UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STATUS OF STUDENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

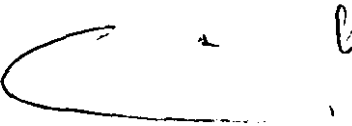Candidate's Signature: .... Date...23/06/08

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Supervisors' declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: .... Date: 23-06-2008

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ABSTRACT

The management of student records in the University faces some challenges. This research work was, therefore, a study of the Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast. The study was a descriptive survey research. It was aimed at finding out the challenges which define the status of the management of student records - admission, registration, and academic achievement records - and the provision of suggestions to improve records management practice.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. A total of 239 respondents made up of 131 lecturers, 90 students, and 18 personnel from the Division of Academic Affairs took part in the study. A questionnaire instrument was developed to collect data from 230 respondents, while an interview schedule was used to collect data from 9 respondents. The questionnaire data were statistically analysed using frequencies and percentages, and the interview data were used to support the discussions of the results.

Results from the study indicated that the University managed the creation of student records well, and that of the maintenance and use aspect of the student records fairly well. The results further showed that the main challenges in the management of the student records occurred in the retention and disposal phase of the records which were not being managed according to the records' life cycle. The acquisition of materials, recruitment of personnel, and formulation of directives were suggested to improve practice. Generally, the Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast was rated average.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Cecilia Kommeh, and my beloved children, Aba, Esi, and Adjoa.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In concrete recognition of higher education for all, the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) declared:

> Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit, in keeping with Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . . no discrimination can be accepted on grounds of race, gender, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities (UNESCO, 1998, p.1).

In keeping with the terms of this declaration, countries, including their governments, parliament, and other decision-makers, were expected to establish, when appropriate, the legislative, political, and financial framework for reform, and further development of higher education. This is to ensure that no one is excluded from accessing higher education or its study field or degree levels.

An assurance of the realization of the above declaration was given in a resolution by about four thousand (4,000) participants from one hundred and eight–two countries. The participants made up of teachers, researchers, students, members of parliament, representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from various sectors of society, businessmen, financial institutions, and publishing houses resolved:

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We, participants in the World Conference on Higher Education

at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 5 to 9 October, 1998

. . . commit ourselves to opening schools, colleges and

universities to adult learners . . . by calling upon the World

Conference on Higher Education (Paris 1998) to promote the

transformation of post-secondary institutions into lifelong

learning institutions and to define the role of universities

accordingly (UNESCO,1998, p. 20).

From the declaration and resolution above, we can infer the superlative

and unique attention that is being paid to the learner – the student – in

educational matters at the higher education level in recent times. The issue of

granting access in proper learning environment to all students who qualify is

forcefully and strongly articulated.

It is evident that a university's existence finds meaning in its students who

are referred to as the "Junior Members" (University of Cape Coast, 2003, p. 1).

It will be right to say that the university exists for them, through them, and by

them, by way of extending the democratic maxim. The great potential and

capability of these junior members for the growth and development of society

have served as the cornerstone upon which the roles, functions, and missions of

universities have now been established. There is no better place, indeed no better

forum to express this fundamental concept than at the World Conference on

Higher Education.

The WCHE asserted that the core missions or values of universities (to

educate, to train, to undertake research, and in particular, to contribute to the

sustainable development, and improvement of society as a whole) should be preserved, reinforced, and expanded to educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens, and to provide opportunities for higher learning and for learning throughout life. With regard to higher education in our present day society, the WCHE noted that its role should include such vital components as culture, social, economic, and political development in order to facilitate democracy, and peace. Toward this goal, it emphasized that personnel, and students of higher education should preserve, and develop their crucial functions through the exercise of ethics, scientific and intellectual vigour in various academic disciplines. It urges further that both national and institutional decision-makers should place the students and their needs at the centre of their concerns and consider them as major partners and responsible stakeholders in the renewal of higher education. Students who drop out of the universities should have suitable opportunities to return if and when appropriate.

Arguably, students in higher education have the potential and capability to ensure the attainment of the economic, social, cultural, and political development of the society. Consequently, the Task Force on Higher Education (2000) established that higher education, as a medium, has the ability to:

(a)   unlock potential at all levels of society, helping talented people to gain advanced training whatever their background;

(b)   create a pool of highly trained individuals that attain a critical mass and become a key natural resource;

(c)   address topics whose long term value to society is thought to exceed their current value to students and employers; and

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(d)   provide space for the free and open discussions of ideas and values. (Task Force on Higher Education, 2000, p. 13)

In this, the Task Force on Higher Education (TFHE) focused on the student as the key element in the realization of societal expectations. On this aspect of the roles or functions of the universities in relation to the student and the society, Castells (2001) considers four areas. These are described briefly as:

1. The ideological role: The universities serve as ideological apparatus, expressing the ideological struggles present in all societies.

2. The selection and socialization role: The universities have been the mechanism as well as the instrument for the selection and socialization of dominant elites.

3. The knowledge generation role: The universities generate knowledge through research output to meet perceived socio-economic needs as well as add to the stores of knowledge by way of consolidation or renewal for human intellectual progression, and to meet both current and future challenges.

4.   The training role: The universities train a highly skilled labour force to enhance, and facilitate productivity for national growth, and development.

These roles, as posited by Castells (2001), are in harmony with the expectations of the World Bank (2002) which also outlines four essential functions of the universities. The main elements are:

1.   the capacity to train a qualified and adaptable labour force, including high level scientists, professionals, and teachers;

2.   the transmission of norms, values, attitudes, and ethics, as the foundation of social capital necessary to construct healthy civil societies and cohesive

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culture, the very bedrock of good governance and democratic political system.

3. the capacity to generate new knowledge; and

4. the capacity to access existing stores of global knowledge and adapt it to local use.

More recently, Brennan, King, and Lebeau (2004) contributed to the expected normative role of the university. They state that universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development and that the most explicit role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic need.

From all intents and purposes, the scholarship of higher education, and for that matter the universities, revolves around the major role player, the student. One cannot consider the roles or functions of the universities without the junior member factor – for as has been observed earlier, the student has to be considered first in the educational enterprise. The student body can make or unmake a university by its positive or negative acts.

Hence, everyone should be concerned about the raw materials, the students, who constitute the raw organic resource of every higher education. The nature and importance of this resource presuppose that no effort should be spared in:

1. determining the propriety of their selection and matriculation;

2. ensuring their proper assessment and evaluation in the course of and at the end of their training or study programme;

3. their graduation, and award of certificates within the specific time frame and the enabling environment; and

4. preparing them for the world of work, and other endeavours, in order to fulfil societal and institutional aspirations.

Evidently, this calls for a systematic, a comprehensive, and an accurate information gathering or records about each student admitted into a programme from the first day of admission, through registration, and matriculation as a junior member of the university to the final day of graduation, and certification. The life of a student as he or she passes through or undergoes a process of training in a higher institution for a defined period of time constitutes biographic, historic, and chronological data that cannot be wished away. It should be well documented and kept so that appropriate decisions about that individual, unique from all others, could be made or inferred by all stakeholders for the individual, institutional, and societal good. Without a legitimate and credible way of recordkeeping about the individual, who during the period of training is held in trust by the institution, the institution will fail in the execution of its mandate. Invariably, this calls for the management of student records.

In fact, the reality of all the defined roles and the functions of universities posited by Brennan et al. (2004), Castells (2001), TFHE (2000), UNESCO (1998), and the World Bank (2002) will pale into insignificance if records about the students and their institutions, which matter in this research, were not to be kept. The need for records in this case cannot be overemphasized. An illustration will suffice to explain the matter succinctly: A student spent four years in a higher educational institution, and pursued a B.Ed. (Home Economics)

Programme. At the end of the four years, no records about the student could be traced. Worse still, no information about the student was kept. A dreadful situation!

According to Newton (1986), for any organization to function effectively and carry on with it services, there must be one form of records or another. He observes that records are synonymous with every human activity as they have existed since the creation of man. Penn and Pennix (1989) add that we live in an information society that recognizes recordkeeping. They point out that information, as a basic resource and a product, has happened in the past, is happening now, and will happen in future. They conclude that recorded information is or are record(s) and define records as "any information captured in reproducible form that is required for business" (p. 5). JISC InfoNet (2007) explains that records are documents or other items which "contain recorded information; are produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an activity; are retained as evidence of that activity, or because they have other informational value" (p. 3).

The recorded information may be in any form (text, image, sound) and the records may be in any medium or format. The same source describes student records in three broad categories. Briefly, these are listed as:

1. Records documenting the contractual relationship between the student and the institution, for example, records documenting admission, enrolment, payment of tuition fees, and non-academic disciplinary proceedings.

2. Records documenting the student as a learner, for example, records documenting programmes undertaken, academic progress and performance, and awards.

3. Records documenting the student as an individual and consumer of services provided by the institution, for example, records documenting the use of accommodation services, counselling services, library and IT support services.

Accordingly, in the *Guidelines for the management of the student scholastic record in the public schools of Virginia* (2004), student records are described briefly as "those records that are directly related to a student, and are maintained by an educational institution" (p. 9). The content of the record should be limited to information or data needed by the institution to assist the student in his or her personal, social, educational, and career development.

Universities, in fulfilling their roles and functions, generate an immense quantity and great variety of records every day. Various faculties and schools, departments and centres, create and use student records for the purpose of carrying out their statutory obligation or institutional mandate. Penn and Pennix (1989) assert that these records require a specific type of management and that it is not sufficient to manage records like other forms of information because they are a distinct category of information and must be treated accordingly. For this reason, Read-Smith, Ginn, and Kallaus (2002) state that records management involves "the systematic control of all records from their creation or receipt, through their processing, organization, distribution, storage, and retrieval, to their ultimate disposition" (pp. 2, 3).

In explaining what records management is, Newton (1986) states that records management is the discipline of procedures to the control of those sources of information which arise internally within an organization as a result of its own activities. In this regard, JINC InfoNet (2007) clarified the gamut of student records management in very simple and explanatory language. It involves the:

1. managing of the institution's general, contractual relationship with the student;

2. managing of the institution's relationship with the student as a learner; and

3. provision of technical and personal support services to the student; for the purpose of creating, maintaining, using, retaining, and disposing of records documenting those activities during the student's time at the institution.

Further, it points out that it is the responsibility of the institution to maintain complete, accurate, and up-to-date records on every student, covering all aspects of the relationship. Several issues, therefore, arise from the management of student records in higher educational institutions which should be of interest to all people in general and all stakeholders in particular. We need to recognize that:

1. student records serve as major information tools that are very useful in achieving the goals of administrative functions of the universities, as such they must be carefully created, organized, and controlled for decision making, and those that are no longer needed must be efficiently disposed of (Iwhiwhu, 2005);

2. records, like humans, have the concept of a life cycle made up of three phases namely, creation, maintenance and use, and disposition; hence this concept must be upheld and practised by educational institutions in dealing with, and managing student (human life) records (Penn & Pennix, 1989);

3. some educational institutions have manuals on student records management. The manual states the institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding the student, student records, and student records management matters (University of South Florida, 2005; University of Essex, 2004; King's College London, 2003; Harvard University, 2007));

4. some institutions of higher learning lack student records management manuals. Voluminous records have been created without any organized plan for their storage and maintenance, thereby creating difficulty in the location and retrieval of information (Iwhiwhu, 2005; Unuigbe, 1990).

In a study on Management of Records in Nigerian Universities, Iwhiwhu (2005) reveals that "records management programmes or policy on records are not available in Nigerian universities; hence administration of records is without recourse to the principle of records management." He observes further that "there is no University Records Manual, no records retention and disposal schedule . . . untrained personnel . . . inadequate computers . . . as constituting the problem of records management in Nigerian universities" (p. 1).

In the light of the above issues, it is important to give prime attention to, and focus on the case of University of Cape Coast (UCC), one of the six (6) public universities in Ghana. The other five are:

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1. University of Ghana (UG), Legon;

2. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi;

3. University of Education, Winneba (UEW), Winneba;

4. University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale;

5. University of Mines and Technology (UMAT), Tarkwa.

The University of Cape Coast prides itself in its Mission Statement: "The University of Cape Coast is the University of Choice in Ghana," and its Vision Statement: "A university that is strongly positioned, with a world-wide acclaim." It has an illuminative Motto, "Veritas Nobis Lumen" (Truth, Our Guide). This underlines the fact that the university is constantly searching for improved ways of doing things. UCC was inaugurated in December, 1962, as a University College and placed in a special relationship with the University of Ghana, Lagon.

The college attained a full and independent university status with the passage of an Act of Parliament, the University of Cape Coast Act, 1971 (Act 390) on October 1, 1971. It thus assumed the authority to confer its own degrees, diplomas and certificates on its graduates. Finally, in 1992, the University of Cape Coast Law (PNDC Law 278) was promulgated. The autonomy of the University as a "body corporate, capable of suing and being sued, with perpetual succession and a common seal . . ." was thus firmly certified or established as a rule (Kanywanyi, 2006, p. 78).

The university was established by the first president of Ghana, Dr. Francis Kwame Nkrumah, out of a dire need for highly qualified and skilled manpower in education to provide leadership and enlightenment. Its original mandate was, therefore, to train graduate professional teachers for Ghana's second cycle

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institutions and the Ministry of Education to meet the then perceived manpower needs of the nation's strategic and tactical educational plan.

However, today, the university has made giant strides and great progress, and expanded its faculties from two to six (including two schools), diversified and expanded its programmes to forty-seven, and increased its enrolment figures by granting access even to students from less endowed secondary schools (University of Cape Coast, 2007). In response to the changing needs of the society, and those of the entire Ghanaian education enterprise, the university has consistently and progressively added to its traditional functions the training of educational planners, administrators, agriculturalists, actuarial scientists, optometrists, information technologists, biochemists, environmentalists, trade unionists, laboratory technicians, professionals in commerce, management and tourism, and experts in computer science. By this means, the university has positioned itself to fulfil the roles and functions expected of tertiary education. The World Bank notes that tertiary education:

> is a pillar of human development worldwide. In today's lifelong learning framework, tertiary education provides not only the high level skills necessary for every labour market, but also the training essential for teachers ,doctors, nurses, civil servants, and engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and myriad personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead

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effective governments, and make important decisions which affect entire societies. (Mama, 2003, p. 103)

In its capacity as a pillar of human development, the university has made strategic decisions in student enrolments. From an "initial student enrolment of 155 (male: 142, and female: 13) in 1962/1963, there has been an increase to 17,072 (male: 11,623, and female: 5,449) in the 2006/2007 academic year. This number excludes the 11,593 enrolled students in the Distance Learning Programme under the aegis of UCC Centre for Continuing Education" (*37th Congregation basic statistics*, 2006, pp. 14, 15, 40).

Over the years, the university has admitted students from less endowed schools and areas, through a remedial science programme, mature students' entrance examinations, and concessionary selections from deprived schools in Ghana. "A total of nine hundred and sixty (960) students were offered admission through these three (3) windows of increased accessibility into the institution in the 2006/2007 academic year." (University of Cape Coast, 2007. p. 2) By this means, the university is responding positively to Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Higher Education.

The University of Cape Coast, from the first year of inception to date has dealt with students in order to achieve its mandate. Evidently as expected, the relation between the university and the students over the past forty years has generated an immerse quantity and variety of records. Various faculties and departments create and use records for the purpose of carrying out the institutional and national mandate, needs, and aspirations.

The national policy on education at the tertiary level aims at social transformation, economic modernization, training and upgrading of the total human resource of the nation, and promoting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance interregional and international peaceful co-existence, trade (commerce) and industry (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to keep track of events and activities of the institution, particularly as they relate to student enrolment, academic performance, funding, infrastructural needs, and research output. For these reasons, there is a singular and an overriding need to create accurate student records, using and maintaining these records through the life cycle concept of records management.

In the past, the records have been kept in files by manual processes. Today, some of the records are still kept in paper files, while others are kept on electronic devices. The management of student records begins with the admission, and registration of students, through to the period of graduation and conferment of certificates, diplomas, and degrees. The registration of students for semester courses has always posed its own difficulties, challenges, and problems to both students and registration officers. The problem has included the duration of the registration of courses, the mode of registration, the place of registration, the maintenance of security at registration centres, the choice of liberal course offerings, the intolerant behaviour of some students, inadequate computers and inadequate registration personnel involved in the exercise. Late registration by students has even resulted in the imposition of fines on students.

Furthermore, the processes of student records have revolved around lecturers, faculty and departmental registration and examination officers and

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their administrative staff, and the personnel of the Division of Academic Affairs. These personnel, individually or collectively, by commission or omission, deliberately or inadvertently, have encountered difficulties, challenges, and problems at one time or the other with the management of student records in relation to records creation and collection. maintenance and use, storage and security, retention and disposition. Furthermore, encounters with the delays in retrieving past student records, for example, transcripts, are a common feature. The researcher has been a victim of that situation. Other students have had similar experiences.

Furthermore, the aspects of institutional policy and guidelines on student records management seem to be non-existent. In fact, there seems to be no manual on student records management in the institution, a situation which should not exist in the university. Clearly, these perceived anomalies raise questions about the status of the university's student records management practice.

Again, as has been noted earlier, records serve as major information tools that are very useful for decision-making in achieving individual, collective, and organizational goals. Therefore, they must be carefully created and collected, organized, controlled, and managed along defined policies and procedures. In view of the perceived challenges, difficulties, and problems associated with records handling. there is a singular need to ascertain the status of the management of these records. Indeed, what are the challenges associated with the creation or collection, maintenance and use, storage and security, retrieval and accessibility, retention and disposition of these student records, in terms of

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their management. In spite of the challenges, problems, and difficulties, the university seems to get along with decisions about students. This study, therefore, aims at investigating the Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast.

Statement of the Problem

Leedy (1989) states that "everywhere our knowledge is incomplete and problems are waiting to be solved. We address the void in our knowledge, and those unsolved problems, by asking relevant questions, and seeking answers to them" (p. 3). The foregoing statement provides the premise in giving attention to the problem underpinning the study.

The University of Cape Coast has been dealing with students, and by inference their records, for over forty (40) years in its attempt to fulfil its mandate of human resource development, a functional responsibility it assumes as a tertiary educational institution of higher learning. It continues to admit and train students to become a highly skilled labour force for the development of the nation.

One of the major requirements of the university, in being able to achieve these goals successfully, relates to the responsibility of managing student records effectively and efficiently. In fact, this responsibility, as a necessity, can never be wished away since good records management practices lead to "savings in terms of costs, space, materials, and time; improvement in the quality of information; improvement in information retrieval; enhancement in decision-making and accountability" (Department of Education and Training, 2005, p. 5).

The question is, to what extent does the student records management practice in the University of Cape Coast reflect the aforementioned features and benefits? There are perceived challenges, difficulties, and problems associated with the creation and collection of student records (for example, during the admission, and the registration of students and courses every year and every semester). There are also perceived inadequacies in relation to the use of the life cycle concept of records management, namely, the creation and collection, maintenance and use, retention and disposition of records.

Furthermore, there seems to be no institutional manual on student records management which provides guidelines on policies, procedures, and practices of handling student records. How true are these perceptions? How adequately are these perceived challenges managed? These are critical issues that affect students but for which there are no empirical based answers. It is this gap that has necessitated the study into the Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast.

The Purpose of the Study

There is no written guideline or manual on student records management, yet the university seems to, or manages to get by, year after year. The issue of how student records are managed according to their life cycle, therefore, arises automatically.

The singular purpose of this study then was to make a comprehensive investigation to determine the status of student records management in the university. The study sought to find answers, from empirical sources, to resolve

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the issues concerning the perceived challenges associated with the management of the life cycle of student records, namely, their creation and collection, maintenance and use, retention and disposition. The study makes recommendations and suggestions to control these challenges and to improve practice.

Research Objectives and Questions

The research questions were posed with these objectives in view:

1.   to guide the direction of the study and so define what is to be specifically investigated,

2.   to direct the exact method and research instruments to be used to collect data,

3.   to enable the researcher collect the required data, in terms of the variables in the research problem, for effective analyses and evaluation, and

4.   to enable the study to resolve the research problem at the end of the research.

On the basis of these objectives, the following research questions were set:

1.   What are the challenges in the management of student admission records?

2.   What are the challenges in the management of student registration records?

3.   What are the challenges in the management of student academic achievement records?

4.   How can student records management be improved in the University of Cape Coast?

Significance of the Study

The research was pursued to find out the Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast. It was hoped that the study would reveal the real challenges as well as the true nature and manner in which student records are managed in the institution, and that the information will be enlightening enough to guide important management decisions pertaining to student records. It is considered that the findings of the study will open the eyes of all personnel who are directly or indirectly involved with the use of the life cycle concept of records management and enhance their practice.

Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide information that will help the university management to recognize the need to formulate policies and develop guidelines or a manual on student records management to serve as a guide to students and staff. Finally, it is envisaged that the findings of the research will unlock a door or clear the path for further research by others, just as Leedy (1989) observes:

> Those who do research belong to a community of scholars,
>
> Each of whom has journeyed into the unknown
>
> To bring back a fact, a truth, a point of light.
>
> What they have researched of their journey and their findings
>
> Will make it easier for you to explore the unknown:
>
> To help you also to discover a fact, a truth, or bring back
>
> A point of light (p. 66)

Delimitations

The ideal situation called for the research to be conducted by the researcher in all the public universities in the country. However, the study was confined to the University of Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana to allow for the specific problem(s) identified to be addressed or resolved as best as possible. Again, the categories of persons used in the study were restricted to full time students, lecturers, and administrative staff who handled student records. Furthermore, the student records considered were:

1. student admission records,

2. student registration records, and

3. student academic achievement records.

These are considered as core records and serve as vital records in the institution. In view of the fact that the research was confined to University of Cape Coast, generalization thereof was limited to the University of Cape Coast.

Limitations

The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the sample for the research, hence sampling error could not be determined objectively. Again, there occurred the situation of non-response in the collection of the questionnaire and interview data. The return rate in both cases was not one hundred percent (100%) as projected in spite of the efficient manner in which the two research instruments were administered. The pre-test and the main study took place in UCC. Any effect the respondents in the pre-test had on those of the main study could not be ascertained or determined objectively.

Definition of Terms

Active records: Records which are still in use for the day-to-day work of an office in an institution or an organisation. They are also known as current records.

Core student records: Data which are needed by an educational institution to fulfil its obligations to the student over time. E.g. Student name and nationality.

Inactive records: Records which are not needed for the daily operations of an institution or an organization. Though not often referred to, they are of enduring value. They are also known as non-current records.

Record: A piece of information which is written down on paper or stored on electronic device, or information captured in reproducible form.

Records' life cycle: The concept that records go through the stages of birth (creation phase), life (maintenance and use phase), and death (disposal phase).

Records Management: A logical and practical approach to the creation, maintenance, use, and disposal of records.

Semi-active records: Records which are not often in use but are occasionally referred to. They serve as reference material. They are also known as semi-current records.

Vital records: Records containing very essential, unique, and irreplaceable information which require special protection. E.g. degree certificates

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose and setting for the review of the related literature in this chapter adopt Hairston (1998) suggestion that literature review ought to encourage writers, and by extension researchers, to follow models to make their endeavours successful. She states that stories are central to all our lives. The myths and legends of our own culture interpret that culture for us and give us a sense of our own possibilities. How can young people imagine that they might become heroes (heroines) or leaders or explorers if they have never read stories about heroes (heroines) and leaders and explorers? In driving home the point of interest, she states further:

> Consider the tales of heroism and courage that so many of us heard and loved as youngsters: Hercules and the twelve Labours; Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece; Theseus slaying the Minotaur; Odysseus killing the one-eyed monster Polyphemus – these represent just a few. Beautiful books filled with these stories and dozens of others crowd the shelves in bookstores and libraries. We know that all of us are molded by the stories we hear and read (p. 78).

The truth about the matter is crystal-clear: Knowledge of the exploits and endeavours of certain people is necessary for the advancement of our potential and capabilities. It is, therefore, understandable to consider this review as involving the systematic search, identification, location, analyses, and syntheses

of materials containing the relevant and insightful information related to the research problem.

In fact, a conscious and a deliberate effort has been made to pool together fairly recent and current sources of materials to establish the candour and appeal of textual information as they supplement, complement, support, and sometimes even critique popular views. The materials include periodicals, books, studies, research reports, and newspaper publications. These rich sources have contributed to a successful presentation of a general and contextual discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the research in the relevant subject area. Credit is given to all these sources.

The review is logically organized, and sequentially developed in five (5) main parts as follows:

1.   The Nature of Records Management

2.   The Student Records Management

3.   The Mechanics of Records Management

4.   The Student Records Management Manuals

5.   The Student Records in the University of Cape Coast

Each of these parts is further divided into sub-sections with appropriate headings, in a deliberate attempt to develop a chain of thought leading to a coherent understanding of the features of the subject under discussion. A brief résumé of the entire chapter, aligning all the five parts, and setting the context and stage for a holistic understanding of the research is presented in a conclusion.

The Nature of Records Management

This part is a discussion of six (6) areas under the above heading. It provides the background, concepts, meanings, definitions, the importance of records, and records management.

Information and Records

It is important to clarify the meaning of the words information and records, and establish their relationship to enable one to understand their usage and application. Similar views are held about what these words are. According to Norton and Peel (1989), the word, information, can be surprisingly difficult to work with. They regard information as "the substance of communication" (p. 23). However, for this substance of communication to be information rather than mere data, or noise, it must be meaningful, relevant and new to the receiver. These, that is, meaningfulness, relevance, and novelty, are the credentials of the word information.

They point out that data are the raw material which becomes information when retrieved and used. Processing it, and adding value to it turns it into intelligence – the root of decisions. Information is at the mid-point of this feature as illustrated in Figure 1.

| Data (raw material) | ⟶ | Information | ⟶ | Intelligence |
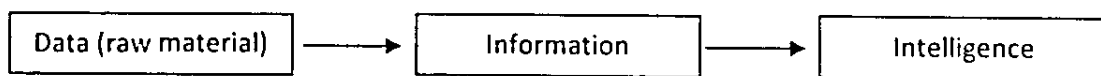
Figure 1: Transforming Information from Data to Intelligence

From their perspective, something can only become useful information if its access, retrieval, and re-dissemination meet the criteria of:

(i)   **appropriate channel**: there is little point, for example, in using words if

the information is a complex three-dimensional shape;

(ii)   **appropriate selection**: masses of unsorted data, or a large parcel of

books may well be worse than useless, serving only to confuse and delay;

(iii)   **right timing**: information about writing a quiz in educational management

which arrives after the quiz will not help;

(iv)   **accuracy and reliability**: misinformation is rarely of help to any student

in any academic setting.

The fact that information originates from data is corroborated by Bucij, Chaffey, Greasley, and Hichie (2003). They provide three definitions of information that are in common use as "data that have been processed so that they are meaningful; data that have been processed for a purpose; data that have been interpreted and understood by the recipient." (p. 5)

Three important points can be drawn from these definitions. First, there is a clear and logical process that is used to produce information. This process consists of collecting data and then subjecting them to a transformation process in order to create information.

Secondly, information involves placing data in some form of meaningful context so that they can be understood and acted upon. Thirdly, information is produced for a purpose, to serve as an information need of some kind. Some examples of data that they offer are the date, time of day, and the word 'read'.

Three examples of information that they provide in this context include a telephone directory, a school time table, and school examination results. In order to broaden the view concerning information, they present another

definition which is quite different from those already considered. The definition given is that "information acts to reduce uncertainty about a situation or event" (p. 5).

By this definition, they reason that although uncertainty can never be eliminated entirely, it can be reduced significantly. Information can help to eliminate some possibilities or make others seem more likely. This definition gives an evidence of the effective value of information.

Penn and Pennix (1989) also support the established view that information results from data.. They concede that there is no single answer to the question, 'What is information?' much the same way as Norton and Peel acknowledged that the term, information, is difficult to work with. They point out that "depending on the philosophic approach one might take, information could be considered to be raw facts, commonly referred to as data, or it could be knowledge, which would be the same facts evaluated, organized and synthesized into meaningful intelligence" (p. 3). Here again, information has to be processed from raw facts to merit the quality of intelligence.

The value of information is inestimable, as Buckland (1991) points out. In recognition of this fact also, Lewis (1988), in his nine (9) prepositions to effective information management states that information is the first basic resource to effective management. It is in the same vein that Matthew (1952) expounds that information should be added as the seventh function to the well-known six functions enunciated by Henri Fayol in 1916 (namely forecasting, planning, organization, co-ordination, command, and control).

Information leads to records. Penn and Pennix (1989) acknowledge that records are recorded information. They define records as "any information captured in reproducible form that is required for conducting business" (p. 3). They argue that within this broad definition there are limitations. It is the context in which the information is created that would determine what constitutes a record. A standard dictionary is used as an example to clarify this point. The standard dictionary may well be required for conducting business but it was not specifically created by or for the particular organization using it. The only organization that would have a record copy of the dictionary would be the publishing company that produced it.

The definition of records given above is by no means different from that stated by Standards Australia (1996). It regards records as recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organization or a person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Detailed facts regarding records are supplied by Commonwealth of Australia (2001). It defines records as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligation" (p. 8). Traditionally, records are regarded as documents in paper files or bound volumes. In fact, records can exist in any physical format which includes photographic prints, video cassettes and tapes, microfilm, and many electronic formats.

In terms of comparing and contrasting, records are a subset of information. This is so because information includes published and unpublished documents, such as

monograph, journals, newspapers, technical literature, and data collections. The broad principles of records management creation, maintenance, access, and disposal apply equally to information. In practice, it can be difficult to draw a clear distinction between records and information.

Records possess certain characteristics that distinguish them from other kinds of recorded information. One of these is the 'fixed' nature of records as they are the product of particular actions that occur at particular times. Such records retain their value as authentic and reliable evidence of particular activities and must not be altered or tempered with. Any alteration renders them invalid. Some students often cheat by changing their recorded grades in examinations and suffer the consequences when the commission becomes known. This was the case of eight (8) students who were expelled from the University of Ghana, Lagon, for admission-related fraud (*Daily Graphic, 2007, May 7*). Records derive much of their meaning, and therefore, their usefulness and value as evidence, from the context in which they were created, maintained and used, and how they are managed over time.

Commonwealth of Australia (2001) observes that while in some organizations there is a management of corporate information resources of all kinds through integrated strategies and common tools, in others, responsibility for records and information lie with only the relevant unit. In these circumstances the evidentiary nature of records is often poorly understood and records may be managed inappropriately, if they are created. Barry (1996) holds the same view.

It is now reasonably clear to draw a conclusion on information and

records. Information is derived from adding meaning and relevance to data. When information is recorded in any form it becomes a record.

Records Management in Historical Perspective

Records management as a function has existed for some 7,000 years even though the term is a relatively new concept originating in the mid 20th Century. As Iwhiwhu (2005) acknowledges, records have existed since the creation of man, and the form or medium of keeping records has changed through the generations even as the principles of records management have themselves been developing.

Penn and Pennix (1989) trace the historical perspective of records management from the past in its rudimentary or primitive form to the present state. They credit the Sumerian civilization with the first records around 5000 BC. Those records dealt with business matters such as taxes, loans, and inventories which were managed by the temple priests who controlled the Sumerian society. All the records were created and kept on clay tablets.

During the New Empire period of Egypt (1530 – 1050 BC.), and the reigns of Hammurabi (1792 – 1750 BC.) and Nebuchadnezzar II (630 – 562 BC.) of the Babylonian dynasty, the creation and management of records were important functions and significant government operations. All records of such nature were kept in the libraries of the rulers. Later, the libraries became the repositories that kept business records which were later replaced with the collections of literature and information on science, medicine, and religion.

As the centuries passed, the record media changed in the following order: from clay, papyrus, and parchment to paper. Information was recorded by that

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portion of the population that was literate – priests, teachers or philosophers, scribes, rulers, nobles, and landed gentry – and the recorded information was referenced by that same literate segment of society. It was an era where few people created documents for few people to use them.

At the turn of AD 1200, a case file system was established in Rome and records retention and disposition practices were evolved. These applications of records, however, were relatively short-lived. In the 15th Century, the registry system of records management was developed. The system involved the numbering and logging, or registering of every incoming and outgoing document. In spite of the cumbersome nature of this system, it was an improvement over the previous non-existence of a system. Even today, the system is still in use in many areas around the world. The later part of the 18th Century to the early thirties of the 20th Century (1930s) experienced realistic efforts in records management. In 1789, the Archives Nationales was established in France to provide for a unified administration of archives, including records of public agencies. In 1838, the British Public Record Office Act was passed to create a centralized public record office headed by a records administrator.

Records have a life span beyond which they lose their usefulness. Therefore, in 1877, a British Order in Council authorized the destruction of valueless material, and in 1889, the first General Records Disposal Act was enacted by the United States Congress. The creation of the US Bureau of Efficiency in 1913 promoted the use of labour-saving office equipment, and it exerted an effective influence on recordkeeping practices. Finally, in 1934, the

National Archives of the United States was established leading to the development of the life cycle concept of records management as it exists today. Advanced records management concepts were not developed earlier for the basic reason that they were not yet necessary. However, now, there are sophisticated records management principles and practices necessary in today's information-oriented society that is absolutely critical to its continued survival,

Governments at all levels establish requirements for maintaining records; and all business transactions rely on the proper creation and maintenance of recorded information. Some of these records are so vital that their alteration or destruction would result in irreparable damage or lose to the agency or corporate body concerned. "Quite simple, an organization today cannot ignore its records any more than it can ignore the working conditions of its employees." (Penn & Pennix, 1989, p. 8)

Another point of interest in the records management domain is the changing record media and the advent of electronic recordkeeping. Emphasis on records media has shifted from traditional records on paper to electronic data base operation or system (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). In fact, the development of the life cycle concept changed the nature of records management from being a series of sporadic and unrelated efforts to one of an organized, structured, and logically-based approach — from creating and maintaining, to disposing of recorded information. The life cycle concept is now the foundation of all records management principles, practices, methods, and techniques.

In Ghana, the Public Records and Archives Administration Act (Act 535) was passed in 1997. This paved the way for the preparation of a records manual

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for records offices and archival administration in Ghana. In the forward to the 1999 edition of the *Records office procedures manual*, Dr. Robert Dodoo, the former Head of the Civil Service commented:

No government could survive without written records.

No office could operate successfully if it had to rely on memory alone for keeping track of every transaction. Without records and speedy access to them, all organized administration would quickly come to a halt. Records, and the information they contain, are a vital resource and they must therefore be managed systematically (p. vi).

He pointed out that the passing of Act 535 marked a turning point in the government's recognition of improved records management as a support service function, which is very critical to the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of government business. The law covers current records in Records Offices, semi-current records in the Records Centres, and non-current records in the National Archives. Under the law, records are managed throughout their life cycle from their creation to eventual disposition. The primary responsibility of public records management lies with the Public Records and Archives Administration Department. (Public Records And Archives Administration Department, 1999)

The Nature of Records Management Theory

The original meaning and underlining sense of the word 'theory' is a view of, or perspective on, something. In its origins, the word 'theory' is related to the word "theatre" (Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 902).

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Typically, and more formally, a theory is a hypothesis or a combination of hypotheses that can be tested empirically. This constitutes the formal nature of theory, and it is associated with the mathematical and experimental sciences. In the view of Buckland (1982) however, records management theory does not have the rigorous, humourless characteristics of the specialized theory of formal mathematical and experimental sciences. He argues from the premise that since theory, in general terms, is a view or a description of the nature of something, then records management theory should be viewed as relating to the practice or principles underlying the management of records.

The explanation to the argument is that, in nature, records just do not happen, like the force of gravity and the direction light travels which are natural phenomena. Records on their own do not materialize on desks, in file cabinets, or in computer memories. People are needed to create them and put them there for definite purposes. The fact that records exist implies that a conscious effort was made by someone to capture the information in reproducible form. The records are then maintained to be used, and when no more demanded, are disposed of. In these respects, records are thought of as possessing life and undergoing a life cycle.

For the same reason, Penn and Pennix (1989) theorize that recorded information has life similar to that of a living biological organism in terms of its birth (records creation phase), its life (records maintenance and use phase), and its death (records disposal phase). Here, in the functional nature of records, lies the theory of records management and not in the context by which the physical sciences operate. In this sense, therefore, Buckland (1982) states that records

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management theory is the access to the working records of an organization which involves information retrieval, the records life cycle, and information policy.

For each of the phases of the records life cycle, there are various elements associated with it and functional activities that are performed within each element. Within the creation phase, there are elements such as directives, forms, and reports. In the maintenance and use phase, there are elements such as files, active storage, security, and vital records. Within the disposal phase, there are elements such as scheduling, appraisal, storage in records offices, and ultimate disposal.

Phases of Records

For administrative convenience, Penn (1983) grouped records into three phases, as active or current, semi-active or semi-current, and inactive or non-current. Active or current records are records still in use for the day-to-day work of an office in the organization. They aid in decision-making and assist in the execution of administrative functions. They are classified as confidential or non-confidential depending on the nature of information they contain. These records have to be effectively managed and used (Iwhiwhu, 2005).

Semi-active or semi-current records consist of records not often in use but occasionally referred to. They serve as reference material. Such records occupy valuable spaces in the office and can be transferred and kept in the Records Centre. Inactive or non-current records are the type of records which are not needed for the daily operations of the institution. Though not often referred to, they are of enduring value. They are valuable records containing information on the activities and functions of the organization. As Emery (2005) points out, these

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may be vital records containing unique or irreplaceable information such as articles of incorporation and annual reports that require special protection. They are considered as an integral part of a disaster recovery plan or operation.

The University of Essex (2004) identifies the need to observe these three phases in records management, and it is here cited as an example. The university declares in its *Records management* overview:

> Records retention and disposal is the process by which the University decides whether records should be destroyed or transferred to the archive. All University records fall into three categories:
>
> **Current** (when data may be added to it);
>
> **Semi-current** (when it has been closed but is used as a reference tool for administrative purposes);
>
> **Archived** (when it has been selected for permanent retention in the University archives). The retention period refers to the life of the record as current or semi-current record. (p. 1)

The Meaning of Records Management

According to Emery (2005), records management is "a professional discipline that is primarily concerned with the management of document-based information system. It is the application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organisation's business" (p. 2). She explains that such systematic controls of the organisation's records should involve the various stages of their life cycle: from their creation or receipt, through their processing, maintenance and use, to their ultimate disposition.

Penn and Pennix (1989) discuss the nature of the word 'management' before defining what records management is. They argue that management is neither a science nor an art since the principles of management are not applicable in the same manner as scientific knowledge is applied, and the nature of management cannot be subscribed to an art in spite of what others propose. In their view, management is a practice since it is performance based on knowledge, skill, and responsibility. Management cannot be exercised in isolation since it is human and resource based. Effective management results if all the three attributes namely, knowledge, skill, and responsibility are exercised in harmony and in conjunction with the purpose and scope of the organizational mission.

Having defined records as information captured in reproducible form and management as a practice, they define records management as "a logical and practical approach to the creation, maintenance, use, and disposal of records and, therefore, of the information that those records contain" (p. 6). When a viable records management programme is in operation, an institution can control both the quality and quantity of the information that it creates; it can maintain that information in a manner that effectively serves its needs; and it can in the same efficient manner dispose of the information it no longer considers valuable and just occupying space.

A complete records management activity involves a combination of practices which include preparing forms, reports, correspondence, directives, mails, filing, copying, retention, scheduling, vital records protection and security, archival preservation, and ultimate disposal. Each practice has its own particular principles, functions, methods, and techniques for dealing with it, and certain

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technological tools, equipment, and materials that may be used to aid in achieving efficient, effective and economical results.

The records management function involves planning, organizing, directing and controlling records from their creation to their disposal in an organisation. In line with this, Standards Australia (1996) views records management as being concerned with managing the records continuum, from the design of a recordkeeping system to the end of the records' existence. In this way, records are managed as an asset and information resource, rather than a liability.

For a teaching institution, records management is an inter-play of activities involving teachers, students, and office staff. Consequently, Department of Education and Training (2005) acknowledges that records management is an integral component of every day work for teachers, principals, registrars and school officers. The management of records addresses issues concerning the monitoring of students and systems performance, communicating with students and other stakeholders in the education process, reporting on what has been done, achieved and how; all of which require the creation and maintenance of records on paper and electronically. In this way, information for, and evidence of daily operations and decision-making can be cared for.

The Importance of Records Management

Information and records management are the pillars of business activities. In their absence, management is incapacitated in its decision-making process (Asiwaju, 1985). The lack of records impairs orderly methods of information communication and utilization in an institution. As Iwhiwhu (2005) points out, a

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university's records are its life's memory – used to supplement human memory, and its blood – used to conduct institutional business. The management of these records through their life cycle is paramount to the survival of the institution.

Emery (2005) observes that records management promotes economies and efficiencies in recordkeeping and ensures that useless records are systematically destroyed while valuable information is protected and maintained in a manner that facilitates its access and use. In discussing the issue about the importance of records management, she condemns the practice whereby some people hoard everything that comes across their desk in the course of work. For the reason that records management is so important, she prescribes that records should be retained and stored in keeping their value, access to them made possible in making them useful, and be destroyed (if ever) to end their life cycle.

The importance of records management is further explained by Penn and Pennix (1989). In their view, information is today the fourth vital resource of an organization, after people, capital, and property. On one hand, when any vital resource is diminished, an organization can expect diminished returns which, invariable, lower the reputation the organization enjoys both internally and externally. On the other hand, while people, capital, and property can be replaced, information and records cannot readily be created, replaced, or reconstructed – except through years of effort. Records management function protects this vital resource – records – for the survival, maintenance, and progress of organizations and institutions.

