NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Academic Administration

POLICY ON ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS





POLICY ON ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Policy Number	***14/P/2/COUN/CRA***	
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Meaning
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
OB	Office of the Bursar
OVC	Office of the Vice-Chancellor
ODVC: FO	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Finance and Administration
ODVC: RIP	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnerships
ODVC: TLT	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching, Learning and Technology
SCLLLS	Satellite Campuses and Lifelong Learning Support

Acronym	Meaning
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
OR	Office of the Registrar

DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Academic records	Official records, files, documents, and materials containing academic information directly related to a student, maintained by NUST.
Bona Fide Emergency	An immediate situation requiring disclosure of student records to protect safety or health, as determined by the Registrar.
Confidential Information	Any information in a student file that is not classified as Public Information and requires the student's consent for disclosure.
Primary access	First-level direct physical access to the filing cabinets of the Filing Room and Student Records Archives on a daily basis.
Public Information	Information that may be disclosed without the student's consent, including name, email address, major, and degrees awarded.
Reasonable Evidence	Documentation or proof verifying a person's relationship with a student, as defined in institutional guidelines.
Secondary access	Second-level physical access to the actual student file upon request from the Filing Room and Student Records Archives on an intermittent basis.
Student file	A paper-based official file featuring personal and academic particulars of the student on the cover and printed in one of the prescribed colours of the institution.
Student records	Records, files, documents, and materials in any format (handwritten, printed, electronic, microfilm, etc.) containing information directly related to a student and from which students can be personally identified.
Tertiary access	Limited third-level physical access to the actual student file upon request from the Filing Room and Student Records Archives.

1. PREAMBLE

The Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), as an institution of higher learning, is obligated to comply with the Namibian Archives Act (Act No. 12 of 1992) and other relevant legislation. This policy establishes the procedures and mechanisms governing the creation, access, and safekeeping of confidential student records to ensure integrity, security, and compliance with legal requirements.

2. PURPOSE

This policy regulates the procedures and practices related to the integrity, security, and safekeeping of student records, ensuring their preservation as institutional memory for future verification and retrieval.

3. BACKGROUND

The Office of the Registrar is the designated custodian of all official confidential student records. It is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of these records and ensuring their long-term preservation for academic verification, retrieval, and institutional reference.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

4.1 Formalise the activities of the Admissions and Records Department within the Office of the Registrar.
4.2 Define the business processes for the creation and maintenance of student files, specifying the documents that must be preserved.
4.3 Provide guidelines for the management and access of student records by authorised departments within NUST.

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies specifically to the Office of the Registrar (OR), Office of the Vice-Chancellor (OVC), Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Teaching, Learning and Technology (DVC: TLT), Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Finance and Administration (DVC: FO), Office of the Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnerships (DVC: RIP) Office of the Bursar (OB), Deans, Satellite Campuses and Lifelong Learning Support (SCLLLS) and specifically designated support staff.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

The Access to Student Records Policy does not preclude the development of additional business processes to refine the operational activities of various departments. It serves as a foundational framework for managing student records while allowing for necessary procedural enhancements.

7. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is established in accordance with the following legal statutes: Namibian Archives Act (Act No. 12 of 1992), Namibia University of Science and Technology Act (Act No. 6 of 2015) and Namibia Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 26 of 1996

8. IMPLEMENTATION

8.1. General Principles

8.1.1 The Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) is committed to protecting the confidentiality and integrity of student records. As such, no academic records, tuition fees, financial aid details (including scholarships or loans), or any other student-related information will be disclosed to third parties without the explicit, documented consent of the student, provided they have attained the legal age of majority.

8.1.2 Exceptions to Confidentiality

8.1.1.1 Consent must be explicit and documented, and informed, ensuring that students are informed of what information will be shared and with whom.

8.1.1.2 Public Information may be disclosed unless the student has explicitly requested otherwise. Public information is limited to:

8.1.1.2.1 Student Name.
8.1.1.2.2 Situational Email Address.
8.1.1.2.3 Major Field of Study.
8.1.1.2.4 Dates of Attendance.
8.1.1.2.5 Admission of Enrolment Status.
8.1.1.2.6 Faculty or Division.
8.1.1.2.7 Degrees and Awards.
8.1.1.2.8 Activities.
8.1.1.2.9 Sports and Athletics Information.

8.1.1.3 All other information contained in a student file that is not classified as Public Information is considered Confidential Information and may not be released without the student's prior written consent.

