

## Electronic Lab Notebooks (ELNs) as University records

Lab Notebooks have long been used at the University by staff and students to record their lab experiments, observations, analysis and conclusions. Lab notebooks not only are a reflection of how the laboratory work has been conducted, but also as primary evidence for protecting University's invention and intellectual property.

In the recent years, electronic lab notebooks (ELNs) have been adopted by some area of the University in preference to paper bound lab notebooks. Lab notebooks recorded either on electronic media or paper, are an integral part of the University records, therefore must be managed in accordance with the State Records Act 1998.

### Responsibilities

Stakeholders	Responsible for
Research portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business owner;</li> <li>• Training, ongoing monitoring and governance;</li> <li>• Strategic direction and deployment</li> <li>• Setting requirements on system security</li> </ul>
Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and backup of ELNs adopted as the University wide solution.</li> <li>• Ensure that ELNs are adequately hosted, backed up and kept securely within the Australian territory</li> </ul>
Primary investigator, lab head and/or Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring ELNs have been adequately used to record their laboratory work.</li> </ul>
Associate Dean Research or the Head of Department, or equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and authorise the access to ELNs</li> </ul>
Individual staff , student or affiliate (verify with Deborah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are responsible for the actions made under their Unikey log-in, and</li> <li>• Adequate use of ELN to timely and accurately record their laboratory work.</li> </ul>
Archives and records management services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing guidance and requirements for records in ELNs to be managed in accordance with <u>Standard on digital recordkeeping</u>;</li> <li>• Ensure that the records in ELNs are retained in accordance with the State Records Act.</li> </ul>
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trouble shoot, first level of support</li> <li>• Maintain relationship with the system provider</li> </ul>

## General rules and principles:

- Sections 7(2) and 11 of the [Research Data Management Policy 2014](#), have stipulated the definition and ownership of lab note books, and set in principle that the ELN(s) are integral part of the University records, therefore must be managed in accordance with the [Standard on digital recordkeeping](#).
- To safe guard University's intellectual property, and protect the University records from unauthorised access or disclosure, ELNs must be hosted and backed up within the Australia territory.
- Any instances where there is need for the ELNs records and its metadata leave Australia, written authorisations from the Manager, Archives and Records Management Services must be sought prior to these instances taking place.
- Individuals have the choice over which medium of lab notebook to use, either paper bound or ELN. To ensure the recordkeeping is done in its entirety, not fragmented, it is highly recommended that the users adopt one medium only, not using both mediums the same time to record their lab work. For example, if you are using an ELN to record your lab work, and you occasionally make some handwritten note or drawing, you should scan the handwritten material, and insert that image into your ELN. Vice versa, if you prefer use a paper bound notebook to record your lab work, and you use computer to generate some data or information electronically, you should print these entries out and have them inserted in the respective section of your paper lab note book.
- Staff, students or affiliates are obliged to follow the best practice provided by the Research portfolio, so the ELNs entries are:
  - a. made consistently and promptly,
  - b. documented in a meaningful, in context and with all the necessary components, and
  - c. signed appropriately whenever necessary
- If the owners of the ELNs have parted the University, the ELNs they have used or created remain in the University electronic lab notebook system. A copy of their ELNs could be made subject to University approval.
- ELNs are University records, therefore the deletion of lab notebook or parts of it, must be applied, documented and authorised by the Archives and Records Management Services.