



## Procedure for the Creation and Maintenance of Electronic Records

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## 1. PURPOSE

The Public Records Act 2005 requires all staff to create full and accurate records of actions undertaken or decisions made in the course of carrying out their position responsibilities. These records are required to provide evidence of Unitec activity including why, how and on what Unitec funds have been used.

Most of the records created by Unitec staff today are created in electronic format. The purpose of this procedure is to assist staff in meeting their requirements under the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA) by:

- a) Outlining the process to be followed when creating new or amending existing Electronic Records;
- b) Outlining the requirements for naming Electronic Records and identifying the current status of the Record (i.e. Draft, Final); and
- c) Identifying where Electronic Records need to be stored to ensure they are accessible to those who should be able to access them and can be managed correctly for the entire period they are required to be retained

## 2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This procedure must be followed by any Unitec staff member, contractor, consultant or other person engaged by Unitec and who is creating, maintaining or receiving Electronic Records on Unitec's behalf.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

RECORD	means "information, whether in its original form or otherwise, including (without limitation) a document, an email a signature, a seal, text, images, sound, speech, or data compiled, recorded, or stored, as the case may be,— <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) in written form on any material; or</li><li>b) on film, negative, tape, or other medium so as to be capable of being reproduced; or</li><li>c) by means of any recording device or process, computer, or other electronic device or process."</li></ul> (Public Records Act 2005)
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ELECTRONIC RECORD	means a Record created using a word processing or application software such as Word, Excel, Adobe, Visio, Photoshop (not an exhaustive list) and which is stored in a medium which requires a computer or other electronic device to retrieve it.
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## 4. PROCEDURE

### 4.1. Creating a New Electronic Record

- 1) Before a new Electronic Records is created the owner should first check to see if there may already be an existing Record e.g. has a policy on this already been written? Does Unitec already have a strategy on XYZ? If this is the case, then this existing Record may just need updating to include any new information required.
- 2) **If an existing Record does exist**, the owner of the record (identified by position title on the Record) should be contacted to request an update and/or rewrite of the Record.
- 3) **If no similar Record exists** then a new Record can be created. Depending on the type of Record being created, a number of standard 'Unitec templates' have been developed to assist you in correctly structuring your document. These templates include the Unitec [Statute Template](#); the Unitec [Policy Template](#); the Unitec [Procedure Template](#) and the Unitec [Guidelines Template](#). All are accessible from the Policies and Procedures section of the staff intranet.
- 4) If there is no existing template to assist you in creating the new Record, you are free to create the Record using the format and application (word, excel, publisher etc) you think best suits the Record type being created, however some general guidelines are:
  - i) Remember your audience – use a format and language that makes sense to them and include the content relevant to their needs;
  - ii) Ensure that whatever application you create your document in will allow the document to be opened by those who need to read and/or edit it. Not everyone for example may have Visio or Publisher installed on their computer;
  - iii) Ensure you identify on the document who created it. This allows people to know who to contact if they wish to find out more, or make any comment. This is particularly important if the document gets separated from the email it was sent by, or the memo/letter it was attached to, if delivered hard copy;
  - iv) If it is a document that will first need to receive official approval from a person or body before you can distribute it, ensure that you identify on the document who provided this approval and when;
  - v) If it is a 'living document' i.e. one that will need to be reviewed for accuracy and currency on a periodic basis e.g. a building's fire evacuation scheme, ensure that you identify on the document when this next review will take place;
  - vi) Include a section (usually at the end of the document) titled 'Amendment/Revision History.' This should provide space for those who amended the document to identify who they are and include brief comments about the amendments they made. This will allow readers to see how the document has evolved since it was first created. For further information about what to include in an 'Amendment History' section refer to the handout '[How to Complete the Document Details and Amendment History Sections of a Document](#)';
  - vii) Include a section (usually at the end of the document) titled 'Document Details'. This is for capturing information about the version number of the document, the

document's Owner and Sponsor and details about when the document was last approved and when it will next be formally reviewed to ensure ongoing accuracy and continued relevance. For further information about what to include in an 'Document Details' section refer to the handout '[How to Complete the Document Details and Amendment History Sections of a Document](#)'.

