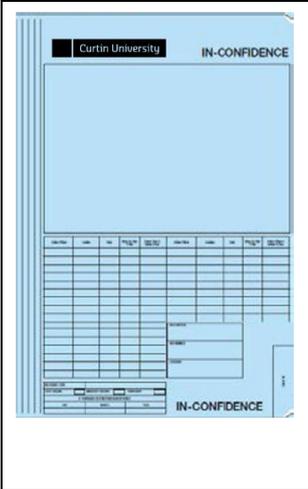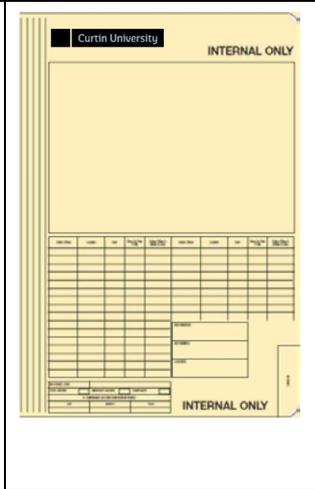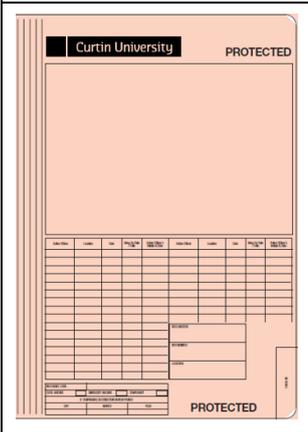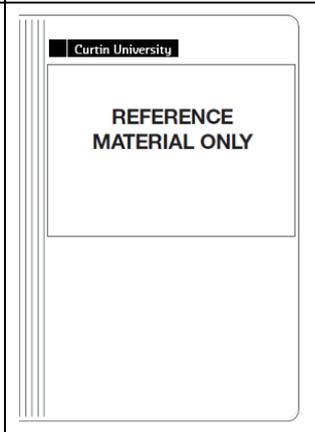# CREATING AND MANAGING PAPER FILES

Even those the majority of University business is conducted electronically, sometimes we still need to create and manage hard-copy information. As employees of Curtin University, we are all responsible for ensuring that our information is appropriately managed. This advice sheet is designed to assist staff with creating and managing paper files.

## What type of file cover do I use?

At Curtin, we have branded files which can be ordered through the Records & Information Management *(RIM)* website. It is recommended that these folders be used for paper-based University information, especially if the information is 'official and valuable' in nature. Where possible try to avoid using lever arch, plastic A4 or box files as they are bulky and take up valuable storage space.

There are four different styles of file covers available, as outlined below:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | **IN-CONFIDENCE**<br>Information under this classification contains details which may cause serious harm to the University or associates if released without authorisation.<br>Used for:<br>• Commercial In-Confidence.<br>• Legal In-Confidence.<br>• Medical In-Confidence.<br>• Student In-Confidence. |  | **INTERNAL ONLY**<br>University information that is NOT available to the general public.<br>Release of this information to the general public may cause minor harm to the university, external organisations or individuals within the university. |
|  | **PROTECTED**<br>Information under this classification contains details that would cause serious harm to the University or associates, comprise Australia's national security, national interests, economy, stability or integrity and international relations or defence, if released without authorisation. |  | **REFERENCE MATERIAL ONLY**<br>This classification is for all information which is copied and used as reference material only. This information can be securely destroyed when reference ceases or when no longer required. |

## When is the creation of a new paper file required?

You may need to create a new paper file when records can no longer be placed in existing files due to the following reasons:

- A new subject, topic or sequence of transactions has commenced.
- A new volume of the existing paper file is required.
- The contents of the existing paper file have evolved into a number of subjects which need to be separated.

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Files should contain only one subject at a time and should be created at the beginning of a new subject, topic or sequence of transactions, so that documents can be filed as you work. Delaying filing may inevitably lead to more work and can cause problems with others not being able to locate information easily. Additionally, sometimes even with the best intentions, documents may never find their way into a file if not managed as they are created.

## File titles and numbering.

Files should be given a unique title so they can be easily retrieved, maintained, archived and/or destroyed. Furthermore, information should be filed according to the subject and not based on an organisational structure. For example: **Financial Management \ Reporting \ Monthly Reports** etc.

Additionally, file numbers can provide a simple and effective way to easily locate and track files. When allocating, it is important that the numbering is unique so the correct file can be identified. Different types of information should use different numbering identifiers. For example, student files use the student ID as the unique identifier and staff files use the staff ID *(i.e. BLOGGS, Joseph: **ID177000B**)*.

## How to request a new file volume?

- Complete a new volume request through the Curtin Records & Information System *(CRIS)*. Please contact us directly if you do not have access to CRIS.
- The new volume will be created and returned for you to use.
- Please make sure specify the "contents to" and "contents from" dates of the existing paper folder as well as the "contents from" date of the new volume.
- A folder/volume closed form and the new volume will be returned to you.
- Place the folder/volume closed form on top of the closed volume.

## When should a file be closed?

A file can be closed for any of the following reasons:

- A new volume is needed.
- At the end of the year for those folders created on a yearly basis *(e.g. many financial records)*.
- At the end of a project.
- If you have not referred to the folder for 2 years.

When a file is closed it can still be accessed and is not removed from the system. It simply means that you can no longer add additional information to that file. If that particular subject matter arises again, a new file should be created and the previous file cross-referenced or identified as related.

A **File/Volume Closed Form** should be placed at the front of the file once it is to be closed, as this will help to stop any new documents being placed in the file by mistake. It also means that you can see information about the file, such as the date range etc., at a glance.

## Need further assistance?

Please do not hesitate to contact us via phone on 9266 7050, or by email at: **rim@curtin.edu.au**, should you require additional assistance. For information management advice of a general nature, you may wish to visit our website at: **rim.curtin.edu.au**.

This advice sheet is made under and supports the **Information Management Policy** and associated **Procedures**.

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