

# University Information Framework 2010-14

## 1 Purpose

The University is a knowledge-intensive organisation in which information exists in a wide range of digital and material forms and this diversity is critical to the University's mission and success.

This framework has several purposes. It defines what information is and then lays out a set of principles intended to guide the development of University policies and procedures on information and to set out basic considerations and standards underlying operational aspects and systems which are applied to information. It establishes several key themes in information that support the University Corporate Plan and its three key sector strategies for Research, Teaching and Learning, and Enterprise. The Framework also maps out the current committee structure of the University as it relates to the discussion of issues related to information.

## 2 Definitions

Information is: knowledge gained through experience or study; knowledge of specific and timely events or situations and news or; the act of informing or the condition of being informed. As a concept information has many meanings from everyday usage to technical settings. The concept is closely related to notions of communication, content, form, knowledge, meaning, mental stimulus, perception, representation, constraint and control.

## 3 Ownership

This framework was developed by The University Information Strategy Committee (ISC) in consultation with stakeholders throughout the University and it replaces the University Information Strategy 2005 to 2009. It has been approved by the Senior Management Board, Senate and Council of the University. The framework will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Information Framework Steering Group (successor to Information Strategy Committee).

## 4 Principles

These principles are intended to guide University policy and procedures in relation to information and to set out basic considerations and standards underlying operational aspects and systems which are applied to information in its many guises. The following list is not intended to be hierarchical.

1. **A knowledge-intensive organisation.** As a knowledge-intensive organisation, information is critical to its success and therefore must be generated, acquired and managed efficiently as a highly valuable strategic resource. University information systems should enable people to access, create, analyse, publish, store, secure, archive, search and retrieve content.
2. **Access.** Potential users of information should have ready access to the University's information, whether on campus or remotely, in compliance with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy where reasonably practical, except where there is legitimate reason to restrict the information for example if that information is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act or disclosure would breach Data Protection principles.
3. **Quality.** Information should be fit for purpose: it should be relevant, up to date where necessary, accurate, secure and compliant with legislation and University policies. Information should be shared and duplication minimised.
4. **Ownership.** The University will continue to provide guidance on the ownership of information and will identify an appropriate custodian for each general area of information. The custodian will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the content and operating the access policy.
5. **Users of Information.** All users of information should be made fully aware of their rights and responsibilities in its handling.
6. **Information infrastructure.** The University provides an information infrastructure to facilitate information-handling processes and procedures across the University and to ensure that they are coherent and coordinated. The infrastructure includes integrated, quality information systems for providing and regulating access, secure storage, analysis and dissemination, together with procedures for their effective deployment.
7. **Communications.** The University will provide a University-wide user-led system for the rapid communication with and between staff, students and external stakeholders.
8. **Governance.** The importance of information to the activities of the University, together with the increasing requirements for regulatory compliance, requires an effective information governance framework.
9. **Secure storage.** Given the core importance of information to the business and integrity of the University, the provision of security and appropriate storage must be recognised as an essential requirement.
10. **Thinking, planning and delivery.** The committee structure for information-related matters will operate efficiently, be well joined up, its various bodies will have representation that captures the different needs and interests across University and will communicate advice and recommendations effectively.

## 5 Themes

The principles outlined above highlight the pervasive and crucial nature of information to the University's identity and business. The principles are intended to be enduring and aspirational. Applying the principles will require prioritization of resources which will be driven by the University Corporate Plan and its three underpinning key strategies. These priorities are laid out below under three themes (A to C).

### **Theme A. Supporting Excellence in Research, Teaching & Learning, and Enterprise.**

#### **a. Supporting and enhancing excellence in research and knowledge transfer.**

- i. enhance the collection, analysis, and communication on information about the University's research and enterprise activities
- ii. continue to support and secure both digital and non-digital information in its various forms closely aligned to the University research priorities

#### **b. Supporting and enhancing teaching and learning.**

- i. enhance access to, communication of, and feedback about, information through the provision of effective and accessible information resources, tools and physical environments that stimulate and challenge teachers and students
- ii. recognise the importance of, and support the provision of a diversity of information sources both digital and material information resources for teaching and learning

### **Theme B. Accessibility and Efficiency in Information and Communication.**

- c. increase the accessibility and efficiency of information resources and services including the provision of information to the public (e.g. about programmes of study)
- d. enable easier publication and dissemination of information.
- e. enhance the collaborative sharing of information.
- f. deliver more efficient and effective business processes.

### **Theme C. Effective Decision Making and Good Governance.**

- g. continue to enhance the University's legal, regulatory, security and audit compliance
- h. streamline the management of corporate information to support better decision making
- i. improve the collection and analysis of student management information

### **These themes will be supported by a commitment to ensuring;**

- Digital and material resources for research and teaching enable us to be competitive in areas of strength
- Staff with information roles and responsibilities have the required authority, skills and training
- A secure, reliable, efficient and scalable physical IT infrastructure
- Effective consultation and communication with users at all levels
- The adoption of demonstrably best practice in service management and support.

## 6 Strategies and Policies

The Framework aims to support the University in the delivery of the following core University Strategies all of which can be found at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/about/about-policies.aspx>

- The University Corporate Plan 2008-13
- The University Research Strategy
- The University Learning and Teaching Strategy
- The University Enterprise Strategy

Other University policies and strategies on information and information technology are listed below and can be found at:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/policiesdocs/imps-policies.aspx>

- Freedom of Information Policy
- Information Management Policy
- Rules for the Use of the University Computers and Data Network
- Copyright Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Information Security
  - Communication Networks Management
  - Information Systems Operation
  - Business Critical Applications Management Policy
  - Systems Management
  - Systems Planning

## 7 Committee Structures

See Figure 1.

**Revised September 2011**

Figure 1: Current flow of information-related issues through University Committees