## 4.2. Saving an Electronic Record

### 4.2.1. Where to Save an Electronic Record

All Electronic Records created in carrying out your position responsibilities must be saved on the H:\Drive (currently Unitec's Document Management System). Saving your Records here:

- i) Ensures everyone who should have access to these Records can be provided and has access (this isn't the case if you save Records on your F:\ or C:\ Drives which only you can access);
- ii) Reduces the risk of unexpected loss of Electronic Records due to the daily back-up process applied to H:\Drive;
- iii) Allows alternative staff member(s) to be granted access to Electronic Records (with the required authorisation) should the staff member(s) usually responsible for these Records be away on leave and/or are away unexpectedly from Unitec;
- iv) Provides the best chance of Records being discovered when staff suspect a certain Record already exists and conducts a search for it. If all Electronic Records are being stored on H:\ Drive (a central repository) and the search does not return the Record then the higher the likelihood that the Record doesn't exist rather than leaving staff wondering if the Record may instead be stored somewhere else.

### 4.2.2. Giving Your Electronic Record a Name

- 1) When saving any Record in electronic format, the name you give the Record must be one that will allow the content/purpose to be easily identified and therefore allow those persons who need to be able to read/use the Record to easily find it.
- 2) To assist you in giving your record an appropriate name, a Unitec 'File Naming Convention' (FNC) has been established. All records created should be named in line with this convention.

Unitec's 'File Naming Convention' takes the following format:

Date Created/Modified (YYYY-MM-DD)\_Subject of Record\_Type of Record\_Version Number

#### Example

It is 13 September 2008, and you have just completed writing the annual business plan for your department - The Department of Architecture. The name you would give this file using Unitec's FNC would be –

<b>2008-09-13_Dept of Architecture Business Plan_Plan_VDraft1a</b>
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#### 4.2.2.1. Elements of the File Naming Convention (FNC)

**a) Date Created/Modified:**

- Use the American format for the date e.g. YYYY-MM-DD

**Note:** This format has been chosen as it ensures Records are saved in sequential order by date. The NZ date format does not allow this.

- Use a hyphen to separate year-month-day

- If a Record is updated/modified a new version (see version numbering) of the Record should be saved giving it a new file name which includes the date of modification.

**b) Subject:** This field should be as descriptive as possible, without necessarily using the whole title of the Record e.g. Department of Architecture Business Plan.

**c) Type:** This field should indicate the type of Record e.g. Plan, Strategy, Policy, Working Paper, Report, Minutes.

**d) Version:** To assist you in giving your Record an appropriate version number that can be understood by all Unitec staff, a Unitec 'Version Numbering' standard has been established. The version number for a Record that has never existed before will always start at version '**VDraft 1a**' and as that draft version is further developed will change to '**VDraft 1b**', '**VDraft 1c**' etc until the Record is finalised. Once a final version is created the 'Draft' is dropped along with any alphas contained in the version number, and the version number becomes simply '**V1**', Further detail on Unitec's Version Control Protocol is provided in the next Section of this document.

**Note:** To separate each element of the file name (e.g. Date; Subject; Type and Version) an underscore should be used e.g. 2008-09-13\_ Department of Architecture Business Plan\_VDraft1a

