

# RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE OF DEFINITIONS

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## 1 PURPOSE

To provide ready access to definitions of terms used in records management and to supplement those terms provided in the Records Management Policy.

## 2 SCHEDULE

**Access Direction:** a direction made by a public office to open or close a series, group or class of records in the open access period to public access.

- An open to public access (OPA) direction allows access to anyone.
- A closed to public access (CPA) direction closes the records for a specified period. A CPA direction does not affect other entitlements of access.

Access directions are made according to guidelines issued by the Attorney General. Public Offices can also grant early access to records that are less than 30 years old. (See State Records Act 1998 NSW Part 6).

**Accountability:** the principle that individuals, organisations, and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others.

**Active Records:** those records required for the day-to-day functioning of an agency or person. Also referred to as current records. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 461.

Records in frequent use, regardless of their date of creation, required for current business relating to the administration or function of the organisation. Such records are usually maintained in office space and equipment close to hand.

**Appraisal:** the process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations. AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.3

**Arrangement:** the intellectual and physical process of putting archives and records into order in accordance with accepted archival principles, particularly those of provenance and original order. If, after detailed examination, the original order is identified as a totally haphazard accumulation making the records irretrievable (but not an odd, unordered or difficult arrangement), the archivist may (after documenting the original order) impose an arrangement that presents the records objectively and facilitates their use. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 464. See '**Description**'.

**Closed part:** that part of a file that has been separated from the active file because the file has become too large for easy handling. When a closed part is created, a 'closed part' sheet is attached to the file as the last folio so that no further documents are added to the file.

**Consignment:** a group of records that belong to the same series, need to be kept for the same length of time, have the same storage requirements and are transferred at the same time.

**Control:** Control systems and processes associated with records management include:

- registration - which provides evidence of the existence of records in a recordkeeping system;
- classification - which allows for appropriate grouping, naming, security protection, user permissions and retrieval;
- indexing - which allocates attributes or codes to particular records to assist in their retrieval; and
- tracking - which provides evidence of where a record is located, what action is outstanding on a record, who has seen a record, when such access took place and the recordkeeping transactions that have been undertaken on the record.

AS 4390 Part4 Clause 1

**Conversion:** the process of changing records from one medium to another or from one format to another. The process of transferring records from one medium to the next is sometimes also referred to as 'refreshing'. See '**Migration**'.

**Corporate Governance:** the processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the organisation. AS 8000 Clause 1.5.1.

**Counter Disaster Plan:** a plan for measures to be taken for disaster prevention, disaster response and recovery and vital records protection.

**Custody:** the physical location of the records or archives. Custody does not always include legal ownership, or the right to control access to records. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 466.

**Deaccessioning:** the process of removing material from the care and custody of an archives, either because the material has been reappraised and found to be unsuitable for the archives' holdings, or because the legal owner has requested its return, or because it has been agreed to transfer it to another archives. Deaccessioning is a serious matter which requires careful consideration and documentation. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 466.

**Description:** the process of recording information about the nature and content of records in archival custody. The description identifies such features as provenance, arrangement, format and contents, and presents them in standardised form. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 467. See '**Arrangement**'.

**Digital records:** records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment. (AS 4390 Part1 Clause 4.13):

Records capable of being processed in a computer system and/or stored at any instant in a medium which requires electronic or computer equipment to retrieve them. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 469.

**Disposal:** a range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from recordkeeping systems. They may also include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records. AS 4390 Part1 Clause 4.9.

**Disposal Authority:** see '**Retention and disposal authority**'.

**Disposal classes:** classes of records performing or recording similar activities and therefore having the same retention period and disposal action. AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.11.

**Disposal trigger:** the event from which the disposal date is calculated, for example 'last action' or 'expiry of contract'.

**Document:** recorded information or object which can be treated as a unit. AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.10.

Document means any record of information, and includes:

- anything on which there is writing, or
  - anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols or perforations having a meaning for the person qualified to interpret them, or
  - anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else, or
  - a map, plan, drawing or photograph.
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- Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)  
Some documents are records because they have participated in a business transaction, or were created to document such a transaction. Conversely, some documents are not records because they do not function as evidence of a business transaction.

**Electronic Document:** a collection of electronic data which may be produced by the creation of original data (typically a text document, small database, spreadsheet, graphic created within the office environment) or by the combination of existing data (which may include data extracted from data files and databases). It should be managed as a unique entity by means of a standard set of descriptors.  
Information Exchange Steering Committee, *Management of Electronic Documents in the Australian Public Sector*, p. 12.

**Ephemeral Records:** documents that have only short-term value to Macquarie University with little or no ongoing administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential or historical value.

**Evidence:** information that tends to prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term. Australian Standard AS 4390-1996, Part1. Clause 4.14

**File:** (n.) an organised unit of documents, accumulated during current use and kept together because they deal with the same subject, activity or transaction and which may or may not be fastened together with or without a cover.

