

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF STAFF MANAGING STUDENT RECORDS AT KENYA TECHNICAL TEACHERS COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Universities and Colleges are consistently facing challenges in managing student records in a bid to promote service delivery in the academic field. It is with this background that the study endeavored to assess the framework of skills and competencies of staff managing student records at Kenya Technical Teachers College (K.T.T.C.). Descriptive survey was adopted in conducting this research, primary data was collected by use of questionnaires while secondary data was collected from documented materials particularly textbooks and other relevant materials such as internet, newspapers and journals. The target population consisted staff managing student records, Human resource personnel and Heads of departments (HODs) of KTTC. The target population was therefore 30 respondents. The sample size for the study comprised twenty-two (22) staff in charge of student records, four (4) HODs and four (4) human resource personnel totaling thirty (30) respondents. The study employed purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques to select the sample. Purposive sampling was also used to sample key information like staff of the college. Simple random sampling was used to select staff in KTTC registry. The data was analyzed using the Microsoft excel package. The study findings indicated that the majority of the staff managing student records were skilled and trained in student records management skills. It's therefore imperative for the college to train its staff as this will facilitate better student records management. This implies that the majority of staffs have no experience that will enhance efficiency. The study also established that skills and competencies lead to efficiency and effectiveness of student records management. Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made that: the philosophies of the heads of the college as well as the records staff must represent a critical framework of skills and competencies of staff managing student records at Kenya Technical Teachers College (K.T.T.C.).

Key words: Records, Records Management, Skills and Competencies.

Cite this Article: Evans Nyanyu Makwae, Benard Omallah George, Mogaka Jasper Masese and Grace Gesare Nyamosi. User An Assessment of the Framework of Skills and Competencies of Staff Managing Student Records at Kenya Technical Teachers College. *Journal of Library and Information Science Technology*, 2(1), 2016, pp. 01-09.

<http://www.iaeme.com/issue.asp?JType=JLIST&VType=1&IType=2>

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions often operate in a heterogeneous records environment - they need to manage both paper and electronic documents. As a result, they may enact different procedures to address other compliance initiatives. Without standardized processes, it is not uncommon for records management practices to differ between departments, and even faculty within a single institution. In some cases, long-standing paper-based procedures have not been adapted to reflect advances in technology. Obviously, colleges have to address compliance mandates. And in order to process work efficiently, institutions need to be able to manage student, administrative, and back-office records. (Carl, 2012)

According to Education Act (1985) the staff managing student records maintains records on students to assist in fulfilling its obligations as specified in the Education Act. Such records are essential to the process of enhancing learning, maintaining student health and welfare, educational planning, college administration and reporting to parents and students. All college records and documents remain the property of the college.

Records must be retained for various minimum periods, as specified in the college records management policy, after which they may be destroyed, or where appropriate transferred to college's archives.

Whilst the contents of the student's record folder may differ between sites it is recommended that all records relating to a student be managed in the folder. At a minimum it is suggested the following should be placed on the folder: Enrolment, admission and student information, Assessment records and reports, Transfer advice, School leaver statement / student achievement record, Records of absences, Leaving details (forwarding addresses / occupation etc), Medical and family information, Student information card, Work experience records, Discipline records

Notes or comments made by a registrar concerning a student are deemed to be an official record and must be managed accordingly, including being recorded in the student record folder. Where notes are made in a diary, they should be confined to a diary used exclusively for work purposes.

Carl (2012) observes that establishing a records management strategy within an academic environment can be a challenge especially if there is a misconception that students will not benefit from it. Implemented correctly, a records management strategy can lead to improvements in student services and overall organizational efficiencies.

Organizations need appropriate framework of skills and competencies to support business and program delivery. This competency describes the tasks and sub-tasks that must be mastered to plan, design, implement and maintain records management programs and services. Specialists in records management programs establish a mandate and identify the users to whom services will be directed. Policies, procedures and standards are developed to support organizational goals and objectives.