#### 4.2.3. Giving Your Electronic Record an Appropriate Version Number

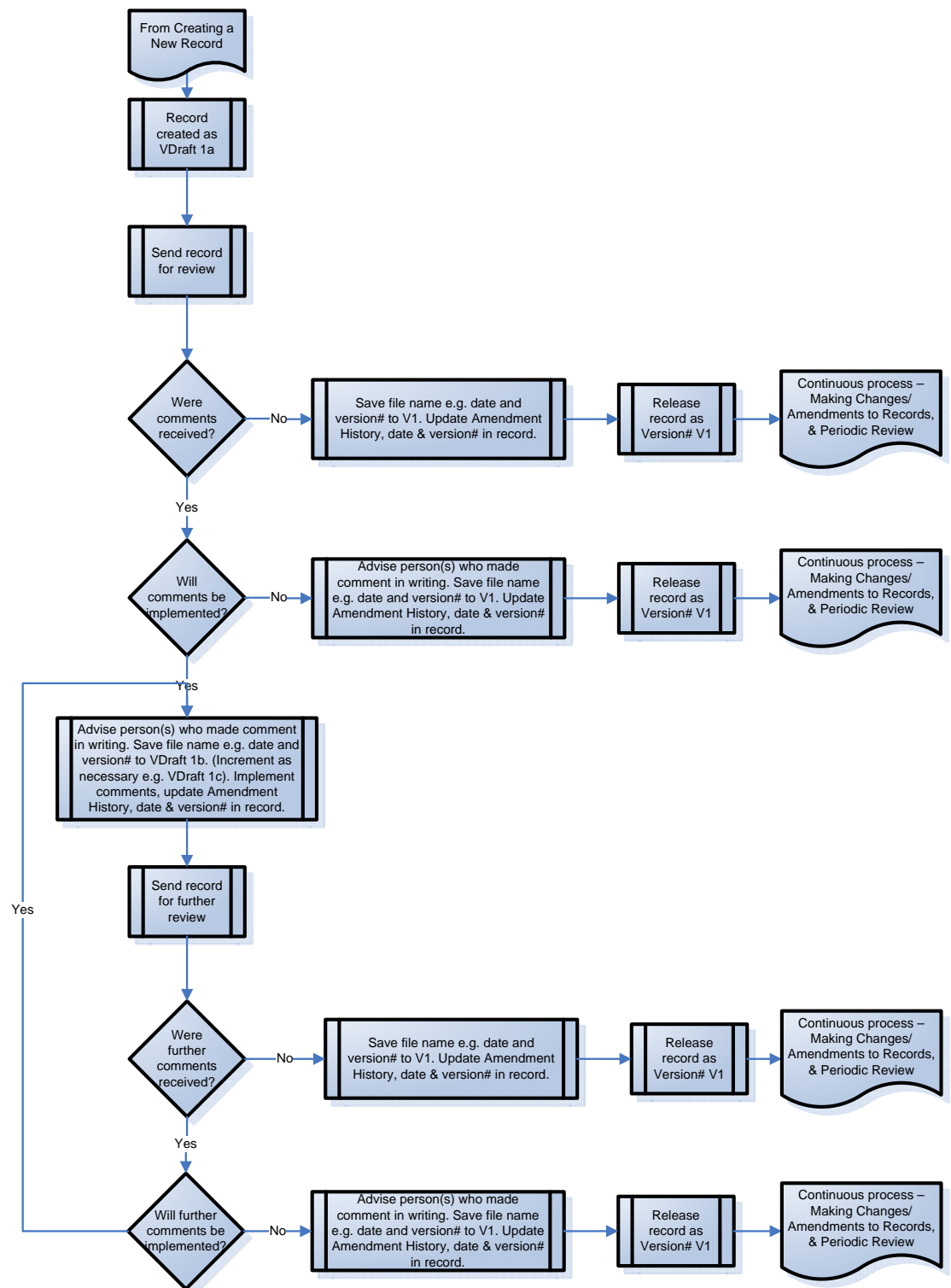
- 1) Every Electronic Record created should be version controlled throughout its entire lifecycle so that all those who need to use the Record know its current status e.g. draft or final. Once a Record you have created moves from a draft to a final version you should move all draft versions of this document into a 'Previous Versions' folder and retain them in this folder for as long as required as per Unitec's Records and Retention Schedules/Rules. This will ensure an audit trail for these Records is maintained through-out their required lifecycle.
- 2) To determine the appropriate version number for the Record you are about to save the following process should be followed:
  - i) All Records being created for the first time (no previous version exists) should start with version number **VDraft 1a**.

