

## UCC Records Management Framework

### Guidelines on Version Control for Digital Records

## Context

Version control is the process by which different drafts and versions of a document are managed. It provides an audit trail of the lifecycle of a document. Good version control ensures the correct version of a document is being used, and helps prevent out of date information being incorporated into current versions.

## Purpose

This document provides guidance on how to implement good version control.

## Guidelines

### Naming a Document

- All documents that will become records should have both an adequate name and version information in their title
- It is good practice to add a date to the title as well, eg, *Project Management Report v1.0 Jul 2019*
- Documents should clearly be either drafts or final versions – a tag or suffix on the document name may be used to indicate this, eg, d for draft, and v for final version
- For example, the first version of a document titled *Project Management Report* will be called *Project Management Report d0.1*. After re-drafting or amendments, it will be called *Project Management Report d0.2*, and so on, until a final version is issued for wider circulation and comment. Then it will be called *Project Management Report v1.0*. Approved changes after this, if any, may be tagged v1.1, v1.2, etc, up until there is a major revision, in which case, on the issue of the next final version, the title will be *Project Management Report v2.0*.

### Drafting a Document

- Watermarks can be added to Word documents, to make their status clear to the reader: select **Format - Background - Printed watermark - Text watermark**
- For important documents that go through many iterations, it is useful to include a document control table or sheet, to record all the details of the revision history. This may be included in the body of the document, as occurs with many University policies (see example), or a separate document control sheet may be maintained in the same folder/site as the main document, and kept up to date.
- Many platforms, eg, MS Sharepoint, have built-in version control functionality. Notwithstanding this, it is recommended that a naming convention such as that outlined above also be used.

- 'Track Changes' and 'New Comment' functions are available under the Review tab in the menu bar on MS Word. These are useful where different users are revising or commenting on a draft document.

## Storing a Document

- Over-writing can be prevented by saving 'read only' versions. This can be done by right clicking on a document name and selecting **Properties**, then on the **General** tab checking the **Read only** box and clicking on **Apply** and **OK**
- In the case of major documents, such as policies which were in effect, rules, and recurring major reports, superceded versions should be retained as archives, in line with records retention schedules,.
- In general, previous drafts of documents should be destroyed once the final version has been approved. However, retaining previous drafts is sometimes useful in documenting the thinking that led to a final version, and so drafts may be retained for a period of 1-2 years after final approval, for reference purposes.
- It is advised, however, that under Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the information you hold, including drafts, may be subject to disclosure.