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Information Classification Regulation

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Contents

Information Classification Regulation

Stellenbosch University
Information Classification Regulation

Type of document:	Regulation
Purpose:	This regulation establishes a classification framework that enables information curators to identify and classify the information for which they are responsible.
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Regulation owner[1]:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global, and Corporate Affairs
Regulation curator[2]:	Senior Director: Information Governance
Keywords:	Information classification, information security, privacy, records management, research data management
Validity:	In case of differences in interpretation, the English version of this regulation will be regarded as the valid version.

1. Introduction

Information is one of Stellenbosch University's most important assets. Stellenbosch University has a duty and responsibility to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its information. Proper classification of these assets serves as the first step to addressing this responsibility. This regulation establishes a classification framework that enables information curators to identify and classify the information for which they are responsible and provide further guidance that may be used in implementing appropriate information management and security practices and controls.

2. Scope and application

This regulation applies to:

- all Stellenbosch University students (both full-time and part-time) and staff (both permanent and temporary), members of institutional statutory bodies, and to the extent applicable or required, third-party collaborators, suppliers, contractors, service providers, and vendors; and
- all University information, regardless of format, including both physical and digital information.

This regulation has been designed to be as inclusive as possible. In terms of this document, any reference to the word or concept of information applies to the word and concept of data. This enables the application of the regulation principles in the broadest sense, regardless of differences in terminology by subject, discipline, or jurisdiction.

This regulation forms part of Stellenbosch University's broader information management framework. Refer to the framework for related policies and regulations and further details on core concepts. Of specific relevance, this regulation should be read alongside the *Stellenbosch University Information Curatorship Regulation*, the *Stellenbosch University Privacy Regulation*, the *Stellenbosch University Research Data Management Regulation*, and the *Stellenbosch University Records Management Policy*.

3. Responsibility for the classification of information

Information curators are responsible for the classification of information within the scope of their responsibility. See the *Stellenbosch University Information Curatorship Regulation* for more details regarding the identification of and responsibilities of information curators.

4. Classification categories

The classification of information requires an integrated approach considering multiple information-related disciplines and regulatory requirements. When classifying information, information curators must consider:

- the **security access classification** most appropriate for the information (see paragraph 5);
- whether the information contains **personal information** (see paragraph 6 and the *Stellenbosch University Privacy Regulation)*; and
- whether the information contains **research data** (see paragraph 7 and the *Stellenbosch University Research Data Management Regulation)*.

5. Security access classification

All information processed within, by, or for Stellenbosch University must be classified in one of the following security access categories: **public**, **internal**, **confidential**, or **restricted**.

Category	Definition
Public	Information that is freely and without reservation made available to the public. Information that, if accessed or disclosed, causes no harm to the University. Integrity of information is important, but not critical. Public-facing information does not require special protection, but some measure of control is required to prevent unauthorised modifications or destruction.
Internal	Information that, if accessed or disclosed, causes minor embarrassment or minor operational inconvenience to the University. Integrity of information is critical. Reasonable information security controls should be applied to internal information.
Confidential	Information that, if accessed or disclosed, causes a significant short-term impact on the operations or tactical objectives of the University. Integrity of information is critical. The highest information security controls should be applied to confidential information.
Restricted	Information that, if accessed or disclosed, causes a serious impact on long-term strategic objectives of the University, or puts the survival of the University at risk. Integrity of information is critical. The highest information security controls should be applied to restricted information.

Information curators must ensure that internal, confidential, or restricted information is clearly marked as such. Information curators must additionally direct and monitor the implementation of mechanisms to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information within the scope of their responsibilities. See the *Stellenbosch University Information Curatorship Regulation* for more details regarding information curator responsibilities.

6. Personal information

Personal information means information relating to an identifiable, living individual or identifiable, existing company. The South African Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013) establishes specific responsibilities for the handling of personal information which need to be considered in addition to the security access classification of information. Information curators must recognise when they are dealing with personal information, classify that information as personal information, and document how it was obtained, where it is stored, and how it is secured in accordance with the security access classifications above. See the *Stellenbosch University Information Curatorship Regulation* and the *Stellenbosch University Privacy Regulation* for more details.

7. Research data

Research data may have additional legal, ethical, and contractual obligations stemming from the relevant South African and international legislation regarding research data management. Information curators must recognise when they are dealing with research data, classify that information as research data, and ensure the appropriate handling of that information in accordance with the principles governing research data management and protection of research subjects as detailed within the S*tellenbosch University Research Data Management Regulation*. See the S*tellenbosch University Research Data Management Regulation* for the full definition of research data.

8. Non-compliance with this regulation

Failure to apply and explain the principles within the University's information-related policies and regulations may render the University or the individuals, involved with information processing, non-compliant with South African or international information-related legislation. This non-compliance may lead to fines and claims against Stellenbosch University and/or the individuals involved under South African legislation. Non-compliance may further expose the University to significant reputational harm, and data subjects to unnecessary risk and harm.

Based on the nature of the non-compliance, Stellenbosch University may execute its information breach procedures.

Stellenbosch University may take disciplinary action against staff or students for non-compliance with this regulation. Stellenbosch University may act, as allowed by contractual agreement or relevant legislation, against members of institutional statutory bodies and third-party suppliers and vendors for non-compliance with this regulation.

9. Control over this regulation

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy, Global, and Corporate Affairs owns this regulation and is thereby responsible for the existence, implementation, monitoring of compliance, and reporting compliance and non-compliance of this regulation to the University's Council and Rectorate.