- ii) If the owner/creator of the Record then sends it to other persons for input and these persons make changes to this draft version, then the original draft has changed in content and should therefore be saved with a version number **VDraft 1b**. When saving this **VDraft 1b** version ensure the date used in the file name is changed to reflect the date that this altered version is being saved. This is in line with Unitec's File Naming Convention (FNC) explained in Section 4.2.2.1 of this document.
- iii) As well as saving the Record with an amended version number the nature of any changes made to the Record (and who made these changes) should also be briefly noted by any person making changes in the 'Amendment/Revision History' Section of the document. [Refer Section 4.1 (4) (vi)]. This will allow readers to see how the Record has evolved since it was first created.
- iv) As the Record continues to be worked on in its draft status, its version number should continually increment to the next alpha letter e.g. **VDraft 1c, VDraft 1d**. The 'Amendment/Revision History' Section should also continually be updated to show what changes have been made between each draft.
- v) Once the owner/creator of the Record is satisfied the Record has reached a stage where it can be finalised and formally approved (where formal approval is required), the Record is now ready for release and the version number must be changed to reflect the change in status from a draft to a final Record. Using the version number used above as an example, this Record would be shown as Final by dropping the word 'Draft' along with any alphas contained in the version number, making the version number simply – '**V1**'. Any version number with no alphas or 'draft' contained in it means the Record is in a final status and not currently under development or review.

**Note:** Out of courtesy for those person(s) who provided feedback to produce the final version, the Record owner/creator should respond in writing to each person letting them know if their feedback was implemented, and if not why not.

#### **4.2.3.1. Process Flowchart - Saving and Storing Your Electronic Record with an Appropriate Version Number**

*Refer to flowchart on next page*



## 4.3. Making Changes/Amendments to Electronic Records

### 4.3.1. Making Amendments to 'Final' Electronic Records

- 1) When a 'final' Record has been released to a wider audience, other than just the owner, and required amendments to the Record are identified, it is important to save on H:\ Drive the amended version of this Record with a new version number and identify the amendments made within the 'Amendment History'

Section of the Record. When changes are made to an existing record and these changes are saved, the person making the changes is in fact creating a new record, hence the reason for needing to change the version number.

- 2) Any amendments made to a Record can be classified as either 'Minor' or 'Major' amendments.

#### 4.3.1.1. Minor Amendments and the Impact on the Version Number

- 1) When a 'final' Record has been released to a wider audience and **minor** amendments to the Record are identified by the owner or some other person who may be reading it, the owner is responsible for making these amendments, or nominating someone to make these amendments on their behalf.
- 2) Any request for an amendment to a Record, should be made in writing via email to the Record owner. Out of courtesy the Record owner should respond to the email to indicate whether the amendments will be made, and if not why.

##### *What is a minor amendment?*

- 1) A minor amendment is a change to a Record that would in no way affect the overall meaning or implementation of any part of the Record.
- 2) Examples of minor amendments include correction of misspelt words or incorrect grammar, changes to a person's position title or department name but only when the same person or department will be carrying out the named task or responsibility. The identification of a different person or department to carry out a named responsibility or task would constitute a major amendment as this change would affect the implementation of the Record.