Department of Education and Training (2005) asserts that the role of records management in the process of education and the increasing need to

demonstrate accountability means that no one can downplay its importance. It credits good records management practices with:

(1)   saving in terms of costs, space, materials, and time;

(2)   improvements in the quality of information;

(3)   improvement in information retrieval; and

(4)   enhancement in decision-making and accountability (p. 5).

The Student Records Management

This part examines core aspects of the research relating to student records management. The discussion is centred on the student, student records, the student transcript, and student records management as gleaned from the literature.

The Student

The student comes first in the planning of a school system. In supporting this fact, Adesina (1990) argues that schools are set up not for teachers, nor for parents, nor for educational administrators, but for students. Without students there would be no schools even if there are ample teachers and school managers. Decisions taken on funding, the size of teaching and supporting staff, physical facilities including classrooms, the extent of services to be provided, all depend on the number, the nature, and the specific needs of the student population. Kochhar (1970) adds that the student is the common denominator in the arithmetic of educational administration. It is for his all round wholesome development that curricula are designed and planned, for which reason he is the focus of the line of educational administration. In this respect, the student holds the central position in any higher educational institution.

Cambridge University Press (1966) identifies a student as a person who is learning at a college or university, or sometimes at a school. A number of universities have also defined who a student is. While University of South Florida (2005) declares that a student is an individual who is registered for a university credit course or programme, Illinois State University (2003) states that a student is any person previously or currently enrolled or registered for credit or non-credit coursework within the university, or any person who has applied for enrolment within the past (12) months. Vecchioli (1999) explains that a student, from the standpoint of the University of Missouri, is any person who is or has been in attendance at the University where the university maintains education records or personally identifiable information on such a person. These various point of views about the student present common grounds and bits of additional information on the word student, thus enhancing its meaning significantly in context. From these considerations, it can be concluded that a student in this perspective is a person who is enrolled in a school, a college, or a university for a credit or a programme, and whose records can be accounted for by the institution.

Student Records

All schools, colleges, and universities gather information about each enrolled student from the time of admission into a course of programme until the end of the student's attendance in the institution. Such information, as recorded, constitutes records.

A number of individuals and universities have shed light on the meaning and the composition of student records. Vecchioli (1999) considers student records as being composed of all information, transactions, and correspondence

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relating to individual students held by the university's Records Management Services, Student Administration (including Departments), the office of Research and Graduate Studies in all form, such as hard copy, photographs, computerized records including electronically derived databases and directories. Whole hard copy student file contains records which include enrolments, change of personal details, examination results, and application forms among others. Electronic records embody students' personal data, address information, enrolment information, academic results, decisions, and qualification for awards and others that may not be kept on a hard copy file.

JISC InfoNet (2007) sees student records as records associated with managing the relationship between an institution and its students. Some of the records consist of records documenting admission and enrolment as well as payment of fees; records documenting programmes undertaken, academic progress and performance; and records documenting use of accommodation facilities, library, and IT support services.

The University of South Florida (2005) adds further to what student records are by stating that such records may be presented by student, submitted on behalf of the student or created by the university. The records are used to assist offices in their support of basic institutional objectives and to document student achievement in the educational process of the university.

Other reasons, besides what have been stated above, have been given for keeping student records. These include using the records to counsel students, assisting them in placement either in graduate study, or employment after graduation (Illinois State University, 2003).

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In particular, no two students are the same. Information that is gathered on all students by a university must respond to this fact. In all cases, data that are collected and maintained for all students by universities include: name and address, birth date, registration number, name and address of parent or guardian, record of attendance, schools attended, grades and grade point average, academic transcript, type of diploma or degree earned, year of entry (admission) date of termination (graduation or withdrawal), and course or programme offered.

The Student Transcript

According to Cambridge University Press (1995), a transcript is "an exact written copy" of something (p. 1549). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) submit transcripts about their students to reflect their academic work. In this regard, the University of Cape Coast (2006) in its *Academic programme, policy and regulations* booklet states, "Transcript shall reflect advance credits, all courses taken or attempted by student (including audited courses), and the grades earned. Under no circumstances will grades earned in a course be deleted from a student's transcript" (p. 25).

The overall aim of the student transcript, as a unique student record, is made clear in the policy statement on transcripts and recommendation data for a programme transcript by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK (1997). It specifies that the policy objectives for higher education transcript are to improve the quality and consistency of information on the learning and achievement of individual students for the benefit of everyone who has an interest in such information, and to contribute to an individual's lifelong record of learning and achievement. The policy statement directs HEIs to provide each

student with a transcript showing what each student has studied and achieved after he or she has completed his or her programme, or after completing each stage of the programme, or at the time a student interrupts his or her programme, or when such information is necessary in order to apply for a job.

QAA notes that institutions should recognize the two purposes served by the student transcript so that they will be committed to their demands. The first purpose is that it provides learners with records of their learning while they are studying.

This information is intended to help them monitor and reflect on their progress and plan their further academic development. Further, it serves as a direct aid to learning and an essential element of their personal development records. The second purpose is that it provides a student who has completed (or interrupted or terminated) a programme with a formal, verifiable, and comprehensive record of learning. Such information satisfies a variety of interests including employers, institutions, professional bodies, and other statutory regulatory authorities in or outside the country. In order for the transcript to serve these purposes, it should be based on minimum information content and in a format that must reflect the complete record of learning and achievement, including information on what was studied, what was successfully completed, and what was not successfully completed.

Furthermore, QAA recommends that the data set for a student transcript must include the student's personal identity, qualification, record of learning and achievement, award, and explanatory information on how to interpret the grading

system and the transcript. The transcript's authority is certified with the signature of an authorized officer and the institution's common seal.

From the foregoing, it is abundantly evident that the student transcript plays a vital role in the educational life of a student. It must be seen as a vital record and should be regarded as such by HEIs. Not to be overlooked is its dual role — as an institutional function and an institution's product. It enables the institution to function in accordance with its established objectives. As a product, it enables the institution to place students in the labour market and political positions in the state (Brennan et al., 2004). Therefore, the proper management of these vital records cannot be downplayed.

Student Records Management

The notion that the student comes first in any school system implies that student records are paramount in the life and operations of a school. Without the appropriate records, a student will loose his or her identity, worth, and self-respect. Inasmuch as access to higher education is a right for every student, student records are a right for every student (UNESCO, 1998). No matter the constraints and challenges in terms of costs, effort, time, equipment, qualified and adequate personnel needed, student records should be effectively and efficiently managed by an institution at all times.

According to Iwhiwhu (2005), those entrusted with handling student records should exhibit the requisite knowledge about the life cycle attributes of records and demonstrate the skills in processing records through their phases: active or current, semi-active or semi-current, and inactive or non-current. In his study on management of records in Public Nigerian Universities, Iwhiwhu reports

on his findings that records management programmes, or policy on records in Nigerian Universities were not available, with the result that administration of records was without recourse to the principles and methods of records management. Furthermore, the aspects of records retention and disposition schedules and university records manuals were lacking. The list of the problems included untrained records staff; inadequate facilities for the preservation, storage, and retrieval of records; non-existence of filing manuals; inadequate computers to manage the volume of records generated; and the apathetic attitude of administrators towards records and records management.

Most institutions fail in the proper management of student records as a result of external and / or internal factors. Omenyi (1997) assigns reasons for such unfortunate and unprofessional development. Among these reasons are that:

1.   the rise in students population has made data generated too complex to handle;

2.   the offices charged with the analyses of data are ill-equipped with computers and personnel;

3.   officers display unprofessional conduct as they even leave work undone and sometimes destroy the confidentiality of data;

4.   students cheat by bribing record officers to alter some information in the files, and

5.   of non-recruitment of qualitative staff with knowledge and skill in records management.

A clear understanding of student records management should be approached from fetching answers to five key questions which begin with the

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words: What?, How?, Who?, Where?, and When?. What is student records management? (A conceptual question) How are student records managed? (A process or procedural question) Who should be responsible for managing student records? (The personnel or institutional question) Where should student record be kept? (The storage question) When should student record be destroyed? (The disposal question).

Student records management is the practice of following policies and principles to manage information about students in accordance with the life cycle concept of records: to create, to maintain and use, and to dispose of student records. It involves processing student records through the active or the current, the semi-active or the semi-current, and the inactive or the non-current phases of recordkeeping, using the requisite personnel and appropriate records media, equipment, and materials. (Penn, 1983; Penn and Pennix, 1989; Rhoads, 1996).

The nature of student records requires that the records be effectively controlled as they are managed through their life cycle. For this reason, Emery (2005) considers student records management as the systematic control of all student records during the various stages of their life cycle: from their creation or collection, through their processing, maintenance and use, to their ultimate disposition.

In the view of King's College London (2003), student records management is the process of ensuring that student records are managed to meet the institution's operational, legislative, regulatory, and accountability requirements. It adds that good records management ensures that information is located and retrieved on time, supports decision making, provides evidence of

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work, and ensures that student records are maintained, and when appropriate, destroyed systematically in compliance with legal requirements.

From the above, it is clear that student records management is very important as it is concerned with the management of information about students. It is also clear that three basic phases form the basis of student records management programmes. Hence, those who manage student records should recognize this fact and, "just as we obey one set of physical laws that governs the universe," follow to the hilt the principles that govern these phases in records management (*Awake*, July 2007, p. 3). It is on this basis that the effective, efficient, and economic use of student information can be achieved.

Who is responsible for managing student records in an institution? JISC InfoNet (2007) concedes that the varying nature of organizational structures of institutions makes it difficult to specify exactly where these responsibilities should lie in any one institution. It, therefore, suggests that responsibility for managing student records should be clearly defined and documented by that particular institution. For this reason, it is important to define the responsibilities of the staff involved in managing the institution's contractual relationship with the student as a learner, for creating, maintaining, using, retaining, and disposing of records documenting those activities during the student's time at the institution.

In order to ensure the proper handling and dissemination of accurate student records, JISC InfoNet (2007) enjoins institutions to:

> Designate one clear point of responsibility for maintaining
> complete, accurate and up to date records on every student,
> covering all aspects of... the content of the 'core student

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record' . . . so that the institution can . . . provide information on the student's academic performance and award(s) to potential employers, regulatory bodies, as well as to the student, . . . and further provide information on the student as a means of enabling the institution . . . analyse and aggregate student data for planning and developing its future programmes (pp. 4, 5).

Another area to consider in student record management is the storage of records. The nature of student records and the personal information they contain demand that they should be stored in facilities and equipment (hard copy records) or electronic system (digital records). Storage should be secure and accessible only to authorized staff whose work requires them to have access. As noted by JISC InfoNet (2007), the facilities and equipment should provide adequate space and appropriate environmental conditions. In the maintenance of records, the authorized staff is required to maintain the content, format, and location of all student records. Furthermore, they need to maintain a record of the names and designations of all staff with access to student records, and any limitations on that access. In addition, they need to maintain a record of student records transferred to another section of the institution, particularly after the student has left, and organizations to which copies had been sent.

Another activity involved in the storage of student records is the indexing of records for easy identification and quick retrieval. JISC InfoNet (2007) directs that paper records should be housed in durable containers well coded to a restricted-access index to prevent casual, unauthorized access. The containers should·be stored in locked equipment or rooms when they are not being used to

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ensure that the personal data they contain are protected in line with British Data Protection Act 1998.

In the case of digital records, they should be uniquely identified and protected with passwords and other electronic security measures. Furthermore, in all cases, access should be limited to staff that has a need to know. In situations where electronic systems are not centrally managed, designated staff is required to make buck-up copies to prevent loss of records through accidental or intention damage.

The source·referred to above indicates that "the 'core student record' should be treated as a 'vital record' and action taken to protect it from disaster or systems failure by copying and dispersal" (p. 6). According to King's College London (2003), the 'core student record' means different things at different times and to different people and agencies. Be it as it may, it states that "the 'core student record' is that data which are needed by an institution to fulfil its obligations to the student over time; all other data could be deleted or destroyed when appropriate" (p. 18). The college includes in its core record for internal administration the essential records comprising: student name, sex, index number, date of birth, address, parent's name and address, educational background, photograph, course and dates, performance or assessment result, and name, date and result of award. As regards 'vital records' both JISC InfoNet (2007) and Emery (2005) regard them as those records that are essential and unique, and require special protection. They are records containing irreplaceable information which, in the event of a disaster, are essential to maintain business continuity by

continuing operations, recreating an institution's legal and financial status, and preserving the institution's rights and fulfilling its obligations to its stakeholders.

Student records will reach their relatively inactive or non-current phase at the instance where the student leaves the institution. They may then be transferred to other storage facilities or systems. At this point duplicates of records created for administrative convenience cease to be of value and should be destroyed so that only the designated official records survive.

The question of who has access to student records is of paramount importance in student records management. From the point of view of JISC InfoNet (2007), institutions should tightly control access to student records to prevent unauthorized use, alteration, removal or destruction of the records themselves, and unauthorized disclosure of information they contain to anyone who has not got the right to know. Access to student records is allowed for personnel working on or with the records, and the individual student who is a data subject.

On the question of student records retention period, the immediate source cited recommends that such records should be kept for as long as they fulfil three basic requirements. First, they should be retained for the duration within which the institution fulfils and discharges its contractual obligations established between it and the student.

Second, they should be retained only as long as they record the activities of the student as a consumer of the institution's support service provided for his or her welfare, and as long as they serve the institution's future plans and

development. The date at which the student leaves the institution normally ends the retention period.

Third, their retention should be as long as the records can provide information on the academic career and achievements of the student to employers, professional bodies, and other organizations, as well as to the student as part of his or her lifelong learning. These records need to be retained for longer than other student records. Institutions accept that they have a professional and a natural obligation during a student's working life to provide factual information on what the student has studied and achieved. This serves as a lifelong learning file. The retention period for these records is obligatory for long periods of time, perhaps for the lifetime of the student. It is important to segregate these records from non-academic records since the latter have only a temporal value, and is not considered as significant as the former in permanence.

King's College London (2003) suggests that analysis of student data should be used not only for institutional business planning and development purposes, but also for supporting academic, historical, sociological, and demographic research. In doing so, the institution should take account of the cost, the technical difficulty of maintaining the records, the security and subject access implications of retaining personal data relating to named individuals, and the need to create and maintain search and find aids, particularly to meet subject access requests.

The life of a record ends with its death or disposition. Guidance on managing student records by JISC InfoNet (2007) directs that student records which need to be destroyed should be done in line with agreed retention periods.

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Destruction should be authorized by officers with appropriate authority, and it should be carried out in accordance with the institution's procedures for the destruction of redundant records containing personal data. The authority for destruction and the date of destruction should be recorded and held by the section of the institution with final responsibility for the student record.

From the discussion above, it is evident that student records management is all-encompassing and a methodical activity that recognizes the life cycle of each student record, from its creation to its disposition. The qualified staff with the requisite knowledge and skill is required to process student records through their creation, maintenance and use, and disposal. Each record should also go through the three phases of records management namely, current or active, semi-current or semi-active, and non-current or inactive, along with the appropriate policies and regulations.

The Mechanic of Records Management

In this part of the review, consideration is given to directives, forms, and filing systems in records management. The effective management of these tools is crutial to any institution's records creation, maintenance and use, and disposal practices.

Directive Systems

The word 'directive' is used to describe policy and procedure statement issued by an organization. The word is also considered as an official instruction (Penn and Pennix, 1989; Cambridge University Press, 1995). In situations where there are no written guidance or instructions, people are inclined towards

performing an operation in the manner that is best known to them to meet their interests and imaginations. Some of their approaches may be effective; others may be inefficient. When a written record is provided, the approved way of operating which may be considered efficient by management, is clearly spelt out so that people know exactly what to do and how to do it.

According to Penn and Pennix (1989), what a person should do is called a policy, and how it should be done is called a procedure. Both a policy and a procedure are types of directives. Directives guide, instruct, or inform people in a work place about their work. They lay the framework and set the parameters within which effective and efficient work is conducted and accomplished.

There are two types of directives: permanent and temporary. Permanent directives (unlike archival permanence which means forever) refer to the directives that have continuing reference value and long-term significance until specifically cancelled, nullified or superseded. Directives in institution / organisation manuals and handbooks which establish and prescribe structures, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and standards of operation are examples of documents of permanent directives. Among the common names used for such directives are orders, instructions, and regulations.

Temporary directives are of a transitory nature, and are policies and procedures with no continuing reference value. They are used to establish short-term programmes, to try (test) or establish interim procedures and to make announcements. Such directives remain in effect for a fixed period of time, usually not exceeding one year. They naturally exhaust their value and are subject to be destroyed immediately. It is only in emergency situations that a

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temporary directive can be used to modify a permanent one. Even then, a revised permanent directive has to be issued as soon as possible to re-establish equilibrium. The most widely used terms for temporary directives are notices, bulletins, and circulars.

The staff of the records unit(s) is responsible for the management of directives issued in relation to records. They are required to be conversant with the two types of directives files, the History file and the Master reference file into which copies of directives are placed. Permanent, continuous record of directives that have been issued will be in the History file to provide the means for tracing the development of a policy or procedure. A copy of each directive will be placed in the Master reference file. When a directive or a page is revised, the new material would be filed in front of the superseded portion, and marked as such.

Form Systems

Generally, the creation of records requires the use of forms. A form is a tool which may be used to organize, collect, and transmit information. By definition, a form is a fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for entering and extracting prescribed information. These captioned spaces can be preprinted on paper or stored in computers. The use of forms can enhance the flow of work in an office, or the entire organization, increase operational efficiency, and reduce costs (Penn & Pennix, 1989).

The importance of forms in the management of records can never be underestimated. This is why Daver (1988) lists five of them among his ten commandments of effective records management. He commands records managers to:

1.   design forms in such a way that they are easy to complete and provide the

        data which can be used easily;

2.   give specific instructions on how the form is to be completed;

3.   identify each form by a number;

4.   centralize the responsibility for both control and design of the forms; and

5.   avoid duplication of entries in different forms (p. 414).

Penn and Pennix add that records officers should ensure that forms are available

when and where needed, and are also functional to enhance accessibility. If the

above criteria are not met, forms will loose their primary function – the creation

of accurate, up-to-date, and reliable records.

Filing Methods

        Files are synonymous to records. By definition, "a file is a collection of

paper records and or electronic records grouped together by a common subject"

(Department of Education and Training, 2005, p.6). One cannot create records

without creating files to keep the records for their continued life cycle and

effective management. As Penn and Pennix (1989) point out, the most important

aspect of the management of active records is their use as an information source.

For that matter, without adequate file management, the organization can neither

obtain the information it wants nor get it at the proper time. A situation like this

can lead to bad judgment and decisions with serious implications that might affect

the effective, efficient, and the smooth running of the organization.

        Filing systems are the heart of information storage and retrieval activities,

and the most efficient and economical filing method is one that works for the

department or organization and which is easily understood by its users. Factors

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which have to be borne in mind when establishing a filing system include, ready identification and retrieval of individual records and files, segregation and security of information requiring special protection, and ease of understanding by users.

In practical terms, Penn and Pennix (1989) note that there are three types of filing methods namely, numeric, alphabetical, and alphanumeric. In the numeric method, the reference is a series of numbers which may be allocated according to function, series, subject, and item, or one continuous sequence of numbers. In the alphabetical method, each main subject is in alphabetical order. No numbers are allocated to the files.

The alphanumeric filing method combines both letters (alpha element) and numbers (numeric element) in varying positions in referencing files for ease in storage and retrieval of information. A letter or a set of letters is a simple indicator of the function or the part of the organization served by the contents of the file. A complementary subject number is added towards a closer definition of the contents of the file. Then, a serial number is added for a particular item. An example of an alphanumeric filing method is DP/5/1 which denotes

The simple fact that records are the result of functions and are used in relation to them establishes the principle that they should be grouped and maintained according to the function to which they relate. The functional categories delineated will reflect an organization's purpose, mission, programme, and activities.

The Student Records Management Manuals

This part of the review examines the contents of three student records management manuals, their basis and unique features and characteristics, with the view to facilitating and consolidating understanding in the context of the research. A synopsis of each of the manuals is presented in the discussions from three different perspectives. This has been done in order to harness their contributions towards achieving the needed insights and to effect a clear discernment of the rudiments and focus of the research. The three manuals are:

1. *University of South Florida student records management manual (2005)*

2. *University of Essex student records management manual (2004)*

3. *King's College London: What is student records management? (2005)*

The manuals are considered in terms of policy objectives, definitions, procedures, retention and disposition schedules, and / or guidelines in relation to the life cycle concept of records management, namely, the creation, the maintenance and use, and the disposition of student records.