The mandate, supported by documented policies and procedures must be in place before further activities are undertaken within the organizational framework. To support the mandate, new programs and services are developed and implemented, existing programs and services are reviewed and updated as required and programs and services are marketed. Recordkeeping principles are established and communicated throughout the organization, and users are guided and coached on recordkeeping, and use of programs and services. Ongoing maintenance of the recordkeeping infrastructure ensures that the changing work place, changes in technology and user needs is addressed on an ongoing basis. (Alberta, 2004)

The records of a college system constitute to her corporate memory which supplement human memory and serve as a guide for effective planning and decision making.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Education act, (1985) whilst the contents of the student's record folder may differ between sites it is recommended that all records relating to a student be managed in the folder. At a minimum it is suggested the following should be placed on the folder: Enrolment, admission and student information, Assessment records and reports, Transfer advice, School leaver statement / student achievement record, Records of absences, Leaving details (forwarding addresses / occupation etc), Medical and family information, Student information card, Work experience records, Discipline records Education act, (1985) also states that Notes or comments made by a registrar concerning a student are deemed to be an official record and must be managed accordingly, including being recorded in the student record folder. Where notes are made in a diary, they should be confined to a diary used exclusively for work purposes. There are many records created pertaining students information. According to Daramolar, (1995) records are classified into various categories in order to facilitate quick access. When grouped according to classes it's easy to control them because they have different degrees of confidentiality. They are managed throughout their life cycle. They include: Academic records – include records of curriculum issues, facilities and equipment for teaching and learning guidelines for the introduction of new academic programmes and student's academic records.

According to Oregon State University (OSU), (2013) Electronic Record formats, Electronic records or files have many different forms and formats. The lines separating the types of electronic records have become increasingly blurred. Numerous software applications have the capacity to combine graphics, text, and sound into single records. Networked systems allow multiple authors to work on a single document. As software becomes increasingly sophisticated, the electronic record can assume different forms depending on the software used to access it. There are, however, some distinct types of electronic records which can be identified and their dispositions easily determined.

Records management functions are changing extensively with increasing business, regulatory, community and technological demands and a raft of new standards to meet. Records managers, and indeed all those responsible for recordkeeping, need to be armed with the appropriate skills and knowledge to: effectively support business and meet corporate goals, implement best practice and ensure the college is accountable, and comply with the requirements of the college student records management policy, particularly the requirements in the Standard on Managing a Records Managing a Records Management Program (State records, 2004)._According to online dictionary (2013) skills is the ability to do something well arising from talent, training, or practice. Or special competence in performance; expertness; dexterity. Or a craft, trade, or job requiring manual dexterity or special training. Musembi, (1982) asserts that the early practitioners in the field of archives and records management did not have any basic skills pertaining to records and archives preservation. Their practice was done through trial and error efforts before the senior administrators began to feel the need for proper records and archives management and preservation. This condition was made worse by the fact that there were no colleges and institutions and if there were, they did not the capacity to train professional record managers and archivists.

University of Toronto (2013) observes that Proof of Competence can be supported with evidence of professional affiliation in a recognized organization related to one's subject area. Examples of professional affiliations are the College of Nurses (Health Care), Ontario Association of Certified Technicians and Technologists (Technological Design), Landscape Industry Certified Designer (Green Industries), Certified Chef de Cuisine (Hospitality and Tourism), Registered Graphic Designers (Communications Technology) According to State records, (2004) if all staff in the records management program is audited, the results can be aggregated and compared to the result of skills analysis in order to identify knowledge and skill gaps. State records, (2004) go ahead stating Recordkeeping and other skills as follows: focus on only recordkeeping skills, Recordkeeping skills and other skills required by the position holder are applied to

other program areas where records management or recordkeeping skills are required and be part of a wider audit of all staff. Such decisions are dependent on the goals of the organization. For one to have skills he/she should have the ability to do something well arising from talent, training, or practice. State Records (2004) states that staff managing student records should be familiar with the records management function, or have access to such expertise, be committed to the college's learning and development programs, have the ability to communicate well and put people at ease, and be discreet and able to keep personal and sensitive information confidential.

