

Ulster University Policy Cover Sheet

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Custodian	Deputy Director of Finance and Information Services (Information Services Directorate)
Approving Committee	Information Services Directorate (ISD)
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Changes to previous version

Page 3 – Change “With regard to” to “Regarding”

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University has statutory obligations to ensure that data storage hard drives and removable media (e.g. USB drives, DVDs, CDs, memory cards, etc.) including the data and software stored on such equipment and media, are disposed of appropriately and legally. Data must be disposed of in line with the Data Protection Act (1998), the University's Data Protection Policy and information security considerations of the University; and software in line with copyright legislation and software licensing provisions.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The University will comply with all legislation and statutory requirements relevant to information and information systems, including:

- Data Protection Act 1998

POLICY STATEMENT

When permanently disposing of equipment containing storage media, all data and licensed software is required to be irretrievably destroyed by software means **before** the equipment is moved off site. In the first instance, ensuring that this occurs is the responsibility of the IT device owner/operator. Use of standard software deletion is insufficient as it could be possible to use undelete software to restore the information.

AIMS, PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The aim of this policy is to ensure that University data is disposed of in line with the Data Protection Act (1998), the University's Data Protection Policy and other information security considerations of the University. University software is to be disposed of in line with copyright legislation and software licensing provisions.

The scope of this standard is the disposal of all University data and software contained on **ALL** hardware being permanently disposed of from University ownership and/or control. This includes desktop computers, laptops, notepads, external drives, USB drives/sticks, mobile phones and removable storage. This also includes IT devices with external funding components and IT devices donated to the University.

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The following are outside the scope of this policy:

- Actual hardware disposal
- Internal redeployment of IT devices (systems administrators and technical support staff shall follow existing procedures to ensure that data and software is appropriately deleted and/or configured on redeployment)
- Asset reporting
- Recycling and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment(WEEE) documentation

DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATION

The terms:

“Permanent Disposal” is used to signify the IT device leaving University oversight as distinct from the internal transfer of IT devices within the University, for which other policies and procedures apply.

“Irretrievable” destruction of information is used to describe the process by which information on storage devices is rendered inaccessible either through physical destruction, or reinitialisation via approved methods.

“IT Device Owner/Operator” is used to describe the primary user of the IT device at the time of disposal. University workstation laboratories will have a technical support contact designated for the purposes of this role.

“Reinitialisation” is used to describe the process applied to a storage device to permanently remove information from the device, and to overwrite the physical area where the information was held. This process is also commonly referred to as “low level formatting”. The current University standard for reinitialisation is British HMG Infosec Standard 5, Enhanced Standard which performs 3 overwriting rounds.

PROCEDURE

Periodically, a global e-mail will be sent by Physical Resources Department (PRD) informing Faculties and Departments of collection dates for IT/AV equipment to be disposed of.

All storage devices should undergo reinitialisation by the owner/operator using software provided by their technical support contact. Once this reinitialisation has occurred, the appropriate technical support staff should be contacted to collect the IT device, and prepare the device for disposal. Technical support staff shall ensure in co-operation with PRD that information on storage devices is rendered irretrievable

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by performing a (second) reinitialisation. This reinitialisation may be conducted by the University's contracted disposal agent who will erase all data to HMG InfoSec Enhanced Standard 5, with "data erase certification" provided upon request.

In the case of removable media, where reinitialisation is not possible, the media and/or equipment must be physically destroyed and rendered inoperable.

IMPLEMENTATION

Each organisational unit within the University has technical representatives that shall work with ISD and PRD to ensure that data, software and hardware are properly disposed of. In the case of administrative departments who use the Supported Staff Environment (SSE), ISD undertakes disposal upon notification.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OR PROCEDURES

- Data Protection Act 1998
- [University of Ulster Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Electronic Information Assurance and Information Security Management System Policy](#)
- Procedure for disposal of 'end of life' IT/AV equipment (CDL/University)

CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Regarding the irretrievable destruction of information (data and software), technical representatives in the organisational unit should be contacted in the first instance. Alternatively, staff may contact the ISD Service Desk on ext. 66777 or servicedesk@ulster.ac.uk.

the physical disposal of hardware, technical representatives in the organisational unit should be contacted in the first instance. Alternatively, staff may contact Head of Facilities Services, PRD on ext. 23274.