University of South Florida student records management manual (2005)

The University of South Florida (USF) student records management policy is to inform the university faculty and staff of the responsibilities in the access, use, release, security, retention, and disposal of student records information. The policy is to ensure that administrative and academic units are informed of, 1) student records policy and recommended security practices; 2) the guidelines on disposal of student records information; and 3) the need to comply with retention periods and destruction procedures.

The law backing this policy is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended by the Buckley Amendment (1995). The purpose of FERPA is to afford certain rights to students concerning their educational records. The primary rights afforded are the right to inspect and review the educational records, the right to seek to have the records amended in the instance of perceived errors, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records. (Norlin, 2002)

The university defines a student as an individual who is registered for a university credit course or programme. It regards a student's record (also referred to as an education record) as information relating directly to a student which the student personally provides, and of those that are created by the university about the student. The personal identifiers that the student provides are the name, date of birth, address, parent or family member names, and other personal characteristics. The information created by the university includes, admission and registration matters, and cumulative academic or achievement records among others.

A list, by category, with location and custodian of student records are provided. Those for admission and cumulative records are indicated below:

a.   Undergraduate Admission: Director of Admissions

b.   Graduate Admission: Director of Graduate Admission

c.   International Student Admissions: Associate Director of International Admission

d.   Academic and Cumulative Records (of all students): University Registrar

The office of the Registrar is responsible for insuring the confidentiality of all student records and has been designated by the University as the Official Student Records Custodian.

Student Identifiers

The university assigns to each prospective and continuing student a number for individual identification purposes. The identification, (ID), is used for academic, business, and administrative transactions. The student ID is a randomly generated number assigned within the university's student computer information system (OASIS). It is not derived from any personally identifiable student information. The format of the ID is 'U--------,' followed by an eight-digit number. It is an alphanumeric type ID.

The student identification numbers are issued only once and remain the student's official primary identifier with the university. This is a permanent and unique number recognized by OASIS throughout the student's academic career in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programmes. The ID is considered as the property of the university, and for that matter the university has the sole right to use it within the constraints of the law. However, the university is prohibited by FERPA from releasing, transferring, or otherwise communicating the student's ID in the student education record to any party not having a legitimate educational interest in the number. As a result, academic and other forms of personal information will not be publicly posted or displayed where the ID identifies the individual associated with the information. Also, paper and electronic files containing student identifiers are to be disposed in a secure fashion.

Access to Student Records

In addressing the issue of access to student records, the university notifies students annually through student handbooks and orientation manuals. These publications contain policy and procedures for student inspection of their records, policy and procedures to request any amendment to the records, and policy and procedures for request to prevent disclosure of information to unauthorized persons.

Policy and Procedure for Student Inspection of His or Her Records

It is the policy of the university to provide services to students and former students to inspect and review their own education record upon request. The service provides copies of education records and an interpretation and explanation of the records, if requested.

The procedure of review involves the student filling out a <u>Student Request to Inspect and Review Education Records Form</u> at the Office of the Registrar. A review date is scheduled within five (5) working days of receipt of the signed request, except for the first two weeks of a semester when it will be within ten (10) working days. On the scheduled review date, the student is required to present photo identification card before the review is allowed.

Policy / Procedure for Student Request for Amendment of His/Her Record

It is the policy of the university to provide all students the opportunity to challenge the contents of their educational records they feel to be inaccurate or misleading. The procedure requesting an amendment / correction involves the student filling out a <u>Request for Amendment / Correction of Education Records</u>

<u>Form</u> at the Office of the Registrar. The student is required to attach any supplementary evidence to support the request.

Each request is examined by the Registrar, as the custodian of record(s), and the student is informed within thirty (30) days of his or her request of the decision. If the student's request is upheld, the records are amended accordingly, and the student is notified. However, in the instance of a disagreement, a hearing is arranged to sort out the matter. A Student Records Hearing Committee consisting of at least three university officials with no interest in the outcome of the hearing sits on the case. The student is notified in writing of the members of the committee, the place, the date, and time of the hearing, at least five (5) working days before the hearing convenes. The committee makes its decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. If the decision is favourable to the student, he or she is informed of the amendment of the record in writing. Correction and / or amendment of the record is processed within ten (10) working days of the decision of the hearing committee.

If the decision is not in the student's favour, he/she is notified in writing, citing the reasons for the decision. The student is notified of his/her right to place a statement in his or her educational record explaining reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the committee, if he or she wishes to do so. All university offices and individuals with a legitimate educational interest in the decision are also informed in writing of the decision.

Responsibility for Access to Student Records

FERPA and the university rules permit university officials to access and use student records for legitimate educational purposes. A "University Official"

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is defined as "a person employed by University of South Florida (USF) in any faculty / staff position or as a temporary substitute for a faculty or staff member, a person currently serving as a member of the Board of Education to perform a special administrative task for USF (such as an audit)". (p. 20)

"Legitimate educational purpose" is defined as "a University Official's need to know in order to perform an administrative task in the official's position description, perform a supervisory or instructional task related to the student's education, or perform a service or benefit for the student such as student job placement" (p. 20). Accessing or using student information otherwise is strictly prohibited.

All University employees, regardless of level, sign both an Employee Code of Responsibility for Student Records Information, and a Statement of Confidentiality of Student Records Agreement. A Sample Statement of Confidentiality of Student Records Agreement is presented in Appendix A.

Physical Security Guidelines

All student records are maintained in a secure environment. No documents or reports containing protected student information are to be left on reception desks / counters or in other areas open to view and / or access by students and visitors. All student records are removed and /or secured before leaving an unsecured work area.

In the case of electronic systems, all computer monitors are to be positioned in such a way as to prevent other students or unauthorized persons from viewing another student's electronic record. No student or student worker is to have authorized access to completed grade rosters or grade change forms prior

to their receipt by the Office of the Registrar. All officers or employees assigned access codes to unlock and enter the Student Records are to be monitored by access code, date, and time, by the Office of the Registrar.

All certificates, transcript papers, change of grade form are to be properly secured. All irregularities and missing student records are to be reported immediately to the Office of the Registrar for action. A room in the Office of the Registrar, called the inner office, is a secured area with admittance granted only to those individuals with a need for access. Access is controlled by an electronic lock that allows only those individuals with the security code to enter. The access security code is changed every one hundred and eighty (180) days

Records Retention Guidelines

Responsibility for complying with records retention periods and destruction procedures is assigned to student records custodians and managers of academic and administrative units of the university. The requirements for retention and destruction are detailed in a document known as General Records Schedule GS5 for University / Community College Records issued by the Florida Division of Library and Information Service (March 1996). This document lists the student records schedule by series or types and designates the minimum period for retention.

Records Destruction / Disposal Guidelines

When student records have met retention requirements, they are then due for disposal. A Records Destruction Request Form is filled out by the university and, thereafter, forwarded to the Florida Division of Library and Information

Services for state approval. The request must be submitted and approved before actual destruction is carried out.

The appropriate method is chosen for the destruction of the records based on the volume of materials and availability of equipment for the purpose. The methods employed are shredding, recycling, and burning. When records are destroyed, notations of the action are made in the disposal certificate. The disposal certificate is retained permanently in the office of the custodian of records for future reference.

University of Essex student records management manual (2004)

The University of Essex student records management policy relating to records retention and disposal ensures an effective and efficient records management system. Records retention and disposal are the processes by which the university decides whether records should be destroyed or transferred to archives. All student records, like other university records, fall into three categories which are current, semi-current, and archived. The retention period refers to the life of the record as being "current" or "semi-current" (p. 1).

The university retains student files upon creation in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Limitation Act 1980. The former protects student' personal data by ensuring that they are not held longer than necessary, while the latter provides students with the right to sue for negligence up to six years after departure from the university.

All student files fall within current or semi-current records. While in the university, a student file is considered to be current. On departure (either through

graduation or withdrawal), the file becomes semi-current. The Admission Office creates all student files and passes them over to the Schools Office once students are registered. These files are maintained throughout the students' life time at the university before moving to their semi-current status.

Current Student Files

The Schools Office retains the new student file until his or her departure. The minimum information the file holds at this point is the admission letter that offered the student a place in the university. The file is then added to during the student's time at the university. Typical information accumulated in the file during a student's university career includes, registration records, academic progress data in relevant course work or examination marks, and data relating to appeals or complaints. The Schools Office also hold (separately to individual student files) a student's personal details form and registration documents as well as other forms and papers relating to the School Boards of Examiners.

Semi-current Student Files

At the end of the academic year in which the student completes or terminates his or her course of study, the status of his or her files changes from current to semi-current. The procedure for managing the file changes until its confidential destruction. At this point, a permanent record of the student's time at the university is maintained on the Student Records Database (SRDB), which includes data on the student's identity, years of study, as well as marks and degree class. Over the long-term, this is the only information the Schools Office preserves permanently in relation to individual students.

The procedures for the management and storage of files relating to graduated or withdrawn students are well laid out. Files are moved out of the Schools Office back to the Academic Section archive room where they remain in their entirety for one academic year. At the end of this period, the file is pruned in accordance with the pruning procedure set out below, and thereafter stored in the room as a semi-current record for a further five years. At the end of the five-academic-year period, all files are destroyed confidentially. No files are held indefinitely.

In order to cover the entire period of study and the statutory requirements of the Limitation Act 1980, forms relating to first year students are retained for nine years after the academic year in which they were submitted. Forms relating to second and final year students are stored together for six academic years after the academic year during which that cohort of students are expected to graduate. At the start of each new academic year, circumstantial personal details forms and registration documents from the previous academic year are destroyed confidentially.

Pruning Procedures

Pruning involves decisions on records that need to be retained and stored, and those that need to be removed from files and destroyed at a point in time. In order to ensure consistency, a list describing what information must remain on the file following the pruning process is provided. Included among the list to be retained are admission papers and academic progress data. All other data are destroyed. This process is used also to save file space.

Data Security / Protection

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the university's policy directs that all personal data in student files are to be held fairly, securely, and for the specific purposes for which they were generated or collected. Data have to be managed faithfully in accordance with the policy and always destroyed confidentially at the end of the retention period. Disclosures of information from student files are only to be made in accordance with the provisions of the Act and only to those with legitimate authority to know.

King's College London: What is student records management? (2005)

The student records management policy of the King's College London is to pursue the established framework for the creation, management, and disposition of records within the institution. King's considers records as its corporate memory and a vital asset for ongoing operations.

Records Acts

King's develops recordkeeping practices that capture, maintain, and dispose or destroy records with appropriate evidential characteristics in accordance with obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Limitation Act 1980. The provisions of the disposal schedule offer guidance to staff on the need to retain certain records for periods as specified by law, to destroy some records when no longer needed, and to archive records of permanent value. The disposal schedule ensures consistency of recordkeeping practice College-wide, and assists compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Records Database

Student paper files are supported by a computer database (known throughout King's as SIA, SI or SITS) which has been live since September, 1998. The database introduced relational database technology to the student record system in the form of oracle RDBMS (Relational Database Management System).

The individual School Offices enter the data on their students into the database. Various officers within the Academic Registry also input information. Academic departments and academic staff (with some exceptions) have read-only access rights.

The database fulfils two functions. It provides the data which the college needs to fulfil its obligations to the student (for example, name, date of birth, address, course details, marks, and results). It also provides the data for external bodies (for example, applications data, enrolments, and final results summaries).

The data created and entered in the database include:

Personal Details:

(1)   Student identifier

(2)   Name

(3)   Date of birth

(4)   Address

(5)   Emergency contact

(6)   Nationality

(7)   Fee status

(8)   Ethnicity

(9)　　Disability (only with permission of student)

(10)　　Whether an applicant, a current or an ex-student

Programme of Study:

(1)　　Student's degree programme

(2)　　Year of first entry to the course

(3)　　Year (level) at which the student entered the course

(4)　　Start and expected end date

(5)　　Student's entry qualifications

(6)　　Change(s) of course of study

Enrolment details:

Annual permit to enrol

Academic Progress Record:

Students normally have one progress record which contains basic information on the student's course of study and intended awards.

Awards details:

(a)　　Examination registration

(b)　　Calculation of award

(c)　　Final classification (transcript) (p. 9)

Student Records Life Cycle

The records in student paper files and the student database are retained and managed according to recommended disposal schedules in relation to the records life cycle. These are contained in Appendix B.

Appendix B shows a mapping of the life cycle of the student academic records to core data and the recommended disposal schedule. The life cycle of the

six core records begins with Applications and Registration, through Academic Progress and Examinations, and end with Graduation and Afterwards. The record is created and kept in either student database or paper file, or both, depending on its value and purpose over time. Appropriate disposal schedules are recommended from within a year to ten for some records; while for some others, such as transcripts, recommendations are made for permanent retention.

The three university records manuals considered in this part of the study have illustrated the rudiments of student records and their management in line with the records life cycle. The extent of managing these records has also been considered. It is clear from the discussion that student records management is an invaluable activity.

The Student Records in the University of Cape Coast

This part of the review provides and discusses information in materials containing the university's policies on students' admission and registration on one hand, and students' academic achievement on the other. The materials obtained and referred to are:

1.   *University of Cape Coast, Statutes, 2003*

2.   *Academic programmes, policies and regulations, 2006*

3.   *Admission brochure for 2006/2007 academic year*

4.   *Brochure on graduate studies, 1998 – 2002*

5.   *Students' handbook, 2006*

6.   *40th Anniversary matriculation ceremony, 2002*

7.   *37th Congregation basic statistics, 2006*

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8.   *37th Congregation programme and list of graduands, 2006*

UCC Statutes

The functions and powers of the university in relation to its students are clearly defined in its Statutes. It states that:

> The University shall provide instruction and undertake research for the advancement of knowledge in such branches of learning and study for persons whether members of the University or not and . . . shall give emphasis to the preparation of teachers both graduates and non-graduates for secondary school, teacher training colleges, polytechnics and technical institutions as well as the training and retaining of such specialized personnel as may be required for the effective provision of education service in the country (pp. 2,3).

Furthermore, it delineates the university's stewardship and accountability to the public by categorically stating that "Council shall within six months after the end of each academic year, cause a report of the activities of the University during that year to be drawn up and made available to the public" (p. 6). The activities of the university during the academic year include obligations enshrined in the *Statutes* such as admission, registration, matriculation, courses or programmes, and congregation for awarding degrees, diplomas, and certificates to successful students upon graduation. Hence, the university is expected to keep records of all its activities in good standing in order to meet these obligations.

Policies and Regulations on Students

The university's policy and regulatory issues concerning students are dealt with statutory in the *Statutes* (2003), but in comprehensive detail both in the *Academic programme, policies and regulation* (2006), and the *Students' handbook* (2006). Even though the *Students' handbook* touches on almost all aspects of the university's relationship with the student, it conspicuously omits information on the process of student academic progression through writing and passing semester examinations, and observing Examination Rules and Regulations under "Academic Matters" (pp. 50-60). Furthermore, the university's "Grading system" is presented only as a scale and class designations (p. 61). Information about the student assessment system, explanation and interpretation of the grading system, and the basic requirement for graduation from the university are not provided. However, these matters are located in the Academic programmes, policies and regulations (pp. 21-23).

Details of admission requirements and programme offerings in the faculties are provided in the *Admission brochure for 2006 / 2007* and the *Brochure on graduate studies, 1998-2002*. According to the brochures, the academic programmes of the university are vested in the six faculties and schools. These are the Faculties of Arts, Education, Social Sciences, Science, School of Agriculture, and the School of Business. The faculties are sub-divided into forty-two (42) Academic Departments, Institutes and Centres. There are over fifty (50) academic programmes mounted each year at the Diploma, Bachelor, Master's and Doctorate levels.

The information in the brochures serves two purposes. First, it is to help applicants understand how the faculties are structured and the programmes they offer. Second, it is to aid applicants in the selection of their programmes. For this reason, a detailed breakdown of subject requirements, subject combinations, and the basic entry grades requirement at the faculty as well as the minimum requirement for programmes at the departmental level are provided.

Furthermore, instructions on how to complete application forms, and the mode of submission of completed application forms are also provided. Photocopies of documents such as certificates or results slips are required to be attached to the completed application forms and posted to the Deputy Registrar, Academic Section of the university. This begins the process for the creation of student records in the university.

It is the university's regulation that all enrolled students in any particular year undergo matriculation to qualify to become junior members of the university with the singular responsibility and duty to study diligently. The *40th Anniversary matriculation ceremony (2002)* booklet provides a list of students who passed the university's entry requirements and were matriculated by the Vice-Chancellor, admitting them "to the Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities of the faculties" in response to the student matriculation oath "to study diligently and to conform to all Statutes, Regulations and Rules" concerning them (pp. 1, 81). The names of students registered under the different programmes of study for the matriculation ceremony serve as a record of students admitted that year.

More evidence of student records is located in the *37th Congregation basic statistics, 2006* and *37th Congregation programme and list of graduands, 2006.*

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While the former provides records of the numbers of students admitted by faculty, programme, and gender during the 2006/2007 academic year, together with student enrolment by year and gender from 1962/63 to 2006/2007, the latter provides a record of names of graduands presented at the congregation by faculty, programme, and degree classification. In 1962/63, the university admitted 155 students (male: 142, and female: 13), while in 2006/2007, student admission was 4,270 (male: 2,674, and female: 1,596). This is a clear indication of a tremendous increase in admissions and student enrolment requiring efficient and effective records management operations.

However, during his search, the researcher could not trace any student records management manual or handbook that details the policies, procedures, legal basis, and practices of the university which relate to student admission, registration, and academic achievement records which are processed in conformity with the life cycle of records management. Also, there were no retention and disposal schedules of student records to refer to.

Résumé of the Review of the Related Literature

It should be acknowledged that the review of the related literature on the research variables has provided a clear understanding of the thrust of the study in connection with student records management. Four main ideas have emanated from the discussion of the review. First, evidence from the literature indicates that records management, as a profession, is a relatively new concept. Advanced records management concepts were not developed earlier for the basic reason that they were not considered necessary at the time. In today's information-oriented

society, records management principles and practices are absolutely necessary and critical to society's continuous survival.

The second aspect relates to the life cycle concept of records. In view of this concept, records are understood to go through stages of birth, life, and death. For this reason, the management of records involves processing records through their creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposition. Through these processes, records may fall within any one of three phases – current (or active), semi-current (or semi-active), and non-current (or inactive) – and be managed as such. The independent variables in the research namely, student admission, registration, and academic achievement records are thus collected, kept, and processed in line with the demands of the dependent variables of records management, vis-à-vis records creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposition.

Furthermore, there are varying retention and disposal schedules for different types of student records. For example, transcripts of student academic achievement records are considered as permanent and vital records, while welfare records are ephemeral, with short term value.

Third, there are Laws and Acts which underpin policies, regulations, and procedures of student records management practices in institutions of higher education. School authorities are not only to take measures to ensure their compliance, but they are also obliged to ensure an effective and efficient student records management system. Student records are to be readily accessible to students. In addition, individual student records are to be kept safe and confidential. Further, the institution is both responsible and accountable for the

whole gamut of student records. Student records management manuals are provided by some higher institutions to inform staff, and particularly students about their rights and responsibilities as far as their records in the institutions are concerned.

Fourth, student records management principles and practices in the University of Cape Coast are not well defined. There is no student records management manual which offers guidelines as to how student records are managed. Student matters are either scattered or partly duplicated in various brochures and booklets, thus making it a bit cumbersome to locate specific information. For example, on student academic achievement grading system, the *Student handbook* 2006 presents an unexplained version of the Grading System. An explained presentation is offered in the *Academic programmes, policies and regulations*, 2006 booklet. Again, the list of student offences in the former book omits examination offences, hence making the entire list of student offences incomplete. The list of examination offences is furnished in the latter booklet.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, a discussion of the research design, the population, the sample, and the sampling technique used for the study is presented. In addition, the research instruments which were used to collect data and the procedure for the data collection are also discussed.

Research Design

The research design considered appropriate for the research was the descriptive survey method. The method "looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and then describes precisely what the research sees" (Leedy, 1989, p. 140). The method was used, therefore, to process the data which was gathered through observation by the researcher. It should be clarified that observation, by this survey method went beyond physical vision, and involved the preservation of facts (records) that were gathered with the use of appropriate instruments such as the questionnaire and the interview.

The basic assumption underlying this research approach, according to Leedy (1989), is that given phenomena usually follow a common pattern. For this reason, whatever one observes about people at any particular time is what could be observed again under the same conditions. In this respect, Neuman (2003) points out that descriptive survey is appropriate for research questions about human behaviour, attitudes, believes, opinions, knowledge, and characteristics;

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and measure many variables in research studies. In the same vein, Gay (1987) opines that this method is used to collect data from members of the population in order to determine, with intense accuracy, the current phenomena of that population with respect to one or more variables.

The research dealt with the activity of managing student records. The topic required the use of the technique of observation as the principal means of collecting data. Those practical considerations made the choice of the descriptive survey method appropriate for the research.

