AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES AND FORENSIC BIOTECHNOLOGY (ACENTDFB)

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

Documentation, Archiving, Disposal and Retrieval Policy of Records

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The Africa Centre of Excellence of Excellence for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology maintains the conditions stipulated in Handbook of Administrative Procedure, 2024 of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria (https://abu.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Handbook-of-Administrative-Procedures-UPDATED-21-03-2025.pdf); chapters 14 and 15.

The policy ensures that all centre's documents and records are properly classified, maintained, protected, retained, retrieved and disposed of in accordance with approved administrative procedures of the university.

Archiving

Archiving is the process of storing records or documents that are no longer needed regularly. They are stored either physically in an archive or electronically using a dedicated electronic device (e-archive). The need for archiving arises from the need to preserve the records of personnel upon retirements, terminations of appointments, transfers, deaths, etc., and other activities (funded projects, financial records, grants, and research) of the centre

The centre shall work towards replacing all the physical archives to the electronic archiving system within the next three (3) years.

Physical Archiving

The records of centre's activities archived in subject files that are not regularly used, need to be secluded in order not to hinder access to those records that are regularly used, consulted or referred to.

The following procedures govern archiving of physical records:

i. Staff members whose services have ceased, or subjects that are superannuated, shall have their files kept in the active filing cabinets for up to one year to accommodate obvious post-exit references and consultations; thereafter, such files should be moved to the archive room/cabinet.

ii. The record files (both active and the archive) should be properly documented with the reference details including the respective dates of the dispatch and receipts for ease of retrieval
iii. File movement register should also be created to reflect movements of archived files at any time
iv. A Census of archived files should be conducted, at least, once every two-month, to update the file movement register and correct the wrong placements of files
v. The archive should be arranged into active and inactive chambers; the active chamber, which should be more easily accessible, should contain:
    - Personal files of staff that are no longer with the centre for 3 years or less,
    - Centre's subject files and other anachronistic subject matters that are discontinued for 3 years or less,
vi. The inactive chamber should contain older files containing the personal and subject files that are archived for 4 or more years;
vii. Archived records can be destroyed after securing approval from the relevant authority and the stipulated disposal period of 10 years.

Disposal of Official Documents

The Administrative officer of the centre is the custodian of all documents (both active and archive) and is responsible for authorising their disposal. When the need arises for the disposal of official documents, the following procedure applies:

i. Where the Centre leader believes that an archived document is duplicated or is in an irreparable state of deterioration, or has no permanent value for preservation or should, for some other reason, not be preserved, he/she may formally notify his observations to the Administrative officer, who will initiate a document-disposal meeting to consider the matter.

ii. The centre should hold a document-disposal meeting to deliberate and determine the obsolescence or inutility of official document(s) and the most appropriate mode of disposal

iii. The reason for the inutility, whether age, duplication, damage, superannuation, lack of space, etc, must be clearly articulated and stated

iv. A letter requesting permission to dispose of the documents, stating their nature, the ground(s) for the disposal and the proposed mode of disposal should be written to the Registrar. The minutes of the document-disposal meeting should be attached to the letter;

v. The Registrar should consider the merit of the disposal and approve the request or request the centre to expatiate on the observation(s) he/she made;

vi. The approval should be communicated to the centre and should indicate that the schedule of the disposal be sent to the Registrar for him to witness personally or through his representatives. The Registrar may invite the Chief Security Officer to witness the disposal where necessary

vii. The Registrar should create and keep an inventory of all disposed documents.

viii. The disposal of documents should be done by shredding or burning. Shredded documents may be sold to an accredited industrial user

ix. Historical and legal documents should be scanned and both the scanned and physical copies should be permanently retained

x. While soft copies of documents should be preserved through permanent retention, the following physical documents should be disposed of after 10 years of archiving:
    a. Financial documents
    b. Digitised employee records
    c. Subject/operational files

xi. Electronic documents should be uploaded to a cloud storage facility of the centre

Records Retrieval

Records retrieval is the systematic process of locating, accessing, verifying and making available centre's documents and information whenever required for administrative, financial, research, legal, audit or operational purposes.

The following should be adhered to:

i. Establishment of a Centralized Records Retrieval System so as to maintain a central directory indicating the location and custodianship of physical and electronic records
ii. Adoption of Electronic Records Management Systems so as to improve accessibility and reduce delays associated with manual filing.
iii. Records retrieval must not compromise the authenticity, reliability, completeness or integrity of centre's records
iv. The following standard documentation and registers are to be used by the centre:

a. Records Retrieval Request Form
b. Records Retrieval Register
c. File Movement and Tracking Register
d. Records Access Authorization Form
e. Records Return Register
f. Confidential Records Access Register
g. Electronic Records Access and Audit Log
h. Records Inventory and Location Register
i. Records Retrieval Performance Assessment Report

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Signature: 

Name and Status of Approving Officer: Prof Y.K.E. Ibrahim, Centre Leader