According to the University of Toronto (2013) only education that is part of a recognized diploma or degree program will be credited towards a requirement of five years combined post-secondary education and skilled wage-earning experience related to one's Technological Education Area. Certificate studies and stand-alone courses will not be credited to this requirement. Government of Alberta (2004) observes that this series of courses provides foundational training on managing records; Records Management Orientation (AC0290) - Records Management Orientation will give staff managing student records an overview of the records and information management program in the college and introduce him/her to basic records management concepts and terminology. Managing Active Records builds on the principles of the Records Management Orientation course and teaches records staff how to use records management tools to effectively manage active hardcopy records systems. Records Disposition (AC0292) - Records Disposition covers the processes and practices involved in the inactive and final disposition phases of the records life cycle. Records Disposition -IRIS - (AC0730) - The 1 day course provides new users instruction and hands-on practice searching, entering, and submitting boxes of inactive records for transfer in IRIS. ARMA (2000) adds that providing adequate training for users of electronic recordkeeping systems in the operation, care, and handling of the equipment, software, and media used in the system and in the management of electronic records is the responsibility of the agency records manager and the college's Records Management Program.

According to State records (2004) 'A qualification is the recognition - accepted nationally or internationally - that a person has attained a certain standard of education, knowledge and skill in a particular field. Qualifications include degrees, diplomas, certificates, grades of membership in a professional association or institution, or enrolment or licensing by legally recognized registration bodies such as courts or registration boards.' They go ahead indicating that: tertiary qualifications in records management such as Certificate III or above or post graduate qualifications, extensive experience in the management of records, understanding of and ability to implement the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* and associated records management standards .According to oxford dictionary (2013) qualification is a pass of an examination or an official completion of a course, especially one conferring status as a recognized practitioner of a profession or activity.

Education portal (2012) observes that a college registrar must be familiar and comfortable with changing technology. A bachelor's degree is usually required. A master's degree may also be required, and knowledge of computer science might be preferred. Registrar positions generally require 3-5 years of experience in a related area, including a background in supervising other employees. Smith (2000) observes that Work experience is offered by colleges as an opportunity for students to engage themselves in a work situation. Heads of institutions do this for a range of reasons, but fundamental amongst these is the direct benefit which they see to their college, and it is this benefit which governs their view that work experience itself is important. For institutions which are seeking to build an involvement in the offering of work experience, the benefits which can sell the concept internally need careful articulation. For one to be perfect and an expert in his/her work, he /she should have worked in an organization for a period of time. As the saying states that "experience is the best teacher". Therefore a college can have confidence in someone's operations since he/ she has been doing the same for a period of time.

According to OSU (2013) Active Records Systems that have continuing utility and value must be actively maintained by the creating unit. Maintaining these systems will entail routine system backup and may involve periodic or scheduled recopying data from old to fresh storage media. OAR 166-020-0045(2)

also directs state agencies to "store security copies of essential electronic records systems off the premises where the system is used, along with any system documentation necessary to enable recovery of the system in the event of an emergency." OSU (2013) observes that continued maintenance of electronic systems may require the records management officer to migrate records and data to new systems that can take advantage of the most current systems hardware and software. Prudent management requires that offices and units committing long-term records to electronic records systems provide a system and data migration plan to the agency records officer (College Archivist). The plan should specify a schedule for data back-ups and recopying as well as require backwards compatibility of a new electronic records system. Backwards compatibility means that, to perform continuing functions, new systems must be able to access and read previously created electronic records and data. (OSU, 2013). In order to protect valuable college data from accidental erasure, disaster, or system malfunctions, a backup procedure should be in place for every office. The frequency of data backups should be determined by registrar based on the frequency of data changes and the volume of records affected by the periodic changes. Some offices may need daily backups to protect vital records; others may require only weekly or monthly backups. When record data on removable electronic media, such as diskettes and CD-ROM, contain protected information and the data for reasons of obsolescence are no longer needed, it is important to destroy the actual magnetic storage unit. It is not wise to send diskettes out of the office for use by others, even if the diskettes have been reformatted. The nature of magnetic media makes it easy to recover files that have been recorded even if they have been erased or the media reformatted. The same cautions must be exercised when surplus computer equipment containing hard disk drives. Hard disk drives must at least be reformatted before they leave the office for another department or surplus property. If the hard drive contains confidential information it is advisable to delete the contents of the drive using one of the commercially available erasing and data-blanking programs. The most desirable solution to the potential loss of control over confidential or personal privacy information is to remove and retain the hard disk drive in the office or destroy it.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research design since the collected data was to test the answers to the questions concerning the current status of KTTC registry and assess skills and competencies of staff managing student records at KTTC (Kenya Technical Teachers College). The target population consisted of three (3) departments in KTTC College which targeted the staff in-charge of student records. However the records were managed centrally hence the staff in-charge of student records were deployed in one department of which all were to be considered and represented in the study. Sample size for the staff was determined in accordance to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003 who propose the sample size to be 30% of the total population. the sample size for the study comprised of four (4) staff in-charge of student records, four (4) heads of department (HODs) twenty two (22) staff managing student records in KTTC registry totaling to 30 respondents. The study sample size as calculated using 30% is shown in table 1 below