Population

A salient characteristic of the descriptive survey, according to Leedy (1989), is the careful selection of the population, which should be clearly defined, and specifically delimited, in order to set precise parameters for ensuring discreteness to the population. In view of that, the target population was defined as consisting of:

i) all regular students (RS) in attendance at the University of Cape Coast,

ii) all full – time lecturers (FL) teaching in the University of Cape Coast, and

iii) all records staff (both senior members and senior staff) at the Division of Academic Affairs (RSDAA) involved in student admission, student registration, and student academic achievement records in the University of Cape Coast. The total number of the population was 17,494 with a breakdown as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Population Distribution

Categories	Number
Regular Students (RS)	17,072
Full – time Lecturers (FL)	404
Records Staff of the Division of Academic Affairs (RSDAA)	18
Total	17,494

Table 1 indicates that there were 17,072 regular students, 404 full – time lecturers, and 18 records staff making up a total of 17,494 as the target population, as at June 30, 2007 (Source: UCC Payroll Unit, and Student Records and Management Information Section).

Sample and Sampling Technique

One of the sampling designs that are used in a descriptive survey is the purposive sampling, and this was chosen for the research. The purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling type whose characteristics were considered suitable for the study.

Sarantakos (1998) notes that "qualitative studies employ a form of non-probability sampling, such as purposive sampling." He states further that "qualitative sampling is biased by the nature of the underlying qualitative framework which is perceived as an investigative process" in which case one makes gradual sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, and classifying the variables of the study. He observes that many writers (e.g.

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Lamnek, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994) note that qualitative sampling is directed:

(i)   not towards large numbers of respondents but rather towards typical cases;

(ii)   not towards fixed samples but towards a sample that is flexible in size and type or subjects;

(iii)   not towards statistical or random sampling but towards purposive sampling;

(iv)   not towards representativeness but rather towards suitability (pp. 154, 155).

Hence, the use of the purposive sampling technique allows respondents to be chosen to constitute the sample based on their suitability, such as their experiences.

In view of the above considerations, the sample for the study consisted of individuals purposively selected from the population, according to leadership, office, or responsibility. The sample was selected in three stages. In the first stage, a sample was selected from the RS category. The large number in this category was made up of 17,072 students consisting of Level 100, Level 200, Level 300, Level 400, and graduate students. It was impractical to involve all the students in the study. Again, it would have been cumbersome to locate, and select by random, a representative number from each sub-group (level) to constitute a meaningful sample to facilitate the study. The purposive sampling of student executive leaders was considered to be a better and favourable option. The student executive leaders served as a proper representation of all the students since they were elected by the students themselves and served as their

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mouthpiece. They had the background and the experience expected from all the respondents who took part in the study for its successful accomplishment. They were, therefore, considered suitable for the study. Even though the local NUGS, UCC, is not in the Statutes of the University, by convention, it is appropriately recognized by the Management of UCC as an organ that represents the interests of UCC students in the body politic of students nation-wide. Furthermore, the local executives are also elected into office by all Junior Members of the University in a similar way as it done for the SRC and the JCRC executive members.

The student leaders were selected from all the official positions as follows:

1. Student Representative Council (SRC): Six (6) students were selected, one from each of the six executive positions in the SRC.

2. Junior Common Room Committees (JCRCs): Seventy-one (71) students selected, one from each of the seventy-one executive positions in all the seven halls of residence namely, Adehye, Atlantic, Kwame Nkrumah, Casford, Oguaa, Valco, and Valco Trust Graduate Hostel.

3. Local National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS): Six (6) students were selected, one from each of the six executive positions in the NUGS in UCC.

4. Graduate Students Association of Ghana (GRASAG): Seven (7) students were selected, one from each of the seven executive positions of the Association in UCC.

A total of 90 executive leaders constituted the sample from the regular students' (RS) population of 17,072.

In the second stage, a sample was drawn from the FL category. The number in this category was 404. It was not possible to use all the individuals in this category for the study because of the size of the number. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample. Individuals who had been elected to serve as deans, vice deans in the faculties, appointed heads of departments and centres, departmental registration and examination officers were included in the sample. All of them served as elected and / or appointed representatives of all the full – time lecturers and had years of experience with student records. The lecturers selected were: -

1. Deans of Faculties & Graduate Studies   6 lecturers

2. Vice-Deans of Faculties   5 lecturers

3. Heads of Departments   45 lecturers

4. Registration Officers   45 lecturers

5. Examination Officers   45 lecturers

A total of 146 lecturers constituted the sample in the category.

In the third stage, a sample was selected from the staff of the Division of Academic Affairs (composed of the Academic Section and the Student Records and Management Information Section). There were 5 Senior Members and 13 Senior Staff in that Division. All the 18 records staff of RSDAA constituted the sample for the research since their number was small in terms of size and adequate for the purpose of the research. The complete sample is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2:

Distribution of Sample

Categories	Number
Lecturers	146
DAA Personnel	18
Students	90
Total	254

As indicated in Table 2, the sample size for the study was 254.

Research Instrument

Armstrong (1999) states four types of instruments or strategies each of which, or in combination, can be used in conducting surveys. These are:

(a)   structured questionnaire,

(b)   interview,

(c)   a combination of questionnaire and interview, and

(d)   focus group.

For the study, the researcher used a combination of questionnaire and interview instruments to collect the data from the respondents in the research.

The two instruments are appropriate because they provide access to what is "inside a person's head," and thus make it possible to measure what a person knows as knowledge or information. (Tuckman, 1972, p. 173) By counting the total number of individuals who give a particular response, frequency data can be generated for specific interpretations.

The questionnaire, on its part, is effective when considering a large number of respondents, and guarantees respondent's anonymity (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, 1990). On its part, the interview technique is effective for a small number of respondents and provides instant information from them (Dyer, 1976). The combination of the two instruments, the questionnaire and the interview, complement and reinforce the data that are generated to treat the research questions in a comprehensive and an effective manner.

The researcher constructed a questionnaire schedule and an interview guide that were suitable for gathering information to answer the research questions. The questionnaire and interview schedules consisted of five sections each. Section A solicited biographic data from the respondents. Sections B, C, and D measured the challenges in the management of admission, registration, and academic achievement records of students. Section E solicited suggestions to improve the management of the student records.

The researcher used questions which requested the respondents to provide factual and / or opinion-based responses. Hence, both the closed and open-ended types of questions were used. The closed questions format constituted a set of questions each of which had structured responses to which the respondent ticked the response option he or she agreed with, in each case. The format promoted ease of scoring and analysis of the data (Tuckman, 1972).

On the other hand, the open-ended question format allowed the subject to give his or her own candid response, in whatever form he or she chose, rather than agreeing with one of the researcher's own alternate responses provided for each of the questions. Though the open-ended question format provided enough freedom

for respondents to reveal their opinions and to clarify their views, the responses they provided were unstructured and, therefore, difficult to score, quantify, and analyse (Neuman, 2003). Both types of questions were used for the questionnaire instrument. However, the open-ended type of questions was used mainly for the interview. The questionnaire and interview instruments are marked Appendix C and Appendix D respectively in the Appendices.

Both face and content validity were ensured. The face validity was ensured by the researcher. The content validity was certified by two supervisors (senior lecturers) at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) and by a pre-test. A sample of 244 respondents was served with the questionnaires. A sample of ten (10) respondents comprising six (6) deans of the six faculties and schools, and four (4) senior officers of the Division of Academic Affairs (DAA) was served with copies of the interview guide.

Pre - test

In order to ascertain the appropriateness and internal consistency of the questionnaire, and to identify any weaknesses or ambiguity in any of the items that respondents might have difficult understanding, a pre-test was conducted. This procedure was necessary because as Leedy (1989) pointed out, "all questionnaires should be pre-tested on a small population of similar characteristics" to that from which the sample for the study was taken to test whether there were any items respondents might have difficult understanding or that might not ask exactly what the writer of the questionnaire intended (p. 143). Neuman (2003) states that conducting a pre-test "is a means of improving the

quality and reliability" of a measuring instrument (pp. 181, 182). The pre-test involved ten lecturers who were purposively selected from the lecturers who had spent more than five years in the university.

The items in the instrument were judged to have content validity as they were a representative sample of the content areas of the student admission, student registration, and student academic achievement records management, as well as the concept of the life cycle of records. Furthermore, the instrument was judged as having the capacity to measure the extent of knowledge of respondents on the subject matter according to their awareness of student records management practices in the University of Cape Coast.

Two errors were detected and corrected. They were "Don't Know" options in items 32, and 33. They were deleted.

The reliability (internal consistency) coefficient was determined with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 15. The items were dichotomously coded as 1 and 0 (where 1 represented "Yes" response, and 0 represented otherwise, for either "No" or "Don't Know" response) for the three areas, namely, admission records (15 items), registration records (14 items), and academic achievement records (17 items). The Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficients generated (the same as the Cronbach's alpha when items are dichotomous) were 0.7, 0.7, and 0.6, for admission, registration, and academic achievement records respectively.

According to *Wikipedia*, by convention, a cut-off of 0.6 is acceptable, and alpha of 0.7 gives high evidence of internal consistency of the research instrument. Values can range from 0.0 to 1.0, with the lower bound 0.0 indicting

no measure of true score and the upper bound 1.0 indicating perfect measurement with no error component (http://en.wikipedia .org/Kuder-Richardson _ Formula 20). Therefore, the questionnaire was judged as reliable. The pre-test was conducted in August, 2007.

Data Collection Procedure

In view of the number and categories of the respondents involved, a two-week timetable was drawn for the purpose of personally administering and collecting the 244 questionnaire documents. The questionnaires with the researcher's self - addressed envelopes attached to them were distributed to the lecturers in their offices in the faculties, to the student executive officers in their offices on campus, and to the records staff in the Division of Academic Affairs. There was a 94% response rate.

For the interview, a two-week timetable was scheduled. The researcher contacted each of the ten interviewees, gave a copy of the interview schedule to them, and booked appointments for the interviews. There was 90% response rate.

The administration of the research instruments began in the first week of September, 2007. The data collection ended at the end of the month.

Data Analysis

Ary et al. (1990) observe that "descriptive surveys don't typically require complex statistical analysis. Data may simply consist of determining the frequencies and percentages for the major variables in the study" (p. 435). Consequently, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)

the data generated from the questionnaire instrument were statistically analysed on the bases of frequencies and percentages for the necessary descriptions and discussions. Each of the questionnaire documents was given a serial number for easy identification before processing the data.

In Section A, the biographic data, frequencies, cumulative frequencies, percentages, and cumulative percentages were used in treating the data. They involved the distribution of information about respondents' gender, age, status, and length of respondents' status in UCC.

Research Question 1 was to find out the challenges in the management of student admission records. Frequencies and percentages were computed from respondents' responses in Section B to provide the answers. Section C dealt with Research Question 2 to find out the challenges in the management of student registration records. Frequencies and percentages were used to determine them.

Research Question 3 sought to find out the challenges in the management of student academic achievement records. Frequencies and percentages were used to ascertain them from the responses of respondents to the questions in Section D.

Research Question 4 solicited suggestions on how to improve student records management in the University of Cape Coast. This formed Section E. Each response was categorized and coded 1 for personnel, or 2 for materials, or 3 for directives as the case was for all the responses offered by the respondents. Frequencies and percentages were then generated to determine and resolve the issue.

Furthermore, the status of student records management in the University of Cape Coast was rated using frequency and percentage computations from the responses of the lecturers, the DAA personnel, and the students in the study. These were from items 20, 35, and 53. All the statistical analyses of the data in frequencies and percentages were presented in tables for description and discussion. The data gathered from the interviews were used to support the major discussions of the research in treating each of the research questions and that of the research topic.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to find out the status of student records management in the University of Cape Coast. As expected, the university will continue to admit, register, and prepare qualified students through well-tailored courses and programmes to meet the educational goals and aspirations of the students and of the nation. Appropriate and accurate records keeping of each student are essential towards the realization of these ends. Consequently, the proper management of student records is critical towards the calibre of students the university produces and the unique functional image of the university itself.

The management of student records involves three phases, namely, the creation phase in the first instance, the maintenance and use phase in the second instance, and the retention and disposal phase in the final instance (Penn & Pennix, 1989). In view of the challenges inherent in each of the phases, the ability of the university to establish clear practices based on well-defined policies and procedures to deal with the challenges will reveal and define the status of its student records management. Current practices to overcome many of the challenges will indicate high status, while the opposite will indicate low status. Arguably, high status will imply very good managerial practice while low status will indicate low student records management practice which will require pragmatic steps to remediate the deficiencies and improve practice. This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study in relation to the research questions and the research topic.

<p style="text-align: center">**Biographic Data**</p>

The Section A of the questionnaire and interview schedules was designed to solicit biographic data from the respondents in the study. These are gender, age, status at UCC, and length of respondent's status at the end of the 2006 / 2007 academic year. Statistical analysis based on frequencies, cumulative frequencies, percentages, and cumulative percentages was used in treating the data generated. The results are presented in Tables 3 to 8.

<p style="text-align: center">**Status of Respondents at UCC**</p>

The study involved three categories of subjects at UCC. These were lecturers, DAA personnel and students. 146 lecturers, 18 DAA personnel, and 90 students were sampled for the study. It was important to determine the number of each category that responded. Status was used to establish that. Table 3 provides the information.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents by Status

Status	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency
Lecturer	131	131
DAA Personnel	18	149
Student	90	239
Total	239	

Table 3 shows that 131 lecturers, 18 DAA personnel, and 90 students participated in the study. It is inferred from the table that while all 18 DAA

personnel, and 90 students sampled for the study really participated, 15 lecturers representing the difference between 146 and 131 did not participate in the study. A total of 239 respondents out of a sample of 254 subjects, therefore, took part in the study, thus yielding a return rate of 94%. Of the 239 respondents, 230 answered the questionnaire and 9 were interviewed.

Gender Distribution

It was observed that the university had a mixture of both male and female lecturers, DAA personnel, and students, with the male proportion greater than that of the female in each category. It was, therefore, important to indicate the presentation of male and female proportions in the study. Table 4 presents the results of gender distribution in the study.

Table 4

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage %
Male	196	82.0	82.0
Female	43	18.0	100.0
Total	239	100.0	

Table 4 shows that out of the 239 respondents who participated in the study, 196 (82.0%) were males and 43 (18.0%) were females. More males than females participated in the study and that reflected the observed situation in UCC as more males than females are found as lecturers, students, and DAA staff in the higher academic domain.

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Age Distribution

It was important to consider the level of maturity of the respondents in terms of age in order to ascertain to a large extent the appropriateness of their responses. The older the respondents the better their understanding and judgment on the issues at stake. Table 5 presents the results of age distribution of the respondents.

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Below 20	0	0.0	0.0
21 – 30	87	36.4	36.4
31 – 40	29	12.1	48.5
Above 40	123	51.5	100.0
Total	239	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that all the respondents were above 20 years of age and hence, all were of adult age (Cambridge University Press, 1996). In fact, majority of the respondents, 123 (51.5%) were above 40 years, an indication that they were of matured age. The different formal educational backgrounds of the categories of respondents (which were above the Senior High School level) made it possible for them to attain the ages indicated.

Length of Status at UCC as at the end of the 2006 / 2007 academic year

One of the bases for being able to respond appropriately to the

questionnaire or interview items was that the respondent must have spent sometime in the university and gained the experience required for that purpose. The experience was determined by the number of years that respondents have served in their respective roles at UCC as at the end of the 2006 / 2007 academic year. Additionally this indicated, to some extent, the respondent's familiarity with the way the university managed its student records. Tables 6 to 8 provide the required information for lecturers, DAA personnel, and students respectively.

Table 6: Distribution of Length of Status of Lecturers

Length (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5	53	40.5
6 – 10	29	22.1
11 – 15	12	9.2
Above 15	37	28.2
Total	131	100.0

Table 6 indicates that while 53(40.5%) of the lecturers had spent 1 – 5 years, the rest, 78(59.5%) had spent 6 years or more. This indicates that majority of the lecturers had spent many years in UCC.

Table 7: Distribution of Length of Status of DAA Personnel

Length (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5	8	44.4
6 – 10	4	22.2
11 – 15	3	16.7
Above 15	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

Table 7 reveals that while 8(44.4%) of the DAA personnel in the study had spent 1 – 5 years, the rest, 10(55.6%) had spent 6 or more years. Therefore, majority of the DAA personnel had spent many years in UCC.

Table 8

Distribution of length of Status of Students

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	0	0.0
2	19	21.1
3	34	37.8
Above 3	37	41.1
Total	90	100.0

Table 8 indicates that none of the students had spent one year at UCC since Year 1 had no representation. While 19(21.1%) of them had spent 2 years, the rest, made up of 71(78.9%) students had spent 3 years and above in UCC.

The information generated from the responses provided by the respondents indicated that all of them were suitable subjects for the study. They had the status, maturity, and the background in terms of years spent in the university to facilitate the course of the research.

Research Question 1

What are the challenges in the management of student admission records? This question sought to find out the state of affairs in UCC's records management practice concerning the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal of

records as applied to student admission, and the challenges therein. The results of the analysed responses from the respondents on the three phases of the student admission records are presented in Tables 9 to 11 and discussed accordingly.

Form of creation of student admission records

The aspect on the creation of student admission records is considered under items 5 to 9 in the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 shows that the university had established a well-known means for creating accurate student admission records. Over 85% of each of the three response categories observed that the completion of application forms, the provision of information for easy completion of the forms, and accurate entry qualification requirement were known practices.

Penn and Pennix (1989) note that one of the best methods for creating records is by the use of forms. Furthermore, as Daver (1988) points out, the effectiveness of a form as a tool for gathering information is attained if it is designed "in such a way that it is easy to complete and provides the data which can be used easily" (p. 414).

With regard to the detection of falsified entry qualification, while all 14 (100.0%) of DAA personnel affirmed the practice, 85(67.5%) of lecturers and 56(62.2%) of students did so. Hence, about a third of each of these two categories did not affirm the practice. Even though it was observed that majority of the respondents confirmed the practice, it was necessary for all order lecturers and students to be aware of it in an environment such as the university in order to build confidence in the entry qualification records of students.

Table 9

Responses on the Creation of Student Admission Records

Aspect of creation of records	Respondents	Responses in percentage (%)		
		Yes	No	Don't Know
Completion of application	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
forms	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	89(98.9)	0(0.0)	1(1.1)
Provision of necessary	L	113(89.7)	5(4.0)	8(6.3)
information for easy	D	12(85.7)	1(7.1)	1(7.1)
completion of forms	S	78(86.7)	11(12.2)	1(1.1)
Accurate entry qualification	L	124(94.4)	0(0.0)	2(1.6)
required by the university	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	87(96.7)	3.(3.3)	0(0.0)
Detection of falsified entry	L	85(67.5)	2(1.6)	39(30.9)
qualification	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	56(62.2)	4(4.5)	30(33.3)
Definite time frame for	L	111(98.1)	7(5.6)	8(6.3)
admission established by	D	12(85.7)	1(7.1)	1(7.1)
the university	S	60(66.7)	16(17.8)	14(15.5)

Respondents: L for lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for students

The interview related to the creation of student admission records revealed that one challenge in that area was "the manual method used in detecting mischievous students who applied with fake results." The process was found to be "cumbersome and time consuming," as noted by the Deputy Registrar for the

Division of Academic Affairs. With respect to students who falsified their entry qualification, respondents stated that they were expelled upon detection.

On the aspect of an established time frame for admissions, the majority of respondents represented by 111(98.1%) lecturers, 12(85.7%) DAA personnel and 60(66.7%) students affirmed the practice. The implication was that the university planned ahead for the creation of student admission records. Generally, the responses showed that the creation of student admission records was well managed.

Form of Maintenance and use of Student Admission Records

The aspect on the maintenance and use of student admission records is considered under items 10 to 13 in the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 indicates clear differences in terms of majority responses among the three categories of responders. However, confidentiality of records received some consensus in the responses of the three categories. It can be observed that while majority of DAA personnel, 10(71.4%), and students, 53(58.9%), responded that students complained about the admission process, only 40(31.7%) of the lecturers expressed the same view. Therefore, most of the lecturers were not aware of the problem. The major aspects of complaints arose from delays in receiving admission letters and lack of knowledge on the part of students about programme cut-off point, the least aggregate that enables a student to qualify for admission into a programme of his or her choice.

