

Understanding Records Management

Records management is defined by ISO 15489, the Australian and international standard, as “the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records...”. 'Disposition' includes destruction and other actions like transferring storage locations of records no longer needed or used on-site.

Importance

Records management is a vital activity in RTOs, ensuring that records are created, stored securely, and preserved for as long as required. In case of audits, an effective records management system enables RTOs to provide evidence supporting operational decisions, training and assessment outcomes, and contractual obligations related to funding and compliance requirements.

Types of Records

A record can be any information created, sent, or received as part of the RTO's day-to-day operations. Records can be in hard-copy (paper) or digital formats, such as:

- Emails
- Student information
- Human resources information
- Letters
- Photographs
- Memos
- File notes
- Meeting minutes
- Business policies and procedures
- Compliance results
- Complaints/feedback data

Record Management Systems

RTOs may use specialised data management systems like learner management systems, customer relationship management systems, etc. Even without a specialised system, a recognised and usable filing protocol is essential.

Legal and Safety Requirements

Records management in RTOs must comply with legislative requirements like privacy, security, and access of files. Other safeguards such as protection from theft, fire, flood, pests, accidental deletion/destruction should be part of the records management processes.

Standards for RTOs 2015

Specific requirements for managing student files and issuing certifications are outlined in the Standards for RTOs 2015. Some obligations include:

- Retaining records of qualifications and statements of attainment issued for 30 years.
- Using specific security measures to reduce fraudulent qualifications.
- Keeping completed assessment items for six months from the date the decision on competence was made.
- Maintaining details of current or past students.
- Providing ASQA with evidence about the RTO's record keeping systems.
- Providing ASQA with various types of information about the RTO on request.

Accurate records management is not only a good business practice but also a compliance obligation for RTOs.

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.