8.1.2 Parental Access to Student Records

8.1.2.1 Parents, a Spouse or a Sponsor may be granted access to student records provided they have reasonable evidence that verifies their status and that indicates that the student is dependent and below the age of 21 years. The Parents, Spouse or Sponsor should provide a copy of their identity document and a formal letter explaining why access is requested.

8.1.2.2 While NUST staff are prohibited from releasing a student's confidential information, the student may grant written permission to a third party to view his or her Student File.

8.1.2.3 Upon the death of a student, his or her student file will remain confidential. Records of deceased students will only be released to the executor or executrix of the student's estate or to the student's next of kin, to the extent that such access relates to the administration of the deceased's estate. Such requests for information should be referred to the Registrar.

8.2 Parental, Spousal, and Sponsor Access to Student Records

8.2.1 Parents, spouses, or sponsors may be granted access to student records only if they provide reasonable evidence verifying their relationship to the student and confirming that the student is dependent and below the age of 21 years.

8.2.2 The requesting party must submit:

8.2.2.1 A copy of their identity document
8.2.2.2 A formal letter explaining the reason for the access request.

8.2.3 While NUST staff are prohibited from releasing a student's confidential information, a student may grant written permission to a third party to view their student file.

8.2.4 **Access to Records of Deceased Students**

Upon the death of a student, their records remain confidential. Access will only be granted to:

8.2.4.1 The executor or executrix of the student's estate
8.2.4.2 The student's next of kin, but only to the extent necessary for estate administration

8.2.5 All such requests must be referred to the Registrar for approval.

8.3 Primary Access to Student Records

The following staff members have primary access to student files due to their direct involvement in student record management:

8.3.1 Senior Admissions Officer

8.3.1.1 Oversees the Filing Room and Student Records Archive.
8.3.1.2 Audit the register used for releasing student files.
8.3.1.3 Activates student number allocation and supervises the opening of student files upon successful registration.

8.3.2 Admissions Officer

8.3.2.1 Ensures student documents reach the relevant officer.

8.3.2.2 Monitors deadlines for requests.

8.3.3 Student Information Officer

8.3.3.1 Sorts student documents

8.3.3.2 Maintains accurate student files

8.3.4 Senior Faculty Officer

Supervises file verification processes prior to graduation

8.3.5 Faculty Officer

8.3.5.1 Manages academic administration

8.3.5.2 Ensures all actions on student files are documented

8.3.6 Regional Coordinator / Campus Head

8.3.6.1 Creates duplicate student files at regional centres.

8.3.6.2 Ensures their safekeeping

8.3.7 The student

8.3.7.1 May access their student file by submitting a formal written request to the Registrar.

8.3.7.2 Must be notified in writing of any third-party access to their records.

8.4 Secondary Access to Student Records

The following staff members and external parties may have secondary access to student files for specific administrative purposes:

8.4.1 **Secretaries in the Office of the Registrar**

8.4.1.1 For academic record verifications and student complaints

8.4.2 **Meeting Administrators**

For scheduling Student Disciplinary Hearings

8.4.3 Secretaries to the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellor

On a very limited basis

8.5 Tertiary Access to Student Records

The following staff members have tertiary access to student files due to their positions of authority, trust, and conditions of service:

8.5.1 Vice-Chancellor

8.5.2 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Finance and Administration

8.5.3 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching, Learning and Technology

8.5.4 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnership

8.5.5 Executive Deans

8.5.6 Associate Deans

8.5.7 Registrar and Secretary to Council

8.5.8 Bursar

8.5.9 Assistant Registrars
8.5.10 Executive Directors
8.5.11 Directors

9. DISCLOSURE PURSUANT TO A SUBPOENA OR VALID SEARCH WARRANT

9.1 NUST must disclose confidential student records only when required by a lawfully issued subpoena, search warrant, judicial order, or valid exercise of seizure powers by an organ of state in compliance with existing legislation.
9.2 NUST will notify the student or their legal representative (if known) of such a subpoena.
9.3 Before disclosure, the institution must make reasonable efforts to inform the student of the subpoena or order and its intent to comply.

10. DISCLOSURE IN CASE OF BONA FIDE EMERGENCY

10.1 Disclosure of student records is permitted only if necessary to protect the student or others from an immediate threat to safety or health.
10.2 Such disclosure may occur only in cases where consent cannot be obtained due to the urgency of the situation.
10.3 The Registrar will exercise discretion in determining the nature and scope of a bona fide emergency.

11. BOOKING OUT AND RETURN OF STUDENT FILES

11.1 **Manual Booking Out**
Officers must physically sign out student files in a register and sign them back in upon return.

11.2 **Telephonic Booking Out**
Limited to a restricted number of officers.