Table 10

Responses on the Maintenance and Use of Student Admission Records

Maintenance and use		Responses in percentage (%)		
of records	Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
Complaints about	L	40(31.7)	16(12.7)	70(55.6)
the admission process	D	10(71.4)	4(28.6)	0(0.0)
	S	53(58.9)	16(17.8)	21(23.3)
Officer to consult on	L	46(36.5)	25(19.8)	55(43.7)
admission problems	D	13(92.9)	1(7.1)	0(0.0)
	S	16(17.8)	42(46.7)	32(35.5)
Statement to keep	L	7(5.6)	53(42.0)	66(52.4)
records confidential	D	0(0.0) ·	2(14.3)	12(85.7)
	S	3(3.3)	35(38.9)	52(57.8)
Maintenance and use	L	48(38.1)	4(3.2)	74(58.7)
of records	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	19(21.1)	12(13.3)	59(65.6)

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

As regards the officer to consult about admission problems, the responses were mixed among the lecturers and students. However, majority of DAA personnel, 13(92.9%) of them, responded in the affirmative. Even so, the fact that three different officers were named by the respondents, namely, the Deputy Registrar, the Assistant Registrar, and the Registration Officer as the officer to consult indicated inadequate knowledge in the responses. These varied responses

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on an individual clearly revealed a challenge to the university's student records management practice.

It was evident that the university had not established that particular individuals sign a statement to keep student records confidential. Only ten respondents (7 lecturers and 3 students) submitted that that was done at the beginning of every semester. Clearly, this practice is non-existent for which reason none of the DAA personnel affirmed it. The finding was not in conformity with the observation at the University of South Florida (2005) that lecturers and records officers should sign both a Code of Responsibility for Student Records Information and a Statement of Confidentiality of Student Records Agreement in order to hold them legally liable for any misdemeanour on their part.

Majority of the lecturers, 74(58.7%), and of the students, 59(65.6%), admitted that they did not know how well the university maintained and used the student admission records. On the other hand, all the DAA personnel, and 7(77.7%) of those interviewed acknowledged that the records were well maintained and used. They supported that view by stating that the records were kept very well on both digital and paper files, and were easily retrievable. In addition, the vital data of the admission records were used for the certification of students.

It was evident from the mixed responses from the three categories of respondents on the issues discussed that there was a lack of adequate information

on the maintenance and use of student admission records. This is indicative of the fact that some practices of the 'maintenance and use' aspect of student admission records were not apparent to some lecturers and students. Furthermore, it could be concluded that the practice of keeping records confidential was not made obligatory to those who generated the records and those who kept them. These were clear challenges to records management practice in the university.

Form of Retention and Disposal of Student Admission Records

The aspect on the retention and disposal of student admission records is considered under items 14 to 19 in the questionnaire instrument. The results of the responses are presented in Table 11.

It is observed from the responses of the majority of the respondents in Table 11 that in the university, there were no established retention schedules and disposal methods which constitute the last phase of the life cycle of the student admission records. Only few, less than 9(3.9%) respondents in each case affirmed the practices. These respondents gave conflicting schedules, from two weeks to permanence as the retention schedules; and burning as the only disposal method employed by the university.

The interview with the deans and DAA officers yielded similar results. None of those interviewed could provide the retention schedules and the disposal methods for the student admission records. They expressed the view that they were not aware of these features of records management in the university.

Table 11

Responses on the Retention and Disposal of Student Admission Records

Retention and Disposal of records	Respondents	Responses in percentage (%)		
		Yes	No	Don't Know
Retention schedule for	L	4(3.2)	11(8.7)	111(88.1)
rejected application forms	D	1(7.1)	8(57.1)	5(35.8)
	S	3(3.3)	23(25.6)	64(71.1)
Retention schedule for	L	4(3.2)	9(7.1)	113(89.7)
successful applicant forms	D	0(0.0)	5(35.7)	9(64.3)
	S	4(4.4)	22(24.5)	64(71.1)
Information on disposal of	L	1(0.8)	56(44.4)	69(54.8)
application forms	D	3(21.4)	5(35.7)	6(42.9)
	S	4(4.4)	62(68.9)	24(26.7)
Retention schedule for	L	3(2.4)	123(97.6)	
student admission files	D	2(14.3)	12(85.7)	
	S	1(1.1)	89(98.9)	
Method of disposal of	L	4(3.2)	122(96.8)	
student admission files?	D	1(7.1)	13(92.9)	
	S	0(0.0)	90(100.0)	
The officer who authorizes	L	3(2.4)	123(97.6)	
the disposal of student	D	1(7.1)	13(92.9)	
admission files	S	3(3.3)	87(96.7)	

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

There was a clear indication that most of the respondents did not know the officer who authorized the disposal of the admission records. Less than 18(8.0%) of the respondents affirmed that they knew the schedule officer. However, they named the Registrar as well as the Deputy Registrar as the schedule officer. Evidently, the two officers could not be assigned the one responsibility at the same time. Hence, the responses conflicted clearly, and it can be concluded that there was no schedule officer who authorized the disposal of admission records.

The lack of retention schedules, established disposal methods, and an officer with records disposal responsibilities lead to two unpleasant situations. Dead and out-dated student admission records are consistently piled, year after year, to occupy storage space. Also, improper methods are likely to be used to dispose of student admission records. Iwhiwhu (2005) condemns these negative practices in records management.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the challenges in the creation of student admission records were managed well. The challenges in the maintenance and use aspect of these records were managed to some extent. The challenges in the retention and disposal aspect of the records were not managed as expected. From the data gathered, the major challenges in the management of student admission records in the university were the lack of established retention schedules and disposal methods for the records.

Research Question 2

What are the challenges in the management of student registration records?

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This question aimed at finding out the real situation on the ground concerning the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal of student registration records in the records management practice of UCC, and by that means establish the challenges in the management of such records. The issues are raised in Section C of the questionnaire (items 21 to 34) and interview (items 7 and 8) schedules. The results of the analysed responses are presented in Tables 12 to 14 and discussed accordingly.

Form of Creation of Student Registration Records

The creation phase in the management of student registration records is considered under items 21 to 25 in the questionnaire. The analysed results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 shows that over 90% of respondents in each of the three categories affirmed that the university created registration records by issuing ID cards to students, and also had designated fixed periods for the registration of students as well as of courses in each semester. These are good practices. Since no two students are the same, creating standards of identity through identification numbers (ID) is crucial for good record keeping. While two students may bear the same name, the only feature to distinguish them is the student ID.

As University of South Florida (2005) points out, the student ID is the property of the university and serves as a student identifier for the purpose of academic, business, and administrative transactions. In UCC, a student ID is generated by a special computer information system known as UCOSIS. UCOSIS stands for University of Cape Coast Online Student Information Service.

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Table 12

Responses on the Creation of Student Registration Records

Creation of registration records	Respondents	Responses in percentage (%)		
		Yes	No	Don't Know
The university issues	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
ID cards to students.	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	90(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
The university has fixed	L	120(95.2)	5(4.0)	1(0.8)
a period for the registration	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
of students on its calendar.	S	83(92.2)	6(6.7)	1(1.1)
The university has a fixed	L	125(99.2)	1(0.8)	0(0.0)
period for the registration	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
of courses in each semester.	S	83(2.2)	6(6.7)	1(1.1)
The university has a fixed day	L	41(32.5)	70(55.6)	15(11.9)
for the registration of courses	D	4(28.6)	10(71.4)	0(0.0)
for each faculty and department.	S	9(10.1)	70(77.8)	11(12.2)
Students complain about the	L	90(71.4)	21(16.7)	15(11.9)
registration process.	D	11(78.6)	2(14.3)	1(7.1)
	S	70(77.8)	15(16 7)	5(5.5)

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

The registration of students and courses to be studied at the university is very crucial to the success of the academic programme. When the registration period is fixed, it fulfils what is recorded at Ecclesiastes 3:1, "For everything

there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens" (*Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*, 1984, p. 874).

Table 12 also shows that majority of the respondents indicated that the university did not practice the registration of courses for each faculty and department on fixed days on its academic calendar. That was shown by 70(55.6%) lecturers, 10(74.4%) DAA personnel, and 70(77.8%) students. Again, majority of the respondents, 90(71.4%) lecturers, 11(78.6%) DAA personnel, and 70(77.8%) students responded that students complained about the registration process. The main complaints were centred on long back up queues, centralized system of registration, inadequate equipment such as computers to do online registration, and large student numbers to be registered within a short period of time. Furthermore, the Deputy Registrar at the DAA pointed out that "mischievous students try to impersonate or bribe records personnel to manipulate the UCOSIS in their favour during the registration of students and courses." These are challenging situations in student recordkeeping.

Form of Maintenance and use of Student Registration Records

The results of the responses on items 26 to 31 addressed the aspect on the maintenance and use of student registration records. The analysed results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 shows that all the respondents affirmed that UCC requires students to maintain and use their registration numbers on campus. Again all the DAA personnel and students, as well as a majority of 107(84.9%) lecturers responded that the student registration numbers were easy to record or remember.

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Table 13

Responses on the Maintenance and use of Student Registration Records

Maintenance and use		Responses in percentage (%)		
of records	Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
Students required to maintain	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
and use their registration numbers	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
for all purposes on campus.	S	90(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Students registration	L	107(84.9)	2(1.6)	17(13.5)
numbers are easy to record	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
or remember.	S	90(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Knowledge of the type of	L	51(40.5)	75(59.5)	
filing system for student	D	10(71.4)	4(28.6)	
registration numbers.	S	54(60.0)	36(40.0)	
Officer to contact on	L	90(71.4)	9(7.2)	27(21.4)
student registration-	D	12(85.7)	0(0.0)	2(14.3)
related problems.	S	20(22.2)	40(44.5)	30(33.3)
Student name and registration	L	29(23.0)	84(66.7)	13(10.3)
number published together on	D	0(0.0)	12(85.7)	2(14.3)
Faculty/Department notice board	S	18(20.0)	62(68.9)	10(11.1)
Maintenance and use aspect of	L	56(44.5)	10(7.9)	60(47.6)
student registration records is	D	12(85.7)	0(0.0)	2(14.3)
well managed.	S	20(22.2)	8(8.9)	62(68.9)

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

The responses on knowledge of the type of filing system used by the university for the Student registration number were equally divided among the respondents. While 115(50.0%) affirmed it, the same number negated it. Majority of the lecturers, 75(59.5%) of their number, were included in the number that stated that they did not know the type of filing system used.

The type of filing system used is alphanumeric. Ninety-eight of the 115 affirmative responses were correct in their responses. The rest, 17, chose numeric. The numeric system is not used by the University for Student Registration since it does not differentiate between subject matter. The university uses the alphanumeric system since the method differentiates between subjects by combining both letters (alpha element) and numbers (numeric element) for ease of understanding and ready identification of individuals (Penn & Pennix, 1989).

While majority of the lectures, 90(71.4%), and DAA personnel, 12(85.7%), indicated that they knew the officer to contact on registration-related problems, only 20(22.2%) of the students did sc. This indicated that majority of the students did not know of that provision. The dissemination of information among students on this subject was a challenging issue. Of the total 122 affirmative responses, 83 mentioned department registration officers as those to contact, while the rest mentioned the co-ordinator at the Data Processing Unit (DPU).

It was clear that student names were not published along with their registration numbers on faculty and department notice boards. That was indicated by over 64% in each of the three categories of respondents. The 47 affirmative respondents on this issue stated that the practice was observed during the release

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of final year results, and on the occasion when students were admitted. In fact, those responses are not the observed practice. The faculties and departments do not publish such information on their notice boards. The responsibility rests with the Division of Academic Affairs under the Academic Board.

Respondents were mixed on the issue of the maintenance and use of student registration records. While 56(44.5%) lecturers affirmed it, 60(47.6%) did not. While majority of DAA personnel, 12(85.7%) affirmed it, the majority of student, 62(68.7%), did not. However, all the nine officers interviewed responded that the university maintained and used the student registration records well.

The reasons given for the affirmative responses on the issue included the fact that the records were well kept on computer files at the DPU, and were, therefore, easy to retrieve. Also student registration was easy and done very fast online. Furthermore, the university provided a definite time frame for student registration, and faculty and department registration officers were appointed to oversee any problems.

It is evident from the responses that the challenges in the aspect concerning the maintenance and use of student registration records have to do with a lack of dissemination of information among lecturers and students in specific areas. One of these is the type of filing system used for student registration numbers which is the main means of student identifier. Another is the provision of information on registration officers in the departments who offer assistance to their students in registration – related matters. The university, as an educational institution, owes its existence mainly to students (Kochhar, 1970), and also to lecturers who generate the student achievement records. These two

role players should not be denied any information about the way the university maintains and uses student registration records in managing its affairs.

The Deputy Registrar at the Division of Academic Affairs revealed two other challenges. One was the difficulty faces in the proper storage and maintenance of student registration paper files. The other was the large expenditure on the continuous maintenance of electronic equipment to facilitate the maintenance, updating, and retrieval of records on electronic files. Furthermore, The Dean of the Faculty of Education also mentioned another challenge. This related to the inability of students to access the status of their records by using their registration numbers online.

Form of Retention and Disposal of Student Registration Records

This aspect is considered under items 32 to 34 in the questionnaire instrument. The results of the analysed responses from the respondents are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 indicates an overwhelming negative response among the respondents on the issues concerning the retention schedules and disposal methods for the student registration records as well as the officer who authorizes the disposal of the records. For example, 124(98.4%) lecturers, 13(92.9%) DAA personnel, and 88(97.8%) students indicated that they were unaware of the retention schedules for the student registration records. The respondents who affirmed the issue gave conflicting time schedules from five years to permanence which cannot be considered credible because of their conflicting nature.

Table 14

Responses on the Retention and Disposal of Registration Records

Retention and Disposal		Responses in percentage (%)	
of records	Respondents	Yes	No
Awareness of retention schedules	L	2(1.6)	124(98.4)
for student registration records	D	1 (7.1)	13(92.9)
	S	2(2.2)	88(97.8)
Awareness of the officer who	L	11(8.7)	115(91.3)
authorizes the disposal	D	0(0.0)	14(100.0)
of student registration records	S	0(0.0)	90(100.0)
Methods employed in the	L	1(0.8)	125(99.2)
disposal of student registration	D	0(0.0)	14(100.0)
records	S	0(0.0)	90(100.0)

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

Majority of the lecturers, 115(91.3%), and all the DAA personnel and the students indicated further that they were unaware of the schedule officer who authorized the disposal of the records. The 11(8.7%) lecturers who gave affirmative response to the issue named the Registrar as the officer. In view of their very limited number, coupled with the fact that the Deputy Registrar at the DAA did not indicate so, their response cannot be considered credible.

All the DAA personnel and students, together with 99.2% lecturers responded that they did not know the method employed in the disposal of student registration records. Only one lecturer, affirmed knowledge of that issue and stated burning as the method used. In contrast, not even one of the DAA

personnel knew the method involved. Understandably then, the lecturer's response cannot be considered credible.

Of course, the life of a student record ends with its disposal. JISC InfoNet (2007) directs this to be done in line with agreed retention periods and that destruction should be authorized by the officer with appropriate authority. The destruction should be done in accordance with the procedures for the destruction of valueless records. The authority for disposal and the date of the disposal should be recorded and kept by the section with final responsibility for the student record.

Evidently, the reason that may account for the negative responses is that there are no retention schedules and disposal policies and procedures laid down by the university for the management of student registration records. These policies and procedures are very important.

According to Penn and Pennix (1989), policy and procedure guide, instruct, or inform people in a work place about what to do and how to do it. They lay the structure and set the limits within which efficient and effective task is conducted and accomplished. This leads to proper records management which, according to Emery (2005), promotes economies and efficiencies in records keeping by ensuring that useless and outdated records are systematically destroyed while valuable information is protected and maintained in a manner that facilitates its access and use.

Another challenge in this aspect of records keeping was revealed by the Dean of the School of Business. He mentioned the absence of a records management manual which dealt with schedules for the student records life cycle.

From the preceding discussions, it can be concluded that the creation of student registration records was well managed. The challenges in the maintenance and use aspect of the records were being managed to some extent. The challenges in the retention and disposal aspect of student registration records were not managed as expected. Therefore, the major challenges in the management of student registration records in the university, in terms of record practices, were the lack of established retention schedules and disposal methods for the records, and an officer in charge of such matters.

<p align="center">Research Question 3</p>

What are the challenges in the management of student academic achievement records?

This research question was posed with the intention of unearthing the existing practices in the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal of student academic achievement records, and identify the challenges in the management of such records. The issues are considered in Section D of the questionnaire (items 36 to 53) and interview (items 11 and 12) schedules.

<p align="center">Form of Creation of Student Academic Achievement Records</p>

The creation of student academic achievement records as an aspect of the student records management practice is considered under items 36 and 37 in the questionnaire. The analysed results are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Responses on the Creation of Student Academic Records

Creation of academic		Responses in percentage (%)		
achievement records	Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
The university collects	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
the academic achievement	D	10(71.4)	1(7.1)	3(21.5)
records.	S	90(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
The university has put	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
in place measures to	D	10(71.4)	2(14.3)	2(14.3)
control examination	S	90(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
malpractices by student.				

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

It is evident from Table 15 that the university did well in managing the
creation of student academic achievement records. All the lecturers and students
as well as 10(71.4%) of the DAA personnel affirmed that the university collected
the records and had in place measures that controlled examination malpractices by
students. Respondents mentioned effective supervision by invigilators, which
included inspection of students' ID, thorough search on students, ban on the use
of mobile phones in the examination halls, and dismissal of culpable students.
The measure enabled the university to collect credible academic achievement
results for the student records. As Norton and Peel (1989) indicate, this is
necessary because false records are useless, valueless, misleading, and do not bear
any of the criterion of useful information. Furthermore, as pointed out by
Commonwealth of Australia (2001), records derive much of their meaning and,
therefore, their usefulness and value as evidence, from the context in which they
were created in the first instance. By attaching more and strict attention to the

creation of student academic achievement records, the university makes these records reliable and beneficial to be used for eventual certification of students. Employers can rely upon these results to offer employment to qualified graduates, and local as well as external higher educational institutions can use the results to enrol graduates who apply for post graduate studies.

There was a challenging issue concerning the non-uniform mode of creating student academic achievement records in Communicative Skills. This resulted from large student numbers reading that course. "It is not possible to achieve uniformity in the creation of student records since students are grouped under different lecturers," the Senior Assistant Registrar of the Examination Section of DAA explained.

Form of Maintenance and use of Student Academic Achievement Records

This segment of student records management is considered under items 38 to 46 in the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Responses on the Maintenance and use of Student Academic Records

Maintenance and use of records	Responses in percentage (%)			
	Respondents	Yes	No.	Don't Know
Examination results are released on time to students before the registration of new courses in the semester	L	63(50.0)	54(42.9)	9(7.1)
	D	4(28.6)	8(57.1)	2(14.3)
	S	7(7.8)	83(92.2)	0(0.0)
The university carefully secures students academic achievement records	L	93(73.8)	7(5.6)	26(20.6)
	D	12(85.7)	0(0.0)	2(14.3)
	S	15(16.6)	33(36.7)	42(46.7)

Table 16 continued

Maintenance and use of records	Respondents	Responses in percentage (%)		
		Yes	No.	Don't Know
The university takes action to correct errors.	L	115(91.3)	1(0.8)	10(7.9)
	D	11(78.6)	0(0.0)	3(21.4)
	S	25(27.8)	36(40.0)	29(32.2)
Awareness of officer who resolves complaints	L	93(73.8)	33(26.2)	
	D	12(85.7)	2(14.3)	
	S	17(15.9)	73(81.1)	
The university has established a disaster recovery plan to safeguard records	L	20(15.9)	10(81.1)	96(76.2)
	D	2(14.3)	0(0.0)	12(85.7)
	S	2(2.2)	10(11.1)	78(86.7)
The university uses a computer databases system to process records.	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	88(97.8)	0(0.0)	2(2.2)
The university awards certificates to students soon (within two months) after completions	L	2(1.6)	122(96.8)	2(1.6)
	D	1(7.1)	13(92.9)	0(0.0)
	S	5(5.6)	76(84.4)	9(10.0)
The university issues students with their academic transcripts upon request	L	126(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	D	14(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	88(97.8)	0(0.0)	3(3.3)
The university maintains and uses the records well.	L	71(56.3)	7(5.6)	48(38.1)
	D	11(78.6)	1(7.1)	2(14.3)
	S	27(30.0)	11(12.2)	52(57.8)

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

Table 16 presents mixed results on a number of the issues. There are clear differences in responses by respondents by categories on some issues. There are also consensuses in responses on other issues. While 63(50.0%) lecturers

indicated that examination results were released on time, 8(57.1%) DAA personnel and 83(92.2%) students indicated otherwise. Furthermore, majority of the lecturers, 93(73.8%) and 115(91.3%), as well as majority of the DAA personnel, 12(85.7%) and 11(78.6%), respectively pointed out that the university secured both student records carefully and took action to correct errors. They affirmed that they were also aware of the officer who resolved student complaints. Only a minority of the students, 15(16.6%), 25(27.8%), and 17(18.9%) respectively responded likewise on these issues.

Respondents stated that the security measure in place involved the use of computer passwords by those who had authorized access to student achievement records. There was also the use of audit teams to monitor the log files in the computers as a means of checking the safety of the records.