Table 1 Sample size of the respondents in KTTC College

Respondents	Total Population	Sample size at 30 Percentage (%)
Staff managing student records	22	07
Human resource personnel	04	01
HODs	04	04
Total	30	12

The study employed purposive sampling technique to select the sample. In purposive sampling technique, the researcher decided which respondent to include in the sample based on their typicality and it was used to collect focused information (Oso and Onen, 2009). Purposive sampling was also used to sample key information like the Human resource personnel and HODs of the college. Simple random sampling was also used to select the staff in the registry and the researcher considered this to be representative sample because the sample size was large enough to contain all the variations in the population and equal and independent chances were given to each individual in the population to be selected. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate in this study because it makes it possible for the selection of subjects on the basis of their expertise in the subject investigated (Uma, 2010) while Simple random sampling was preferred because it ensured that all members of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample.

Questionnaires were used to collect data complemented by observation. The questionnaires were distributed to the action staffs/officers. The questionnaires were intended to enable the researcher to understand the framework of skills and competencies of staff managing student records at the Kenya technical teachers College (KTTC); skills, types and format of student records, qualifications, training, and experience of the staff managing student records. The administration of the questionnaires was followed by physical observation of records units and registry in the college. To ensure reliability of instruments a number of a pilot study was carried out in Kisii University which was outside the sample population. This university was used for piloting because the nature of staff functions of the student records management in the college was similar. The research instruments were administered to the same pilot group twice after a given interval and results were compared. The reliability coefficient alpha 0.871 was obtained. This implied that the research instruments were reliable and thus were adopted for the study

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the data that related to the background information of the registry staff and students is as follows

Table 2 The scheme for variables used

Variable	Variable code	Response Category	Response category code	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total
Gender	G	Male	1	12	44%	100%
		Female	2	15	56%	
Highest level of education	H	Secondary	1	4	15%	100%
		Certificate	2	8	29%	
		Diploma	3	10	37%	
		Degree	4	4	15%	
		Masters	5	1	4%	
Users category	U	staff	1	15	55%	100%
		Human resource personnel	2	5	19%	
		HODs	3	4	15%	
		Non-staff members	4	3	11%	

The analysis on gender indicated that 44% of the respondents were men and about 56% of them were women. This was because the total number of women in KTTC was higher than that of men. Even from

the 2009 census statistics shows that the total population of women was high than men i.e. 19.4 million for women and 19.2 million for men totalizing to 38.6 million

From the table it was revealed that most of KTTC registry staff they make 55%, followed by HODs whose percentage was 19%, the third category was other staff members whose percentage was 15% and finally the Non staff members whose percentage was 11%. The percentage of staff was high because they were the frequent in - charge of the registry in searching for information and getting academic reports. The percentage of HODs and non-staff members was 19% and 15% respectively because a good number of HODs obtain their curriculum materials from the registry. For non-staff members of the staff for instance registry staff members they used the registry to access records and also doing their routine records management tasks. The percentage of non-staff members was 11% this variable constitute the children of the staff members who resided within the college compound, they used the registry for enquiry because most of them were students in various colleges and universities.