(v.) The action of placing documents in a predetermined location according to an overall scheme of control.

Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p.470

A file is a collection of documents, which show organisational activities through an

identifiable sequence of transactions. Individual documents on the file have relationships with each other, for example a letter and a reply, and a reply to that etc, which are preserved by being kept on file in the right order and are part of the evidence in the records. A file can be physical or electronic.

**File part:** A continuation of the same activity or transactions, placed on a new file because the previous file (closed part) contained too many documents to be easily handled. A file part generally has the same title followed by a part number (eg part 2), but a different file number to the closed part.

**Information Asset:** a body of information, defined and managed as a single unit so it can be understood, shared, protected and exploited effectively. Information assets have recognisable and manageable value, risk, content and lifecycles. (National Archives UK [Factsheet](#) Information Asset).

**Information Management:** enables organisations to control and administer information assets throughout their lifecycle - that is, to capture, distribute, use, maintain and dispose of data and information in a secure, efficient and accountable manner. Department of Finance and Services, *Information Management: A common approach*, p.7.

**Information systems:** organised collections of hardware, software, supplies, policies, procedures and people, which store, process and provide access to information. AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.17.

**Intellectual Control:** the control established over the informational content of records and archives resulting from ascertaining and documenting their provenance, and from the processes of arrangement and description. Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 472.

**Metadata:** data describing data and data systems. In records management, recordkeeping metadata is data that describes the context, content and structure of records and their management through time. AS ISO 15489 Part 1 Clause 3.12

**Migration:** the process of moving records from one system to another, while maintaining the records' authenticity, integrity, reliability and useability. **See Conversion**

**Normal Administrative Practice:** disposal of ephemeral or facilitative records without the formal authorisation of State Records. See State Records Act (NSW) s. 22 and *State Records Regulation 2010*.

**Open Access Period:** the State Records Act 1998 entitles the public to access records over 30 years of age (the open access period). Public offices are required to make access directions for all records in the open access period.

**Original order:** the order in which records and archives were kept when in active use, i.e. the order of accumulation as they were created, maintained and used. The principle of original order requires that the original order be preserved or reconstructed unless, after detailed examination, the original order is identified as a totally haphazard accumulation making the records irretrievable (but not an odd, unordered or difficult arrangement). Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 475.

**Protection:** the processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic records through time.

**Recordkeeping:** the making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.19

Recordkeeping includes the following:

- (a) the creation of records in the course of business activity and the means to ensure the creation of adequate records;
- (b) the design, establishment and operation of recordkeeping systems; and
- (c) the management of records used in business (traditionally regarded as the domain of records management) and as archives (traditionally regarded as the domain of archives administration).

AS 4390 Part 3 Foreword

**Recordkeeping Requirements:** requirements arising from regulatory sources, business needs and community expectations that identify the types of records that should be created and the management framework needed in order to have, and accountably manage, all the business information that is necessary for an organisation.

**Records continuum:** The whole extent of a record's existence. Refers to a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the creation of records (and before creation, in the design of recordkeeping systems), through to the preservation and use of records as archives.

AS 4390 Part 1 Clause 4.22

**Retention and Disposal Authority:** documents authorised by State Records NSW that set out appropriate retention periods for classes of records. There are two main types:

- *Functional* retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records unique to a specific organisation.
- *General* retention and disposal authorities authorise the retention and disposal of records common to more than one organisation.

Such records may include:

- general administrative records
- common records that relate to unique functions, and
- records relating to the unique functions of like organisations such as local councils, universities, and public health services.

**Retention Period:** The period of time, usually based on an estimate of the frequency of current and future use, and taking into account statutory and regulatory provisions, that records need to be retained before their final disposal. Sometimes also used to indicate the length of time records are to be retained in offices before being transferred to secondary storage.

Ellis (ed), *Keeping Archives*, p. 479

**Secondary Storage:** a low-cost, warehouse-style repository or storage area where inactive or semi-active records are housed and referenced pending their ultimate destruction or transfer to archives.

**Sentencing:** the process of identifying and classifying records according to a defined Retention and Disposal Authority and applying the disposal action specified in it.

**State Archive:** a State record that the State Records Authority of NSW has control of under the State Records Act.

**State Records NSW:** the NSW State Government’s archives and records management authority. It manages the NSW State archives collection and sets the rules and provides guidance on the management of official records.

### 3 NOTES

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:Ask.memory@mq.edu.au">Ask.memory@mq.edu.au</a>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Implementation Officer</b>	Director: Strategic Planning and Information and Chief Information Officer
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Approval Authority / Authorities</b>	General Counsel
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<b>3.8</b>	<b>Amendment History</b>	27 February 2020 – Approval Authority updated to General Counsel in accordance with University Delegations of Authority.  29 May 2017 - updated Approval Authority from Chief Operating Officer to Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Policy Authorisation</b>	Records and Information Management Policy