Respondents also stated that the correction of errors was not done early enough. One hundred and forty 140(61.0%) of the total respondents, stated that there were delays in the process. This information is at variance with the common practice in the University of South Florida. For example, the *University of South Florida student records management manual (2005)* states that the student's request for correction of error is examined by the Registrar, the custodian of records (s) and the student is informed within "thirty (30)" days of his or her request for amendment (p. 5). Where the correction requires a hearing by a Student Records Hearing Committee, "correction and / or amendment of the record is processed within ten (10) working days of the sitting of the hearing committee and the student is notified accordingly". (p. 5) Majority of the students, 73(81.1%), indicated that they were not aware of the officer who

resolved complaints on the records. However, 12(85.7%) of the DAA personnel indicated otherwise. Respondents differed in identifying the officer who resolved student complaints relating to academic achievement records. They mentioned the Department Examination Officer, the Registrar, the Co-ordinator at DPU, and the Dean of Students as the designated officer. Clearly, this was an indication that respondents were not well-informed on the issue.

Majority of the respondents, 96(76.2%) lecturers, 12(85.7%) DAA personnel, and 78(86.7%), students responded that the university had not established a disaster recovery plan to safeguard student records. Again, 122(96.8%) lecturers, 13(92.9%) DAA personnel, and 76(84.4%) students indicated that the university did not award certificates to students (within two months) after completion. All the lecturers and DAA personnel as well as 88(97.8%) of the students responded that the university used a computer database system to process student academic achievement records and also issued students with their academic transcripts upon request. Respondents indicated that transcripts were issued either immediately or nearly two weeks upon request. The issuing of student transcript is in line with the university's policy contained in its Academic programmes, policy and regulations (2006) booklet.

On the issue of the maintenance and use of the records, 71(56.3%) of the lecturers and 11(78.6%) of the DAA personnel responded in the affirmative. However, 63(70.0%) students, and 55(43.7%) lecturers indicated otherwise. This indicated that most students and some lecturers were not aware of how well the university maintained and used the records.

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Respondents who affirmed the issue stated that the records were processed electronically and were well kept on both electronic and paper files. Furthermore, they stated that the maintenance of the records afforded the university the opportunity to prepare and submit student academic transcripts readily. The Deputy Registrar of DAA revealed that "the academic achievement records are used to counsel students whose academic performance is poor".

The challenges evident in the maintenance and use aspect of student academic achievement records related to the late release of examination results, lack of a disaster recovery plan to safeguard student records in the event of a disaster, and late certification of students who had completed their studies in the university. Also, the identity of the officer responsible for student academic achievement – related problems was, generally, unknown to students.

These are serious issues in student records management that must be addressed to improve matters and enhance efficiency. In order to ensure the appropriate and effective handling and dissemination of accurate and updated student records, JISC InfoNet (2007) requires institutions to "designate one clear point of responsibility for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records on every student." (p. 4). Evidently, this line of action had not been operating in the records management system in UCC.

Form of Retention and Disposal of Student Academic Achievement Records

This aspect of student records management is considered under items 47 to 52 in the questionnaire. The analysed results are presented in Table 17.

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Table 17

Responses on the Retention and Disposal of Student Academic Records

Retention and Disposal of records	Responses in Percentage (%)			
	Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
The university has	L	0(0.0)	10(9.9)	˙16(92.1)
established a schedule	D	0(0.0)	1(7.1)	13(92.9)
for the retention and	S	0(0.0)	7(7.8)	83(92.2)
disposal of records				
Awareness of the officer	L	2(1.6)	124(98.4)	
who authorizes the disposal	D	0(0.0)	14(100.0)	
of student records	S	0(0.0)	90(100.0)	
Knowledge of the method	L	2(1.6)	124(98.4)	
employed in disposing of	D	0(0.0)	14(100.0)	
student records	S	0(0.0)	90(100.0)	
The university has	L	0(0.0)	9(7.1)	117(92.9)
established a policy on how	D	0(0.0)	3(21.4)	11(78.6)
long student records files	S	0(0.0)	9(10.0)	81(90.0)
are kept as current or active				
The university has	L	0(0.0)	10(7.9)	116(92.1)
established a policy on	D	0(0.0)	7(50.0)	7(50.0)
when student records files	S	0(0.0)	4(4.4)	86(95.6)
become semi-current				
The university has	L	0(0.0)	8(6.3)	118(93.7)
established a policy on	D	0(0.0)	6(42.9)	8(57.1)
when student records files	S	0(0.0)	2(2.2)	88(97.8)
become non-current				

Respondents: L for Lecturers, D for DAA personnel, and S for Students

Table 17 shows clear negative responses amongst the three categories of

respondents on all the issues relating to the retention and disposal of student

academic achievement records. All the lecturers, DAA personnel, and students stated that they were neither aware nor knew the issues concerning the schedules for the retention and disposal of records and policies on current or active, semi-current or semi-active, as well as non-current student record files.

Furthermore, 124(98.4%) of the lecturers, and all DAA personnel and students indicated that they were not aware of the officer who authorised the disposal of the student records, in addition to the fact that they had no knowledge of the method employed in their disposal. The two lecturers who affirmed the issues mentioned the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar as the designated officers, and burning as the disposal method.

The results from the responses of the respondents showed that the aspect of the retention and disposal of student academic achievement records was not well managed. While the officers in charge of these records might be using some means to address the issues of retention and disposal of the records, they had not formulated policies and procedures to inform and guide practice which leads to the conclusion that all such records, from the time the university was established to date, are permanently kept. No manual or document could be presented by any of the deans and DAA officers interviewed to show the policy and procedure on the student records life cycle in the University of Cape Coast.

The issue of retention and disposal of student academic achievement records should be well defined. For example, King's College London (2003) prescribes that student results slips be retained permanently on student file while scripts and assignments be destroyed three years after completion of course.

JINC InfoNet (2007) points out that while students are in the institution their academic achievement records remain active or current. However, at the instance where the students leave the institution, the records reach their relatively semi-active or semi-current phase. They can then be moved and kept in other storage facilities. Duplicates of the records created for administrative purposes then become valueless, and should be destroyed so that only the designated official records survive as permanent records to be kept on student database or permanent files.

Emery (2005) prescribes that records should be retained and stored in keeping with their value, access to them made possible in making them useful, and be destroyed (if ever) to end their life cycle. The methods used in disposing of student records at this stage are shredding; recycling, or burning (University of South Florida, 2005). The responses from the respondents revealed that there were no established policies and procedures regarding these methods.

It is evident from the discussions that the challenges in the creation of the student academic achievement records were managed well. The challenges in the maintenance and use aspect were managed to some extent. The challenges in the retention and disposal aspect were very pronounced, and were not managed as expected. Therefore, the main challenges in the management of student academic achievement records were the means to manage retention schedules and disposal method properly.

Research Question 4

How can student records management be improved in the University of Cape Coast?

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This is the fourth research question that underpins the study. The question was posed with the intention of pooling information from all respondents who, by individual and collective effort, uncover and give substance to the challenges involved in dealing with student records management in UCC. The analysed results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Suggestions on Ways to Improve Student Records Management in UCC

Student Records	Suggested Resources in Percentage (%)		
	Personnel	Materials	Directives
Admission	22(4.2)	67(12.8)	95(18.2)
Registration	18(3.5)	47(9.0)	99(19.0)
Academic achievement	19(3.6)	50(9.6)	105(20.1)
Total	59(11.3%)	164(31.4)	299(57.3%)

Table 18 indicates that of the total suggestions to improve student records management practice in UCC in respect of admission, registration, and academic achievement records, 59(11.3%) related to personnel, 164(31.4%) related to materials, and 299(57.3%) related to directives. This reveals that the highest premium of suggestions was placed on directives with the second highest on materials and the least on personnel among the three student records.

In the view of the respondents, most of the challenges in the institution's records management operations could be overcome by giving foremost attention to directives. Penn and Pennix (1989) point out that the word directive is used to describe policy statement (what a person should do) and procedure statement (how it should be done) to ensure effective and efficient performance of official

tasks in institutions or organizations. They contend that in situations where there are no written guidance or instruction, people are inclined to perform operations according to their own interests and imaginations and that lead to inefficiencies. Furthermore, there is an adverse effect on available material resources in that they may be over utilized or underutilized leading to deficiencies and /or wastages in the system.

Directives are communicated as written information and the value of this information cannot be underestimated as it is considered the first basic resource to effective management (Lewis, 1988). It is, therefore, appropriate for the respondents to place this requirement first across the student records spectrum. On the issues of admissions and registration for example, it was suggested that the university should develop and adopt a policy that would facilitate the admission and registration of students online in a manner similar to that of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in entering students for their public examinations. Another suggestion was that the university should prepare and publish a student records management manual to inform practice. The following proportions, 95(18.2%), 99(19.0%), and 105(20.1%) of the suggested responses on directives, in ascending order, were made for Admission, Registration, and Academic Achievement Records respectively. The responses are almost evenly distributed over the three student records. The resource element that received the second highest responses across the student records spectrum is material. The results consist of 67(12.8%) responses for Admissions, 50(9.6%) for Academic achievement, and 47(9.0%) for Registration Records.

Gaither (1992) defines material as "any commodity used directly or indirectly in producing a product or service . . ." (p. 548). Indeed, Bulin (2001) adds that materials are tangible resource facilities that are required to implement plans, besides people, money, time and energy. He indicates that as functions in an institution become large and complex as a result of changes or increased student enrolment for example, so do plans for the quantity and quality of materials needed for operations and services. In responding to this need, it becomes more critical to have materials available when and where they are needed to move the job forward. Thus, in the views of Everard, Morris, and Wilson (2004), it is not enough to maintain material resources, for the process of change demands that a great deal of attention has to be given to developing these resources to meet new challenges and needs in the information age. The examples of the material resources they refer to are buildings, equipment, and facilities of tangible nature that are required to enhance the progress of an institution. One prominent suggestion was that the university should purchase enough computers for its admissions, registration, and examination offices.

The results from Table 18 indicate that personnel resource received the least number of suggestions. Admission records received 22(4.2%) responses, academic achievement records received 19(3.6%) responses, and registration records received 18(3.5%). The responses are almost evenly distributed among the three core student records.

Personnel is a human resource component which is almost always placed atop all other resources. This fact is expressed by Bulin (2001) who states that "people are often the most expensive, as well as the most important resource"

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(p.163). For this reason, the least number of suggestions recorded for personnel may be considered, in one context, as an exception to the rule.

Also, it may be considered that in addressing the issues of improving student records management practice in the university, the human resource factor is not the most crucial one. This is understandable because changing situations dictate which resource should be given precedence over others. This fact is in harmony with the views of Everard et al.(2004) that a system's progress and relevance must be 'need driven' and not 'resource driven' – that is to say resources must be adapted to meet needs and not the vice versa. For this research, for example, directives and materials have proved to be the more sought after needs than personnel in bringing about the anticipated improvement in student records management in the University of Cape Coast. Respondents only suggested that the university should employ skilled personnel to handle student core records.

It is important to note, however, that the preceding discussion has been pursued on comparative basis on the merit of the observed responses. It is, therefore, necessary to understand that the discussion does not limit the effect and potency of any of the resource elements identified as being able to bring about the required improvements in the management of student records in the University of Cape Coast when employed appropriately.

The Status of Student Records Management in the University of Cape Coast

Respondents were asked to rate the status of student records management in UCC, to address the main purpose of the study. The status question is

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itemized 20, 35, and 53 in the questionnaire; and 5, 9, and 13 in the interview

schedules for the three variables of the student records. Statistical analysis based

on frequencies and percentages has been used to compute the data obtained from

the responses in the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 19 and

discussed accordingly.

Table 19

Responses on the Rating of the Status of Student Records Management

Aspect of student records	Respondents	Ratings in Percentage (%)			
		H	A	L	DK
Admission	L	25(19.8)	79(62.7)	2(1.6)	20(15.9)
	D	12(85.7)	2(14.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	20(22.2)	57(63.3)	6(6.7)·	7(7.8)
Registration	L	83(65.9)	26(20.6)	5(4.0)	12(9.5)
	D	12(85.7)	2(14.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	S	26(23.8)	50(55.6)	11(12.2)	3(3.3)
Academic	L	30(23.8)	80(63.5)	2(1.6)	14(11.1)
Achievement	D	10(71.4)	3(21.4)	1(7.1)	0(0.0)
	S	20(22.2)	56(62.2)	10(71.5)	4(4.5)

Ratings: H for High, A for Average, L for Low and DK for Don't Know.

Table 19 shows that majority of the lecturers and students, represented by

79(62.7%) and 57(63.3%) respectively rated the status of student admission

records as average. However, 12(85.7%) of the DAA personnel (and seven out

of nine respondents interviewed) rated it high. On the status of student

registration records, 83(65.9%) of the lecturers, and 12(85.7%) of the DAA

personnel (as well as eight out of nine respondents interviewed) rated it high. However, majority of the students 50(55.6%) rated it average.

The status of student academic achievement records management was rated average by 80(63.5%) of the lecturers and 56(62.2%) of the students. This notwithstanding, 10(71.4%) of the DAA personnel (and 8 respondents interviewed) rated it high.

From the preceding description of the results in Table 19, it can be seen that majority of the students rated the status of student records management in the university for all three core records as average. Majority of the lecturers made the same rating, except for the student registration records where it was rated high. The majority of DAA personnel rated the status high in all three cases. All the deans and the DAA senior officers interviewed also rated high the status of student records management in the University of Cape Coast.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has analysed the data obtained from the four research questions and has discussed the answers to each of them. The data were obtained from 230 questionnaire respondents and 9 interviewees. It is clear that each of the issues raised in the research questions has been answered.

In research questions 1, 2, and 3, the major challenges identified in each case were those associated with the retention and disposal of student records management. These challenges were not well managed. The challenges posed by the maintenance and use aspect of student records were managed to some

extent. The challenges posed by the creation of student records were very well managed.

The number of suggestions that was made in research question 4 to improve the management of student admission records, student registration records, and student academic achievement records was high in substance and content. The three areas mentioned were directives, materials, and personnel. Generally, the status of student records management in the university was rated high by the DAA personnel, and average by the lecturers and students.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the final work of the study. It involves a summary, and conclusions that are drawn from the findings. Furthermore, recommendations and suggestions for further research are proposed.

Summary

Educational institutions for higher learning are set up usually for the purpose of developing the human resource of a country. Students who are admitted on the merit of some required academic entry qualification are trained, among others, to develop knowledge and skills to meet individual and national aspirations. Consequently, universities set their objectives around ideological, selection and socialization, knowledge generation, and training roles.

The importance of educating every qualified student at the tertiary level is given prominence in a number of United Nation's sponsored conferences. For example, the World Conference on Higher Education at UNESCO declared that in keeping with Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "higher education should be accessible to all on the basis of merit, and that universities should be opened to adult learner" (UNESCO, 1998, pp. 1, 20). Additionally, the Task Force on Higher Education pointed out that higher education has "the capability to create a pool of highly trained individuals that become a key natural resource" (Task Force on Higher Education, 2000, p. 13).

However, as noted by Newton (1986), for an institution such as the university to function effectively and carry on its mandated services, there must be accurate records of its activities. He observed that records are synonymous with every human endeavour and activity and they cannot be done without. Again, records of human activity cannot be gathered and kept just for that sake, but rather they should be managed to make the records useful and beneficial.

Penn and Pennix (1989), therefore, asserted that records required a specific type of management practices that deal with the three phases of the records life cycle, namely, creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal. Hence, while they define a record as a piece of information which is written down on paper or stored on a computer, or information captured in reproducible form, they consider records management as a logical and practical approach to the creation, maintenance, use, retention and disposal of records.

As already noted, the university's function is related to students. Hence, in this information age, the successful role of the university depends largely and significantly on the extent to which it is able to generate or create, maintain and use, as well as retain and systematically dispose of information about each enrolled student from the first day of admission to the final day of graduation. The recorded information about the student is basically his or her life. Without such records the student's life on campus is meaningless, and the university cannot account for him or her. The student's future life prospect for work or further studies is ruined. For that matter, a proper student records management practice is very necessary for establishing, tracking, and evaluation every student's performance and academic achievement in the university. It is only by this means

that the university and the student can coexist in a realistic and tangible relationship.

Student records are described as those records that are directly related to a student, and are maintained by an educational institution. The content of the record is limited to information the institution needs to help the student in his or her personal, social, educational, and career development.

Student records management, therefore, is the practice of following policies, principles and procedures to manage the information about students in accordance with the life cycle concept of records, to create, to maintain and use, and to dispose of the records. It involves processing every student's record through its birth, life, and death, or through the active (current), semi-active (semi-current) and inactive (non-current) phases of recordkeeping by using the appropriate personnel and record media, equipment and materials (Penn & Pennix 1989; Rhoads, 1996).

It had been observed that some universities faced enormous problems in the management of student records (Iwhiwhu, 2005). The problems included availability of policies and procedures on recordkeeping, the absence of retention and disposal schedules and record management manuals, lack of education about the concept of the records life cycle, untrained personnel, inadequate computers, falsification of student records, limited storage facilities, and difficulty in records retrieval.

Experience revealed that the University of Cape Coast faced some challenges of its own in the student records management practice. For example, there was no evidence of a student records management manual to inform student

records practice. Also, students complained about aspects of their records pertaining to their creation during admission and registration. They also complained about the time it took to publish their academic achievement records as well as delays in retrieving student transcripts. In fact, there seemed to be no policies and procedures regarding the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal of student records, and the application of the concept of the records life cycle in managing records. The increasing number of student population each year added to the problem of student records management. The question, therefore, arose as to the status of student records management in the university.

Consequently, the study was designed to find out the challenges in the management of three core student records, namely, admission, registration, and academic achievement records against the background of their life cycle – creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal. From that perspective, the researcher intended to establish the status or position of affairs of the student records management in the university as high, or average, or low (from the point of view of the respondents in the study).

Four research questions were formulated. Three of them were centred on the challenges in the management of 1) admission records, 2) registration records, and 3) academic achievement records. The fourth one was on ways to improve the management of these core student records.

The descriptive survey method was used for the study. A sample of 239 respondents made up of 131 lecturers, 18 DAA personnel, and 90 students was purposively selected from the university population. Two data gathering instruments in the forms of the questionnaire and the interview were developed

and used. The questionnaire was pre-tested among ten lecturers who had taught in the university for more than five years and who were not part of the sample for the study.

The total questionnaire respondents were 126 lecturers, 14 DAA personnel, and 90 students; while a further 5 lecturers (deans) and 4 DAA personnel (officers) were interviewed. The responses of the respondents were analysed by the use of frequencies and percentages and the results were discussed to answer the research questions, and to address the purpose of the research.

Summary of Findings

The following findings were made in considering the three core student records in the light of each aspect of the records life cycle:

1. Challenges in the management of student admission records

The challenges in the management of student admission records occur in the three phases – creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal domains.

i) The study revealed that the creation of student admission records was managed well. Majority of the respondents from 60% to 100% in each response category affirmed that. The university used very well designed application forms and definite schedules to admit students which made it possible to generate the requisite student admission records for its computer and paper files.

The identified challenge in this phase of record management related to the method used in ensuring that students' entry academic records or grades were accurate. The method employed was manual in character. Every student's results were verified manually with the records from the West African Examinations

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Council (WAEC). The process was found to be cumbersome and time consuming.

ii) The maintenance and use aspect of student admission records was well managed to some extent. The student's vital records were kept on computer and in paper files, and were used as elements to certify students upon graduation, and these argued well for the maintenance and use of the admission records.

However, between 31.0% and 72.0% of the respondents in each category affirmed that students complained about the admission process as a result of delays, pausity of information on admission issues, inadequate skilled records personnel, and inadequate equipment such as computers. Another basic challenge in this aspect of recordkeeping was that there was no policy which required individuals to sign a statement to keep student records confidential.

iii) The retention and disposal aspect of student admission records was not managed well and that posed a very great challenge to the university. Between 85.0% and 100.0% of the respondents in each category confirmed that there were no laid down retention schedules and disposal methods for the student admission records. Peen & Pennix (1989) point out that the life of a record ends with its disposal, and this aspect was found lacking in the management of the student admission records.

2. Challenges in the management of student registration records

The challenges in the management of student registration records were considered under the creation phase, the maintenance and use phase and the retention and disposal phase.

i) The creation of student registration records was managed well. This was confirmed by majority of the respondents, between 90% and 100% in each category. The university issued to each student an ID card bearing an easy – to – understand – and – remember registration number, and had designated periods for the registration of students and courses. Students, however, complained about long back up queues during registration and a centralized process of registering students in person and not online.

ii) The maintenance and use aspect of student registration records was managed well to some extent. From 84% to 100% of the respondents in each category affirmed that the university required students to maintain and use their registration numbers for all purposes on campus and that the registration numbers were easy to record or remember.

