

TITLE PAGE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE APPLICATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT
POLICIES AND STANDARDS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT
IN MUTARE:**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Records provide evidence of human activities. They document the history and culture of organisations as well as guarantee the rights of citizens. The study investigated the application of records management policies and standards at the Department of Local Government in Mutare. Basically a policy ensures that official records are created and captured. It ensures that government records with enduring value are stored in conditions which are not adverse to their permanent preservation and are properly arranged so that appropriate access to such records is possible. The research used the life cycle concept of a record to check on the standards being applied to the records. Standards are a descriptive benchmark that an organisation can use to assess its record keeping practices.

The case study method was used to form a narrow and sharpened focus on the records management practices of the Local Government Department. The method allowed the use of observation, interactive discussions, questionnaires and reference to documents as data gathering tools. The use of multiple sources of information was essential to corroborate evidence from other sources and to verify the authenticity of the collected data. The gathered data was interpreted using description, data matrices, tables and figures.

The results showed there was neither policy nor standards in operation in the conduct of records management. There were in place some unwritten procedures whose date could not be ascertained that gave a semblance of order in the management of records. The role of National Archives of Zimbabwe's supervisory role to government departments was scrutinised. The National Archives of Zimbabwe Department was operating on outdated legislation that did not provide for an effective management of public records. Limited resources at both government departments and the National Archives Department also contributed to poor records management practices. The lack of both policy and standards could be resulting in the Local Government Department failing to enjoy the benefits of proper records management for instance there could be escalation of storage costs because records are not disposed of on time and inefficient utilisation of the available space. There could also be loss of information due to failure to capture records in a systematic way.