In the analysis of the variables (high level of education) most registry staff of KTTC had Diploma level i.e. 37% where those with KCSE, Certificate, Degree and masters had 15%, 29%, 15%, 4% respectively. Most staff i.e. 37% had Diploma this was because KTTC admits the students who already have a Diploma to specialize in one year technical teacher education. Secondary (KCSE), Certificate, Degree and masters had 15%, 29%, 15%, and 4% respectively because the college admits the KCSE students and students who had certificate to enroll on certificate and Diploma respectively so the percentage of secondary (KCSE) was 15% because they were not familiar with the importance of registry roles, While that of certificate was 29% because most of certificate holders know roles of the college registry in records management. The staff with masters and degree constitutes the percentage of 4% and 15% respectively this was because most of teaching staff that used the registry were degree holders' while few had masters i.e. 4%.

5. SKILLS OF STAFF MANAGING STUDENT RECORDS AT KTTC REGISTRY

The table below shows the skills of staff managing student records at KTTC registry as per the data collected from the staff of the registry.

Table 3 Skills of staff managing student records in KTTC registry

Types of skills	NO. of staff who use the skills	Usage
Strategic planning	20	74%
Disposal	3	12%
Classification	2	7%
Recording	2	7%
Total	27	100%

Strategic planning is the one which is used frequently by the registry staff. Its usage percentage is 74% this because there is new admissions every day, where disposal has the percentage of 12% because most staff apply skills without consulting anybody while classification and recording has the percentage of 7% respectively that means that it's not frequently used.

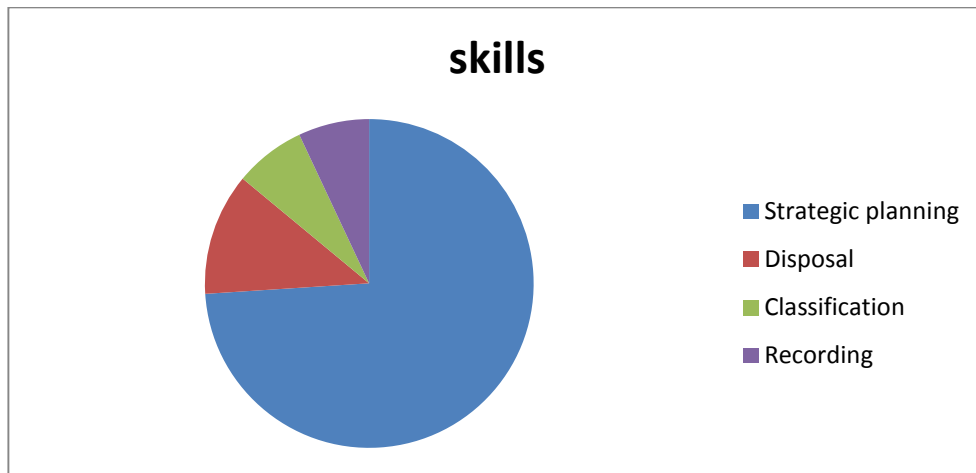


Figure 1 Pie chart showing skills of staff managing student records in KTTC registry

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The researcher found out that the framework of skills and competencies used at the KTTC was not fully utilized for instance there were insufficient staff in the registry and no experienced staff for more than ten years for better registry services. Nevertheless the present electronic records management infrastructure had not matched the increasing number of students of the registry services. Also there was inadequate number of work station, lack of training, equipment and lack of enough skilled manpower to facilitate electronic use.

When properly employed, electronic recordkeeping is an efficient tool for managing the entire record, across many media, because of the unique characteristics (i.e., volatility, metadata, etc.) of electronic records and the complexity of their use. An even more thoughtful application of sound records management principles needs to be given electronic record creation, maintenance, and final disposition. To have an effective electronic records management program, the college Records Management. Analyst and/or Manager--in cooperation with administrative, professional, technical, and administrative support staff must:

- Establish the necessary program elements to manage all records using electronic recordkeeping.
- Use the electronic recordkeeping systems to provide an up-to-date records inventory.
- Make the decisions necessary for developing the college records retention schedule.
- Organize electronic files to maximize their usefulness.
- Implement security measures to protect electronic information.
- Cooperate with the National Archives to preserve the college's historical heritage.
- Apply the approved retention schedule and college procedures to dispose of obsolete electronic records.

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An Assessment of the Framework of Skills and Competencies of Staff Managing Student Records at Kenya
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