11.3 **Booking Out by Email**
Permitted for a limited number of officers.

11.4 **Support and Advice**
The Office of the Registrar is responsible for policy implementation and must be contacted for support.

11.5 **Communication**
This policy will be made available to all administrative staff handling student records.

11.6 **Procedures & Forms**
The following forms must be included in student files:

11.6.1 Registration Forms
11.6.2 Application Forms
11.6.3 Certificates, Diplomas, Academic Records
11.6.4 Disciplinary Hearing Outcomes

11.7 **Guidelines**
This policy must be read alongside the **Implementation Guidelines – Appendix A**.

11.8 **Handling of Student Records in Disaster Situations**
All NUST stakeholders must comply with institutional regulations in the event of a disaster.

12. ETHICS, INTEGRITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

12.1 All staff involved in student record management must adhere to the highest ethical standards, ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
12.2 NUST is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of student records, recognising the importance of trust in the student-institution relationship.
12.3 Any suspected violations of this policy or unethical behaviour must be reported to the Registrar or designated authority for investigation.
12.4 Staff members are accountable for their actions regarding student records. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

13. POLICY CONTEXT

The Policy on Access to Student Records at the NUST is established to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and accessibility of student records while complying with institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks. The policy is guided by national legislation, including the Namibian Archives Act (Act No. 12 of 1992) and the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) Act (Act No. 26 of 1996), as well as internal policies governing records management.

This policy defines clear procedures for accessing, handling, and disclosing student records, ensuring that information is protected while allowing authorised access for academic, administrative, and legal purposes. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, ensuring compliance with ethical and legal standards in student records management.

14. STRUCTURES GOVERNING THE POLICY

The Office of the Registrar is the primary custodian of the Policy on Access to Student Records at NUST. Implementation and oversight are carried out by institutional structures, including the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Faculty Officers, Admissions Officers, and Student Information Officers. These entities ensure compliance with legal and institutional regulations while safeguarding student records.

15. IMPLEMENTATION

The policy is implemented through strict access control measures, procedural guidelines, and designated responsibilities assigned to relevant offices. The Registrar's Office oversees execution, ensuring that student records are managed securely and in accordance with institutional and legal requirements.

15.1 Roles and Responsibilities

15.1.1 Registrar's Office – Custodian of student records, responsible for policy enforcement and oversight.
15.1.2 Admissions Officers & Student Information Officers – Manage student files, ensure accuracy, and facilitate authorised access.
15.1.3 Faculty Officers & Deans – Oversee academic record verification and compliance within faculties.
15.1.4 Vice-Chancellor & Deputy Vice-Chancellors – Provide strategic oversight and ensure institutional adherence to the policy.

15.2 Support and Advice

For internal support, inquiries should be directed to the Office of the Registrar. External guidance may be sought from regulatory bodies such as the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) and legal advisors regarding compliance with national records management laws.

15.3 Communication Strategy for the Policy

Once the policy has been formally authenticated, the Office of the Registrar will implement a structured communication plan to ensure awareness and compliance among internal stakeholders.

The communication strategy will include the following key actions:

15.3.1 Official Announcement and Circular – The Office of the Registrar will issue a formal circular, gazetting the approval of the policy. This announcement will be disseminated through official NUST Announcements communication channels, including email notifications, internal memos, and/or announcements on the university's digital platforms.

14.3.1 Publication on the Policy Portal – The policy will be uploaded to the official policy portal on the NUST intranet, ensuring easy access for all staff and relevant stakeholders. This platform will serve as the primary reference point for policy guidelines, updates, and implementation procedures.

14.3.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Workshops – The Department of Academic Administration, as the designated initiator of the policy, will conduct targeted workshops with internal stakeholders. These sessions will focus on raising awareness, clarifying responsibilities, and fostering a sense of ownership among faculty, administrative staff, and other relevant personnel. The workshops will also provide a platform for addressing questions, ensuring alignment with institutional objectives, and reinforcing compliance with policy provisions.
This multi-channel communication approach will ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed, engaged, and equipped to implement the policy effectively.

15 COMMENTS

NUST encourages constructive feedback from all internal stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrative staff, and relevant institutional bodies, to ensure the continuous improvement of the Policy on Access to Student Records.

Comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the policy may be submitted to the Office of the Registrar, which will review and address them as part of the policy evaluation process. Any significant amendments or revisions will be subject to approval by the Senate and Council, ensuring alignment with institutional objectives and regulatory requirements.

16. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed at least every five years to ensure continued relevance and compliance.



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