##### *How should the version number change if a minor amendment is made?*

- 1) If a minor amendment to a Record is made, a copy of this Record must be made and saved with a new version number ready for the amendments required to be made to it. A minor amendment is reflected through the addition of decimal number after the current version number. For example if the Record before amendment had a file name with a version number of V1 and a minor amendment was made, **the version number then needs to become V1.1**. Any subsequent minor amendment would require the version number to change again, this time to **V1.2**
- 2) Along with changing the version number element of the filename already assigned to this Record to reflect a minor change you must also ensure you adjust the date element of the file name. The date assigned should be the date the minor changes were made to the Record. So for example if the Record before amendment had a file name of **2008-09-13\_Dept of Architecture Business Plan\_Plan\_V1** and a minor amendment was made to it on 21 December 2008, then the record should be resaved with the file name **2008-12-21\_Dept of Architecture Business Plan\_Plan\_V1.1** This change of date is important because it will allow the easy application of Unitec's



retention and disposal of Records rules. For more information on the Disposal of Records refer to Section 4.5 of this document – “Retention and Disposal of Records.”

- 3) Upon making any minor amendments to the record, also ensure that the nature of any changes made (and who made these changes) are briefly noted in the ‘Amendment/Revision History’ Section of the Record.

This updated Record will then replace the previous version of the Record available on H:\ Drive and the previous version should be moved into a ‘Previous Versions’ folder and retained for as long as required as per Unitec’s Records and Retention Schedules/Rules.

#### **4.3.1.2. Major Amendments and the Impact on the Version Number**

- 1) When a ‘final’ Record has been released to a wider audience and **major** amendments to the record are identified by the owner or some other person who may be reading it, the owner is responsible for making these amendments, or nominating someone to make these amendments on their behalf.
- 2) Any request for an amendment to a Record, should be made in writing via email to the Record owner. Out of courtesy the Record owner should respond to the email to indicate whether the amendments will be made, and if not why.

##### *What is a major amendment?*

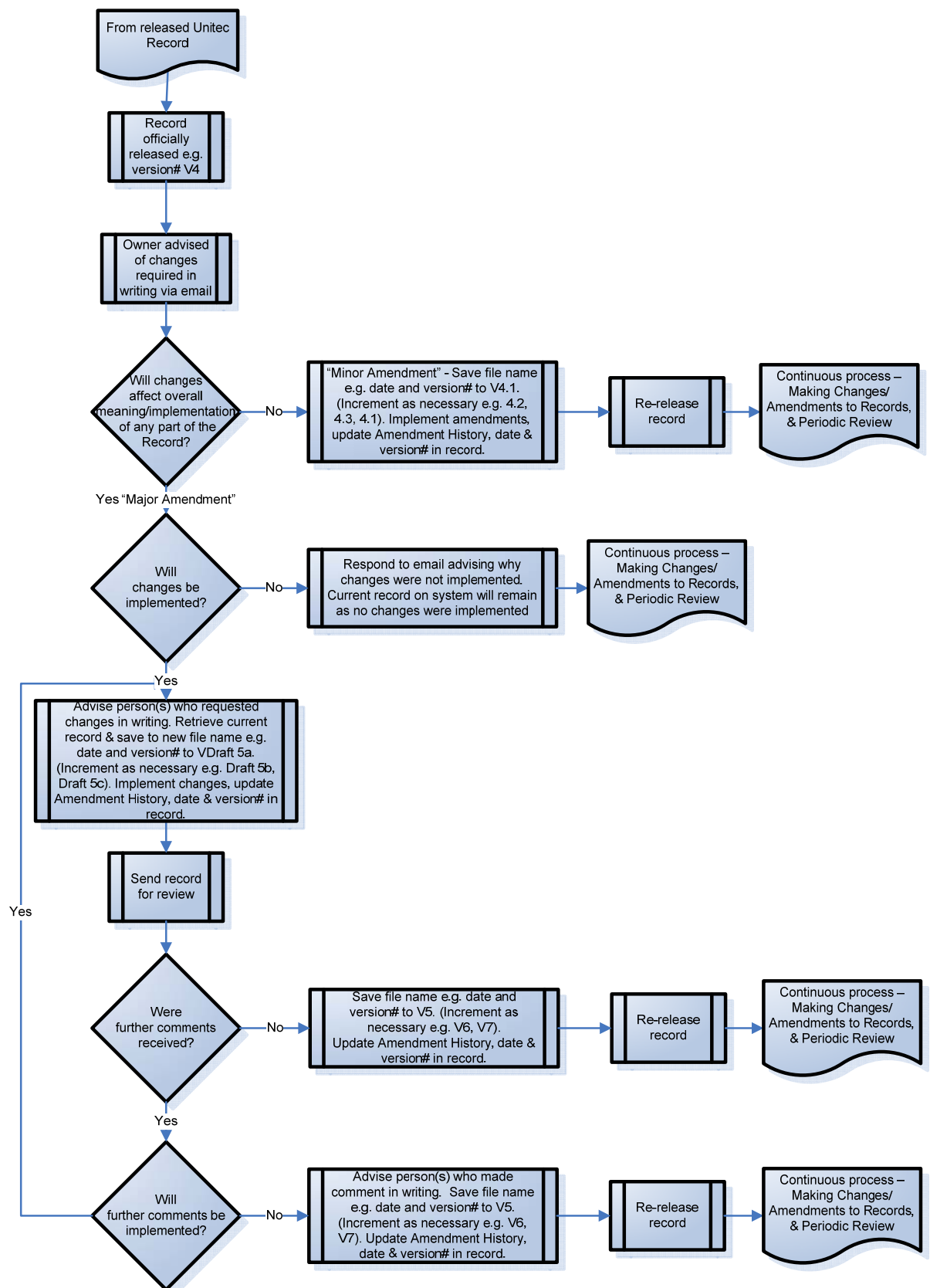
- 1) A major amendment is a change to a record that has an affect on the overall meaning or implementation of any part of the record. Major amendments normally result from a formal review of the record e.g. a formal review of a Unitec policy.
- 2) Examples of major amendments include changes required to a record due to a change in legislation, significant changes made as a result of a formal review of the document, changes to the person or department responsible for carrying out any assigned responsibilities or tasks that may be mentioned within the record.  
Note: This does not include when the change is just a change to the person’s position title or the renaming of a department. These ‘renaming’ changes are considered minor amendments – see above.

