

Records Management Guidance: the Provision of References

References for students

The usual retention for most student records is six years after graduation. It is recommended that personal references are limited to this period and that, after that time, a reference consist primarily of confirmation of the facts held on the central, permanent record relating to the student (see JISC guidance above for more on this). It is worth noting that we are only obliged to keep the basic record which we hold permanently on the electronic system anyway. However, we do of course wish to help our graduates with more detailed information such as module content wherever we can. If you have any concerns about fitness to practice then see the University policy on this at: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/students/student-administration-centre/policies-procedures/fitness-to-practise.htm> and the JISC guidance (link in first paragraph above), footnote 4.

Certain departments get frequent requests after six years and so may wish to keep records for longer than this period. The Data Protection Act states that personal information should not be kept for longer than necessary. If you can demonstrate that you need the data for a valid administrative reason and are following a consistent retention period then it should be acceptable to keep them for this longer period. Records should always be confidentially disposed of at the end of the retention period.

References for staff

As with students, the usual retention for most staff files is six years after they leave the institution. Again it is recommended that personal references are limited to this period and that, after that time, a reference consist primarily of confirmation of the facts held on the central, permanent record held by Human Resources.