



ONLINE FACULTY SYSTEM

File Storage Strategy and Retention Policy



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ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

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Introduction

As you might be aware, storing electronic documents in the Cloud (i.e. online) so that they might be accessible at all times is increasingly expensive. Like many other organisations, the Archbishops' Council has moved to a storage policy whereby electronic files are hosted in the Cloud for only as long as it is deemed absolutely necessary. Once a file is no longer required on a regular basis, it is removed from the Cloud and stored on dedicated servers (meaning a single computer in a network – this could be your office's network for example).

In line with the Archbishops' Council's policy, we have developed a three-staged storage strategy for the Online Faculty System. Please note that the Online Faculty System will not change the Church's file retention policy – which files to keep and for how long – but will change the way files are kept.

File Storage Strategy

Stage one: Cloud Storage

Electronic documents supplied with a Faculty application will be stored in the Cloud (i.e. on the Online Faculty System) for as long as a case is active. Once a case becomes dormant, the supporting documents will be removed from the online system and moved to a dedicated server to save on costs (see Stage two: Dedicated server storage).

System Status: Proposal in Preparation

In cases where applicants have yet to seek DAC advice, supporting documents and images will remain accessible on the system for one year after the last date the proposal was accessed.

The applicant and the DAC will receive an email notification to inform them that they have one month before the supporting documents and images are removed from the online system and the case abandoned.

Applicants and/or the DAC should decide whether or not to save the documents by downloading them from the online system and storing them on their personal or office computer.

System Status: Ready for Formal Application

In cases where a proposal has been sent to the DAC for formal advice, supporting documents and images will remain accessible on the online system for as long as the Notification of Advice (form 2) remains valid – i.e. 24 months.

Applicants and DACs will be notified by email one month before the expiration of Form 2's advice so that they might either reapply to the DAC for advice or apply to the courts for Faculty. If no action is

taken, the supporting documents and images will be removed from the system and moved to a dedicated server and the case abandoned.

Applicants and/or the DAC should decide whether or not to save the documents by downloading them from the online system and storing them on their personal or office computer.

System Status: Post-Determination (Faculty Issued)

In cases where a Faculty is approved, supporting documents and images will remain accessible on the online system for as long as a Faculty application is active. They will be removed from the system one month after the applicant has completed the Practical Completion (Form 7).

Applicants, DACs, and Registrars will be notified by email one month prior to the automatic removal of the documents so that they might save them by downloading them from the online system and storing them on their personal or office computer.

The Petition and the Faculty forms will remain accessible on the online system permanently as these are not supporting documents, but form part of the core functionalities of the Online Faculty System.

System Status: Post-Determination (Faculty Refused)

In cases where a Faculty is refused, supporting documents and images will be removed from the system one month after the applicant has been notified.

Applicants, DACs, and Registrars will be notified one month prior to the automatic removal of documents so that they might save them by downloading them from the online system and storing them on their personal or office computer.

The Petition and the Faculty forms will remain accessible on the online system permanently as these are not supporting documents, but form part of the core functionalities of the Online Faculty System.

*Please note that this policy will be revisited once the Online Faculty System has been developed to deal with and process appeals.

Stage two: Dedicated Server Storage

Historically, Diocesan Offices and Registries have stored paper files locally on a number of Church related matters including Faculties. This has proved a useful tool when researching background information and past development proposals. The Archbishops' Council has no intention of changing this policy which is inscribed in law:

Schedule 2 of the 1991 Measure requires DAC to develop and maintain a repository of records relating to the conservation, repair and alteration of places of worship, churchyards and burial grounds and other material (including inspection reports, inventories, technical information and photographs) relating to the work of the committee.

As indicated previously, we are not bringing any changes to the Church of England's file retention policy. This means that we still advise that DAC agendas, minutes and reports are retained permanently; registers for petitions for Faculty are retained permanently; and individual case files are retained for 20 years after the date of the last transaction then moved to the Diocesan Record Office.

Click here to access the current advice and guidance from the Church of England's Record Centre (CERC) <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchcommissioners/church-administration/librariesandarchives/recordsmanagementguides.aspx>

What is changing, however, is the format in which these records are kept and the location where they are kept.

Therefore, **once the supporting documents and images are removed from the Online Faculty System, each diocese will have the responsibility to manage their electronic records on their own dedicated server.**

A dedicated server will most likely be an internal office network. Files stored on most internal office networks are not accessible via the Internet, but are immediately accessible to any computer connected to that network.

The Church of England's Record Centre (CERC) is currently updating its guidance and advice on storing electronic files on dedicated servers. Your own office IT staff might also be of assistance.

Stage three: Archiving in Diocesan Record Offices

Dioceses will need to approach their Diocesan Record Office to discuss the archiving of digital media for eventual long-term preservation.

Click here for the current advice and guidance from the Church of England's Record Centre (CERC): <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchcommissioners/church-administration/librariesandarchives/recordsmanagementguides.aspx>

The Church of England's Record Centre is updating their guidance and advice on archiving electronic media.