##### *How should the version number change if a major amendment is made?*

- 1) If a major amendment is required to a Record a copy of this Record must be made and saved with a new version number ready for the amendments required to be made to it. If the current version of the record is V4 (or V4.2 if a number of minor amendments have previously been made to it), then the new version number that needs to be given to the new Record you will be making the major amendments to, will be VDRAFT 5a. This is line with the version numbering protocols outlined in Section 4.2.3 of this document – “Giving Your Electronic Record with an Appropriate Version Number.”

- 2) When saving the new version of a Record that has had **major amendments** made to it, ensure the file name you give it also reflects the date the amendment was made, so for example if the Record before amendment had a file name of **2008-09-13\_Dept of Architecture Business Plan\_Plan\_V4** and on 21 October 2008 you are resaving it to make major amendments, then the Record needs to be saved with the file name **2008-10-21\_Dept of Architecture Business Plan\_Plan\_VDraft 5a**. This change of date is important because it will allow the easy application of Unitec's retention and disposal of Records rules. For more information on the Disposal of Records refer the [Disposing of Records at Unitec Procedure](#).
- 3) Upon making any major amendments to the record, also ensure that the nature of any changes made (and who made these changes) are briefly noted in the 'Amendment/Revision History' Section of the Record. This updated Record will then replace the previous version of the Record available and the previous version should be moved into a 'Previous Versions' folder and retained for as long as required as per Unitec's Records and Retention Schedules/Rules. Unitec's Records and Retention Schedules/Rules can be accessed from the [Records Management and Disposal page](#) of the staff intranet.