However, the study revealed that nearly 72(80.0%) of the students did not know the officer to contact on student registration – related problems; and about 27(30.0%) of the DAA personnel, 36(40.0%) of the students, and about 75(60.0%) of the lecturers did not know the type of filing system the university used for student registration numbers. Penn & Pennix (1989) note that there are three filing systems or methods namely, numeric, alphabetical, and alphanumeric. It was found that the university used the alphanumeric method for its student registration records.

iii) The retention and disposal aspect of the student registration records was not managed well. From 91% to 100% of the respondents in each category indicated that they were not aware of the retention schedules, disposal methods, and the officer who authorized the disposal of the records.

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3. Challenges in the management of student academic achievement records

The challenges in these records were considered under the three phases of record-keeping namely, creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal phases.

i) The creation of student academic achievement records was managed well. All the lecturers and students, and 10(71.0%) DAA personnel affirmed that the university had put in place appropriate measures to control and collect accurate student records in every semester in the academic year. This practice enabled the university to publish reliable students' results. Commonwealth of Australia (2001) points out that such reliable records are useful and valuable and can be relied on by employers or school authorities in considering to employ or admit students for work or for further education, as the case may be.

However, it was found that there were situations where non-uniform modes of creating student academic achievement records occurred. Such situations occurred where different lecturers taught groups of students offering the same programmes because of large student numbers.

ii) The aspect pertaining to the maintenance and use of student academic achievement records was managed well. This was confirmed by all the lecturers and DAA personnel, and 87(97.0%) of the students. The university used a computer database system, the UCOSIS, to process student records, and issued students with their academic transcripts.

However, most students' examination results were not released on time before the start of the new semester. Between 84% and 97% of the respondents in each category confirmed that the university did not award graduating students

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with their certificates within two months after the completion of their programmes.

Furthermore, about 81% of the students affirmed that they were unaware of the schedule officer responsible for resolving complaints on academic achievement issues. Between 76% and 87% of the respondents in the three categories also affirmed that the university had not established a disaster recovery plan to safeguard student records.

ii) The retention and disposal aspect of student academic achievement records was not managed well. Respondents ranging from 92% to 100% in the three categories (lecturers, DAA personnel, and students) indicated that the university had not established retention schedules and disposal methods for the student records and that they were unaware of the schedule officer who authorized the disposal of those records. None of the respondents affirmed that the university had established policies on how long student record files were considered as current, semi-current, or non-current.

4. Ways to improve student records management in the university

Three categories of resources, namely, directives, materials, and personnel were identified as the components needed to improve the status of student records management in the university. About 313(60.0%) of the suggestions were made for the formulation of various directives – policies and procedures – to guide records management practice. About 157(30.0%) of the suggestions were made for the acquisition of various materials – equipment and facilities – to enhance the management of student records. In the personnel category, about 52(10.0%) of the suggestions were made for the recruitment of additional lecturers to improve

the lecturer – student ratio on one hand, and the employment of skilled personnel for the various student records offices on the other.

5. The study revealed the following rating results about the status of student records management in UCC:

i) Majority of the lecturers, between 64(51.0%) and 83(66.0%), rated the management of both admission and academic achievement records as average and that of registration records as high.

ii) Majority of the DAA personnel ranging from 10(71.4%) to 12(85.7%) rated high the management of all the three student records.

iii) Majority of the students represented by 57(63.3%), 50(55.6%), and 56(62.2%) rated the management of the student admission, registration, and academic achievement records respectively as average. ·

6. The study revealed that the university has not published any student records management manual to inform practice. Hence, the use of the concept of the records life cycle to manage student records was not evident.

Conclusions

The University of Cape Coast has a system in place for the management of its student records which serves as evidence of the relationship between it and its students. The management of the student records is done to some extent in accordance with the principles, methods, and procedures of the life cycle concept of records management – the logical process of recordkeeping involving the creation (birth phase), the maintenance and use (life phase), and the retention and disposal (death phase) of records.

The creation of student records is well managed. The university uses very good procedures to capture student records and keep them on both paper and electronic files for further processing. The maintenance and use aspect of the records is also fairly well managed. A student database system known as UCOSIS is used to store and retrieve student admission, registration, and academic achievement records. It is thus possible to release complete student transcripts in a relatively short time upon request. Also, there are security measures such as the use of passwords and audit teams to ensure the safety of the record.

However, the retention and disposal phase of the records is not well managed. There are no written down policies and procedures regarding retention schedules and disposal methods to manage the last phase of the student records life cycle. In general, therefore, the status of student records management in the university is rated average.

The singular and most important challenge the university should overcome is the provision of a student records management manual to improve records management practice. This will enhance the status of student records management practice considerably.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Records manual: The University should prepare and publish a student records management manual. The contents of such a manual will inform

lecturers, students, and DAA personnel about how the various student records are managed in accordance with the life cycle concept of records.

2. Schedule officers: Admission, Registration, and Examination Officers in each department of a faculty should be formally introduced to students by the Dean of the faculty so that students can approach them with their problems for immediate solution.

3. Correction of errors: Student academic achievement records should be kept accurate and up -to- date by the department examination officer. The Deputy Registrar (Academic) should set deadlines for the correction of errors, and ensure their compliance.

4. Decentralized registration system: The Division of Academic Affairs of the University should use various methods including registration at the departmental level, and Short Message Service (SMS) online registration, for the quick and easy registration of students and courses.

5. Access to student records: The Division of Academic Affairs of the University should procure the right facilities to enable students to access the status of their registration and / or academic achievement results online by using an automated SMS.

6. Custodian of student records: There should be a clear line of authority with regards to student records. The Registrar should be designated as the custodian of student records, and all matters relating to the student records life cycle, from their creation through their maintenance and use, to their retention and disposal should be referred to him.

7. Confidentiality of records: The Registrar should ensure that all lecturers, records officers, and students sign a statement of confidentiality to keep records confidential. Those who breach the statement should be summarily dismissed, and further prosecuted in instances where the university's name is brought into disrepute.

8. Disaster recovery plan: A disaster recovery plan should be put in place by the University's Fire Service Section to safeguard records in the event of any disaster such as fire, water, or an earthquake.

9. Records Management course: The Academic Board should approve a Student Records Management course to be offered as a liberal course by all first year students. A study of the course will help students to obtain first hand and accurate information about their individual records life cycle. Such knowledge will encourage students to build credible and enviable records for improved academic performance.

10. Supply and maintenance of equipment: The University should provide records staff with enough equipment in the form of computers and accessories, as well as electronic servers, and other office facilities so that they will be adequately equipped to manage student records very well. The equipment should be maintained progressively to prolong their life span.

11. Qualified records personnel: The Division of Human Resource of the University should train records staff in the science and art of Student Records Management practices in order to make them adequately qualified to handle student records on both paper and electronic media.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Other student records: This research concentrated on the management of three student records generated in the university. Other student records such as health, accommodation, and fees offer opportunities for further research into their management.

2. Quantitative research: This research used the qualitative approach. It is possible to use a quantitative approach to do a study in any of, or all the three student records considered in this study.

3. Comparative studies: This research can be carried out in other public universities for the purpose of comparing the status of student records management in the chosen universities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SAMPLE STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS AGREEMENT OFFICIAL FORM

In compliance with the guidelines incorporated in the Family Educational Rights

and Privacy Act and the University of South Florida's Student Records Policy,

I

_____

will take every precaution to protect the integrity of our student records.

As an employee of the_____

office, University of South Florida, I am aware that any release of academic

information which would identify a specific student is prohibited unless we have

a written release from that student.

I am also aware that confidentiality of student records is required by Federal

Law.

I have read the above and the University's Student Records Policy and agree to

comply with all regulations both on and off campus.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix B

SAMPLE OF THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS

Purpose	Records which include names of students created	Records on individual students created	Disposal Schedule
Applications			
Unsuccessful	Yes	No	Destroy after 2 years
Successful	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Registration			
Enrolment	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Photograph	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Subject registration form	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
ID card	Yes (student database)	No	N/a
Academic progress Course units	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file

Change of course	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Withdrawal/ Interruption of studies	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Student report form	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain one copy permanently on paper file
Attendance	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	May need to retain permanently
Annual transcript	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Destroy provided all information is included on final transcript.

Examinations

Registration form	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain permanently on school file
Candidate number	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain permanently on database
Examination Attendance sheet	Yes	No	Destroy 3 years after completion
Mark sheet	Yes	Yes (student file)	Destroy 3 years after completion
Medical certificate form on- attendance	No	Yes (separate file)	Destroy 3 years after completion
Results slip	Yes	Yes (student file)	Retain permanently on school file
Official Finalist Pass list	Yes	Yes (student file)	Destroy copies on student file; retain official lists permanently on school file
Request for resit/ replacement exams	Yes	Yes (student file)	Retain permanently on school file

Appeals/ complaints	Yes	Yes (student file)	Destroy in 7th year after settlement of Case. Retain summary permanently on school file
Scripts, assignments, dissertations	Yes	Yes (separate file)	Destroy 3 years after completion of course
Degree certificate	Yes	Yes	N/a
Associate of King's College: Diploma/ certificate	Yes (student database)	Yes (student file)	Retain permanently
Graduation Application to attend ceremony	Yes	No	Destroy 1 year after ceremony
Graduation list (list of students attending and award)	Yes	No	Copy to Archives on creation and destroy in Office when no longer current
Afterwards Final transcript	Yes (student database)	Yes (sometimes on student file)	Full transcript should be retained permanently
Requests for Transcripts	Yes	Yes	Destroy after 10 years

QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE ON STUDENT RECORDS

MANAGEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

The questionnaire aims at collecting information for a study on the status

of student records management in the University of Cape Coast. The study is

being conducted in connection with a research programme at the Institute for

Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast,

Ghana.

The questionnaire is NOT a test. I would, therefore, be grateful if you

could provide frank answers, to the best of your knowledge or opinion, to each of

the questionnaire items. Any information you provide will be treated with utmost

confidentiality and used for research purposes only. Be assured that your

anonymity is guaranteed.

Please, do not provide your name.

SECTION A

Background information: (Please tick √ where appropriate)

1.   Gender: Male [ ]   Female   [ ]

2.   Age :   Below 20 years [ ]   21-30 year   [ ]

                    31- 40 years [ ]   Above 40 years   [ ]

3.   Indicate your status at UCC

     Lecturer [ ] DAA Personnel   [ ] Student   [ ]

     (DAA Personnel is a staff of the Department of Academic Affairs)

4.   How long have you been in your present status at UCC as at the end of the

     2006/2007 Academic year?

(a)   For Lecturers only: 1 – 5 years   ( )   6 – 10 years   ( )

                            11 – 15 years ( )   Above 15 years   ( )

(b)   For DAA Personnel only: 1 – 5 years ( )   6 – 10 years   ( )

      11 – 15 years   ( ) Above 15 years   ( )

(c)   For Students only: ( ) 1 years   2 years ( )

                  3 years   ( )   Above 3 years ( )

SECTION B

Instruction: The following 16 questions (5 – 20) require that for each item you tick in

the appropriate space 'Yes' or 'No' or 'Don't Know' as the case may be. to

indicate to the best of your knowledge, your response. You may be required to

offer brief responses in writing in some cases. Please do not answer according to

the way you feel. It is important that you answer all the items.

5.   Is it the established practice by the university that students seeking

admission complete application forms for admission?

      Yes ( )   No   ( )   Don't Know   ( )

6.   Does the university provide the necessary information on the forms to

make it easy for applicants to complete the application forms for admission?

      Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know ( )

7.   Does the university request applicants to provide accurate information

about their entry qualifications when filling the application forms for admission?

      Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know ( )

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8.	Is the university able to detect students whose entry qualifications are falsified?

Yes [　]　　　　　　　No [　]　　　　　　Don't Know [　]

If 'Yes' what happens to such students upon detection?

....

9.	Has the university established a definite time frame on its academic calendar for the admission of students?

Yes [　]　　　　　　　No [　]　　　　　　Don't Know [　]

10.	Do students complain about the process of admission?

Yes [　]　　　　　　　No [　]　　　　　　Don't Know [　]

If 'Yes', what usually do they complain about

....

11.	Does the university provide information on the specific officer to consult on student admission – related problems?

Yes [　]　　　　　　　No [　]　　　　　　Don't Know [　]

If 'Yes', please state the officer's designation..

12.	Has the university established that all lecturers, DAA personnel, and students sign a statement of Confidentiality of Student Records to keep records confidential?

Yes [　]　　　　　　　No [　]　　　　　　Don't Know [　]

If 'Yes' indicate when this is effected..

13. Does the university maintain and use the student admission records well?

 Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

 If 'Yes', please give one reason for your answer..............................

 ....

14. Has the university established a fixed time for the retention (retention schedule) of all rejected applicant forms for admission?

 Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

If 'Yes', please indicate the retention schedule..

15. Has the university established a fixed time for the retention (retention schedule) of all successful applicant forms?

 Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

 If 'Yes, please indicate the retention schedule................................

16. Does the university provide any information on how application forms for admission are eventually disposed of?

 Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't Know [ ]

 If 'Yes', please indicate the method of disposal................................

17. Are you aware of how long the university retains the student admission files? Yes [ ] No [ ]

 If 'Yes', please state the duration..

18. Do you know the method that the university employs in the disposal of student admission files? Yes [ ] No [ ]

 If 'Yes', please indicate the method .

19. Are you aware of the officer who authorizes the disposal of student admission records?   Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]

If 'Yes', please state the officer's designation................................

20. How will you rate the status of student admission records management in the university? High   [   ]Average   [   ]   Low   [   ]   Don't Know[   ]

SECTION C

Instructions: The following 15 questions (21 – 35) require that for each item you tick in the appropriate space 'Yes' or 'No' or 'Don't Know' as the case may be, to indicate to the best of your knowledge, your response. You may be required to offer brief responses in writing in some cases. Please. do not answer according to the way you feel. It is important that you answer all the items.

21. Is it standard practice that all students admitted into the university are issued with identification (ID) cards?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

22. Does the university have a fixed period on its academic calendar for registration of 'fresh' student as well as continuing students?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

23. Does the university have fixed period on its academic calendar or the registration of courses in each semester?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

24. Does the university have fixed day on its academic calendar for the registration of courses for each faculty and department?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

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25. Do students complain about the registration process?

Yes   No   Don't Know

If 'Yes', what usually do they complain about?...

26. Does the university require each student to maintain and use his or her

registration number (or ID) for all purposes throughout his or her stay on

campus?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't Know   [ ]

27. Are students' registration numbers (identification numbers) easy to record

or remember?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't Know   [ ]

28. Do you know the filing system or method that the university has now

adopted for student registration numbers?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

If 'Yes' please tick the method.

Numeric   [ ]   Alphanumeric   [ ]   Alphabetical [ ]

29. Does the university provide information on the officer to contact to on

student registration – related problem?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't Know   [ ]

If 'Yes' state the officer's designation..

30. Does the university normally publish student names along with their

registration numbers on faculty and department notice boards?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't Know   [ ]

If 'Yes' when is this done?...

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31. Does the university maintain and use the student registration records well?

    Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

    If 'Yes', please state a reason for your answer ....

    ....

32. Are you aware of how long student registration records are kept (retention

    period) before their disposal?

    Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

    If 'Yes', please state the duration..

33. Are you aware of the officer who authorizes the disposal of student

    registration records? Yes [ ]   No [ ]

    If 'Yes' state the officer's designation.................................

34. Do you know the method that is employed in disposing of student

    registration records? Yes [ ]   No [ ]

    If 'Yes' please state the method ....

35. How will rare the status of student registration records management in the

    university?

    High [ ]   Average [ ]   Low [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

SECTION D

Instructions: The following 18 questions (36 – 53) require that for each

item you tick in the appropriate space 'Yes.' or 'No.' or 'don't Know' as the case

may be, to indicate to the best of your knowledge, your response. You may be

required to offer brief responses in writing in some cases. Please, do not answer

according to the way you feel. It is important that you answer all the items.

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36. Is it a standard practice of the university to collect the academic achievement records of each enrolled student in each semester?

Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know ( )

37. Has the university put in place measures to control examination malpractices by students during the administration of examinations?

Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know ( )

If 'Yes', please state one of the measures ....

....

38. Are student examination results released on time to students before the registration of new courses in the semester?

Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know ( )

39. Does the university secure student academic achievement records carefully so that unauthorized persons cannot gain access to alter any records? Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know   ( )

If 'Yes', please explain briefly the means by which this is achieved

....

40. Does the university take action to correct student academic achievement – related errors?

Yes ( )   No ( )   Don't Know   ( )

If 'Yes', are they corrected promptly? ....

41. Are you aware of the officer whose responsibility it is to receive and resolve all student academic achievement – related complaints?

Yes   ( )   No   ( )

If 'Yes', please indicate the officer's designation ....

42. Has the university established a disaster recovery plan (procedure for safeguarding records) in the faculties and the student records office to safeguard all student academic records in the event of any disaster?

Yes   No   Don't Know

43. Does the university use a computer database system to process student academic achievement records?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

44. Does the university award certificates to final year students soon (within two months) after completion of their programme of study?

Yes · [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

45. Does the university issue students with their academic transcripts upon request?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

If 'Yes' how promptly is this done? ....

46. Does the university maintain and use the student academic achievement records well?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

If 'Yes', please state one reason for your answer...............................

47. Has the university established a schedule known to students for the retention and disposal of student academic achievement records?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Don't Know [ ]

If 'Yes', what is the schedule...

48. Are you aware of the officer who authorizes the disposal of student academic achievement records files?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]

If 'Yes', please state the officer's designation...............................

49. Do you know the method that is employed in disposing of student academic achievement records?

Yes   [   ]   No   [   ]

If 'Yes', please state the method..

50. Has the university established a policy in how long student academic achievement records files are kept as current or active (that is when data may be added to them)?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

If 'Yes', how long do the record files remain current or active?...................

....

51. Has the university established a policy on when student academic achievement records files become semi-current or semi-active (that is, when the file is closed, but it is used as a reference tool for administrative purpose)?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

If 'Yes', please state the policy..

52. Has the university established a policy on when student academic achievement records files become non-current or inactive (that is, when the records are due for permanent retention)?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]   Don't Know   [   ]

If 'Yes', please state the policy...

53. How will you rate the status of student academic achievement records management in the university?

High   [ ] Average   [ ] Low   [ ] Don't Know   [ ]

SECTION E

Instructions: Please, you are required to provide brief suggestions to questions 54 to 56 as to how to improve student records management in the University of Cape Coast.

54. What can the university do to improve the management of student admission records?

....

....,..

....

....

55. What approach should the university adopt to improve the management of student registration records?

....

....

....

....

56. What measure should the university put in place to improve the management of student academic achievement records?

....

....

....

Appendix D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ON STUDENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

The interview aims at collecting information for a study on the status of student records management in the University of Cape Coast. The study is being conducted in connection with a research programme at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

I would be grateful if you could provide objective answers to each of the following questions. Any information you provide will be treated on its own merit with utmost confidence and used for research purposes only. Be assured that your anonymity is guaranteed.

Section A

Background information:

1. Gender: ………………………   2. Age: ……………………………

3. Status in UCC as at the end of the 2006/2007 academic year (lecturer/DAA officer)

4. Length of status (as a lecturer or DAA officer) in UCC……………………….

Section B

5. What challenges have you observed in the management (that is, the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal) of **student admission records** in the University of Cape Coast?

RESPONSE: …………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

....

....

6. As far as you know, does the university manage the **student admission**

records

well? Please, give reason(s) for your answer?

RESPONSE:

....

....

....

7. How will you rate the status of **student admission records** management in

the University of Cape Coast? (Use one of these: High, Average, Low, Don't

Know)

8. In your view, what can the university do to improve the student admission

records management?

RESPONSE:

....

....

....

Section C

9. What challenges have you observed in the management (that is, the creation,

maintenance and use, retention and disposal) of **student registration**

records in the University of Cape coast?

RESPONSE: ....

....

....

....

10. As far as you know, does the university manage the **student registration records** well? Please, give reason(s) for your answer?

    RESPONSE:...

    ....

11. How will you rate the status of **student registration records** management in the University of Cape Coast? (Use one of these: High, Average, Low, Don't Know)

12. What approach should the university adopt to improve the **student registration records management?**

    RESPONSE: ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

Section D

13. What challenges have you observed in the management (that is, the creation, maintenance and use, retention and disposal) of student academic achievement records in the University of Cape Coast?

RESPONSE: ....

....

....

....

....

14. As far you know, does the university manage the **student academic achievement records** well? Please, give reason(s) for your answer?

RESPONSE: ....

....

....

....

....

15. How will you rate the status of **student academic achievement records** management in University of Cape Coast?

(Use one of these: High, Average, Low, Don't Know)

RESPONSE: ....

16. What measures should the university put in place to improve the **student academic achievement records management?**

RESPONSE: ....

....

....

....

....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH