions

Records in tertiary institutions are kept for the following reasons:

- v. **Efficiency** - records are better organized, located and retrieved more quickly
- vi. **Consistency** - existence of documented policies
- vii. **Good decision making** - ready access to all necessary records
- viii. **Economy**: Control costs associated with records and information management.
- ix. **Legal protection**: Minimize the legal risks posed by inadequate records management practices.
- x. **Enhanced image**: Image of the organization and stakeholders are improved due to orderliness
- xi. **Ensures preservation of important records**: Records of continuing value are preserved.
- xii. **Continuity**: Passing on knowledge of records from past to the next generation ensuring that permanent and historical records are captured and maintained.

Records / Information Retrieval

An information retrieval system is a set of tools that connect potential users with a collection of information contained in an information institution. It consists of users, documents, and matching engines. An indexing language represents each document. The benefit of the system is to display the desired information and filter out unwanted information. Information retrieval systems are designed to retrieve documents or information needed by user groups. An information retrieval system aims to collect and organize information in one or several fields of knowledge to be presented to users who need it as quickly as possible (Russell-Rose, Chamberlain, & Azzopardi, 2018). Technically, the purpose of the information retrieval system is to match the terms formulated in the form of a query with the index terms in the document. With this matching, relevant documents will be retrieved. Retrieval of relevant documents from the collection storage system is expected to meet the information needs of users. The fulfillment of user needs is a measure of an information retrieval system (Khalifi, Cherif, Qadi, & Ghanou, 2019).

Issues in Record Keeping/Management in the Education System

Koko and Nwiyi (2019) identified seven of such issues. They include:

- 12. Lack of modern facilities

13. Natural hazards
14. Inadequate trained personnel
15. Inadequate storage facilities
16. Ignorance
17. Attitudinal behavior
18. Negligence of duty and carelessness
19. Differences among administrative staff; and
20. Frequent change of administrative staff

In the words of Azameti and Adeji (2013), public tertiary institutions lack adequate equipment to effectively manage electronic records. Of course, this is a major indictment of administrators committed to record-keeping. It has also been found by Allison and Otuza in Gesmdo et al. (2022) that many students had suffered as a result of poor records management of credentials, examination scripts and results. These challenges lead to difficulties in administering, developing and supervising educational systems (Amanchukwu & Ololube, 2015).

Conclusion

The management of an institution records determines its reliability and trustworthiness. As such, records must be stored in a safe environment that ensures accessibility and protects records from environmental damage. An institutions' success or failure is highly determined by its quality. Sound and quality records management is the foundation any higher educational institution needs to provide/delivery service in order to fulfill its obligation. A proper record administration/management enhances the performance of educational administrators and makes their role easier.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made:

1. The management of tertiary institutions should organize training, seminars, workshops, conferences where administrative staff who handle records would learn and practice the same.
2. In order to maintain quality delivery service in tertiary institutions, there is a need to establish adequate record keeping system and maintenance culture in administration.
3. The authorities should train and retrain administrative staffs who handle the said records or sustainability.

4. Education for all is the responsibility of all. By this, all stakeholders in education should assist higher institutions to ensure that faculties, documents and all records be kept and managed accordingly as this will go a long way to better our education system holistically.

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