#### 4.3.1.3. Process Flowchart - Making Amendments to 'Final' Records



#### 4.4. Formal Periodic Reviews of Records

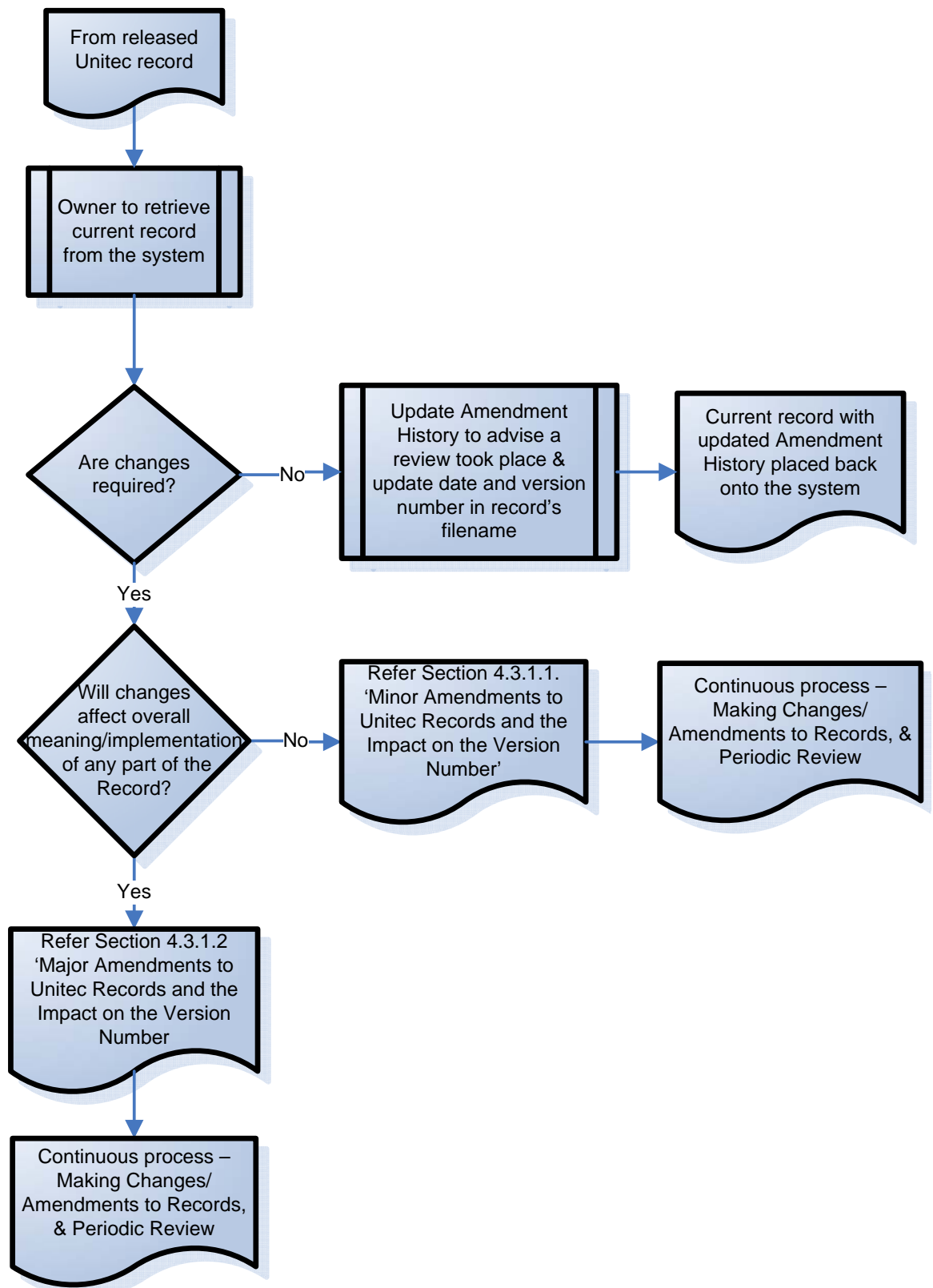
- 1) Some Records depending on their nature will need periodic review to ensure that the information they are providing is always up-to-date. Examples (not an exhaustive list) of such records are policies, procedures, strategy documents, business plans.
- 2) Any Record that fits into the above examples and which has been created for the first time (i.e. a policy that Unitec has never before had) should have its first formal periodic review 1 year after it was first released. The frequency of review following this initial review should then be at least every three years.

