



University Recordkeeping Manual

GLOSSARY

Archives and Records Management Services
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access: in a records management context, to provide access means to permit or facilitate the examination of or access to documents or information. Under some conditions, access may be withheld.

Active records see **current records**

Adequate: *Records* should be adequate for the purposes for which they are kept. Thus, a major initiative will be extensively documented, while a routine administrative action can be documented with an identifiable minimum of information. There should be adequate *evidence* of the conduct of *business activity* to be able to account for that conduct. (AS 4390, 1996, Part 1, Clause 4.2)

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, 1996, Part 1, Clause 4.3)

Archival quality: refers to those qualities in materials (papers, file covers, boxes etc) which makes them suitable for creating or storing archival records. Paper should be acid free (pH 7+) and have longevity. Non paper storage media must be inert, for example, only certain plastics such as *mylar* should be used.

Archives: those records appraised as having permanent value *or* the repository in which they are stored

Archiving: a term commonly used to describe the activity of removing electronic data from active systems to some sort of system storage (eg. a computer tape)

ARMS: Archives and Records Management Services

Audit: in a recordkeeping context, an audit can mean

- (a) checking data integrity of recordkeeping system by undertaking location audits; usually conducted on-site using the portable bar code reader
- (b) checking the quality of classification or file titling
- (c) checking for security breaches on the RM system

Classification: systematically applying controlled language to describe files and documents and to apply security levels.

Cull: to selectively remove some records (files, documents, data) from the system because they are no longer current and have been retained for the required period according to authorised disposal schedules.

Current records are those which are still in use and which contribute to the day-to-day function of the University or of a position within the University. See also **active records**

Custody: the physical location of records and archives or the responsibility for records and archives.

Disaster plan: a written document setting out the procedures for preventing, minimising or recovering from disasters. The plan should also identify *vital records* within the organisation.

Disposal – In a recordkeeping context, disposal does NOT mean destruction. Disposal is the action taken at the end of the record's retention period and can mean permanent retention as an archive or destruction.

Disposal Schedule – see **General Disposal Authority**

Electronic records – are those created and stored within and communicated and retrieved by electronic systems

File – a collection of related documents, usually stored chronologically. Often contained within a cover but can be electronic.

FOI – see **Freedom of Information**

Folio – a numbered page within a file or document

Freedom of Information (FOI) – the right of a member of the public (including employees and students of the University) to apply under the NSW Freedom of Information Act for access to documents.

Functional thesaurus: is a thesaurus of keywords which covers the organisation's particular functions and which is used to name files and documents in a consistent way so as to facilitate creation, retrieval and reporting.

GDA – General Disposal Authority

General Disposal Authority (GDA) – Disposal schedules approved by the NSW State Records Board and covering records relating to a particular function or functional area, for example, financial or accounting records, personnel records etc. GDAs identify functions and activities, describe the type of records associated with each and prescribe a disposal action.

Intellectual control – documented systems which manage the creation, location and disposal of records

Metadata: data about data and data systems. In electronic recordkeeping, this means data that must be captured along with electronic records to enable

them to be understood and to support their management. Examples of metadata tags are: date created, location, creating agency, title etc.

NAP – see Normal Administrative Practice

Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) – where records of little or short term value or which are purely facilitative with no continuing value can be destroyed under the State Records Act when no longer required. See expanded definition on page 2 of Part 7 of the University Recordkeeping Manual.

Preservation: the maintenance of records in such a way as to make them accessible for their required lifespan. Factors include: storage conditions and media; access and handling etc.

Records – are created or received by and document the function or business of, the agency

Records continuum: the whole extent of a record's existence. Refers to a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of creation of records (and before creation, in the design of recordkeeping systems), through to the preservation and use of records as archives. (AS 4390, 1996, Part 1, Clause 4.22)

Records Management: the discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations. (AS 4390, 1996, Part 1, Clause 4.23)

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

RMS – Records Management Services

Vital Records – “Those records that are essential for the ongoing business of an agency, and without which the agency could not continue to function effectively”.