- 3) Review dates will be from the date the Record was first created or from the date the last formal periodic review of the Record took place.

**Remember:** A formal periodic review does not necessarily mean any changes are required to the Record. It may be that after reviewing the Record, its content is still relevant and up to date, therefore no changes are required. The fact that a formal periodic review took place (with no changes identified) still however needs to be recorded in the 'Amendment/Revision History' Section of the Record.

- 4) The process to follow when carrying out a formal periodic review is:
  - i) Retrieve the current version of the Record from the official folder repository for this Record on the H:\ Drive;
  - ii) **If no changes are required** then the 'Amendment/Revision History' Section of the Record must be updated to indicate a formal periodic review has taken place with no changes identified. The date and version number in the Record's file name must also be updated. Save this newly named Record back into the H:\ Drive. In this case the version number would change to reflect a minor amendment had taken place. Refer Section 4.3.1.1 for details on how the version number needs to change for minor amendments;
  - iii) If the only changes required after formal review are **corrections to misspelt words or grammar (i.e. minor amendments)**, follow the Minor Amendments process outlined in Section 4.3.1.1 of this document;
  - iv) If the changes required after formal review **will have an affect on the overall meaning or implementation of any part of the Record. (i.e. a major amendment)** follow the Major Amendments process outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of this document.

#### 4.4.1. Process Flowchart - Formal Periodic Reviews of Records



## 4.5. Retention and Disposal of Electronic Records

- 1) All Electronic Records must be disposed of in accordance with Unitec's records and retention schedules and rules. These schedules/rules provide direction on how long a record needs to be kept from its date of creation (or last modification if any **major** amendments have been made to the record since its initial creation) and the disposal action to be taken when this retention period has been met. Unitec's Records and Retention Schedules/Rules can be accessed from the [Records Management and Disposal page](#) of the staff intranet.
- 2) To ensure you follow the correct disposal procedures for all Electronic Records use the procedure outlined in the [Disposing of Records at Unitec Procedure](#).

**Note:** The disposal action for a record may not necessarily be to throw it out/shred it/delete it. Depending on the type of record, the disposal action for a record may be to transfer the record to an external agency. In most cases this will be to Archives New Zealand to allow the record to be available for sighting by members of the New Zealand public.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- [1] [Disposing of Records at Unitec Procedure](#)
- [2] [How to Complete the Document Details and Amendment History Sections of a Document](#)
- [3] Unitec's [Records Management Policy](#)

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Version:</b>	1.2	<b>Issue Date this Version:</b>	16 April 2013
<b>This Version Approved by:</b>	Manager, Information & Policy	<b>Date of Approval:</b>	16 April 2013
<b>Document Owner:</b>	Manager, Information & Policy	<b>Document Sponsor:</b>	Executive Director, Organisational Development
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	May 2015		
<b>Date first version issued:</b>	18 December 2009	<b>Original Approval Body:</b>	Executive Director, Organisational Development

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Issue Date	Reason for Revision	Approved by
1	18/12/2009	Brand new document – first edition.	Executive Director, Organisational Development
1.1	09/05/2012	Formal Periodic Review. Only minor changes identified including inserting hyperlinks to newly created records management procedures; a better defined 'Purpose' section; and simplified language to aid understanding.	Manager, Information & Policy

1.2	16/04/2013	Minor change – Hyperlinks added to new Unitec policy, procedure, guidelines etc templates which have replaced the macro embedded templates that were available through the Microsoft Office application. Removal of reference and link to the manual for the 'Use of Unitec's Document Templates'. Manual no longer needed for use of replacement document templates.	Manager, Information & Policy
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