

RECORDS APPRAISAL AND SCHEDULING

Records retention schedules are the primary mechanism by which records are managed throughout their life cycle. The records retention schedule, sometimes also called a records disposition authority or a records retention and disposition schedule, is a control document that:

- identifies all the records created or maintained by a public service organisation or an administrative unit of a public service organisation;
- notes the appraisal decisions that have been taken in respect of them;
- specifies the periods for which they are to be retained and their place of custody during those prescribed retention periods;
- authorises their disposal at the appropriate time and indicates the disposal action to be taken.

It is the key to ensuring that valueless records do not accumulate in registries, offices and records storage spaces and that records of enduring value are identified and properly preserved.

In the absence of records retention schedules, many record-keeping problems can occur. When public service agencies have no direction as to how long records should be retained, files are closed only when they become too bulky and not by means of any systematic criteria, leading to difficulties with the retrieval of any but the most recent documentation and the accumulation of records in registries, offices and other storage areas. The build-up of records ultimately creates space problems for public service agencies. To release space, they often end up destroying records on an *ad hoc* basis, which creates a risk for the agency, its employees and the public, should the records be needed.

A planned programme of records retention scheduling, leading to timely and appropriate retention and disposal of records, prevents these problems from occurring. Systematic records retention scheduling supports the efficient management of records throughout their life cycle by ensuring that records no longer required are responsibly destroyed to release storage space, rather than destroyed as an *ad hoc* exercise when a public service agency has run out of storage space or when it must relocate its offices, and that records which need to be kept are retained in an appropriate place of storage.

Records retention schedules are the end-product of the appraisal of records. Appraisal, which is sometimes called 'evaluation' or 'selection', is the process of determining the value of records for further use, for whatever purpose, and the length of time that value will continue. It has two objectives:

- (i) to determine what records need to be kept for their continuing use to their creators (e.g. the finite use that records may have for transacting business or as evidence of business transactions) and how long; and
- (ii) to determine what records have enduring value for other purposes that merit their preservation in the Archives.

To appraise records, the appraiser must have knowledge of what the records are, who created them and how they relate to the creating agency's functions and to other records. Based on an assessment of the value of records, retention periods and disposal options are set. These are then documented in a records retention schedule.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL

Before appraisal can be carried out properly, it is necessary for the appraisers to know the functions that the records were intended to serve and the context of other records created as part of the same process. This knowledge comes from two sources:

- (i) information about the records themselves; and
- (ii) information about the processes that led to the creation of the records, usually from records creators.

In public service agencies without a planned programme of records retention scheduling where backlogs of unidentified records have built up, the first step in introducing a planned programme of records retention scheduling is to gather information about the records to be appraised, scheduled, and either retained for a further period or disposed. This can be accomplished by means of a total inventorying of the records in the public service agency. A sample records inventory form appears at Appendix 1. Once the inventorying exercise is complete, there should be no need to repeat it, unless the agency continues to allow records to build up in an uncontrolled manner. Instead, information about the records will come from the up-to-date file indices maintained by records staff.

In the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, semi-current and non-current records had accumulated over time in registries, offices and other storage areas creating a severe space crisis. To achieve control over these records and thereby alleviate the space crisis, a 'clean-up' exercise was conducted involving the inventorying of all government records. The inventorying exercise facilitated the appraisal of the government's records, which, in turn, led to the development of approved records retention schedules, and the identification of semi-current and non-current records that were ready for removal from registries and offices or for final disposition.

In order to ensure that knowledge about the processes which have led to the creation of the records is available for appraisal, records creators or persons with adequate knowledge about the processes will need to be involved in assessing the value of the records being appraised. It is not necessary that the actual persons who created the records perform the appraisal; any person(s) who continues to perform or knows about the function or processes for which the records were originally created may contribute to the appraisal of the records.

WHAT TO APPRAISE

When faced with a mountain of documents or files to appraise, the task can seem daunting; however, it can be made manageable by appraising records at the level of the series, rather than item by item or file by file.

A series is the level of arrangement of files and other records of a public service agency or unit of a public service agency that brings together those that relate to the same function or activity, have a common form or share some other relationship arising from their creation, receipt or use. Examples of records series commonly found in public service agencies include:

- personnel files;
- stock books;
- registry subject files.

It is because of their relationship to one another that records forming part of the same series are usually relatively homogeneous, as in the case of the first two examples. By extension, it is the homogeneity of the records in these series that gives them a similar value.

In other cases, as in the example of the registry subject files, series will not be homogeneous. When this is the case, appraisal will have to be done at the highest level at which a homogeneous relationship between the records can be identified, such as at the level of the sub-series or file unit. For example, within a series of registry files, there may be files relating to conferences and seminars that, because of their common subject, have a similar value and therefore may be grouped together for the purposes of appraisal and records retention scheduling. Rarely is it necessary, or advisable for that matter, to appraise records file by file or item by item.

ADMINISTRATIVE VERSUS OPERATIONAL RECORDS

It is often useful when appraising and developing records retention schedules to distinguish between operational and administrative records. Operational records are those created and maintained in support of a public service organisation's mandate, functions or operating activities. They are unique to each organisation. For example, patient files in a hospital are operational records, as are programme production files at a public service broadcasting agency. Owing to the uniqueness of operational records, it is necessary to appraise and develop records retention schedules separately for each series or group of operational records.

Records created and maintained to *support* the operation of a public service organisation, such as those relating to financial management, personnel management and building maintenance, are common to and found in all offices. These common 'housekeeping' records are administrative and relate to a wide range of subjects (e.g. mail; typing; information technology; public relations; security; buildings and property; equipment and supplies; accounts; audits; budgets; contracts; grants; official travel; salaries; grading; pensions; benefits; health and safety; hours of work; labour relations; leave; recruitment; promotions and postings; and training.

The task of appraising and scheduling administrative records is always simpler than appraising and scheduling operational records because each agency will have the same basic kinds of administrative records as the next. Moreover, public service agencies of all types tend to have the same kinds of administrative records. Consequently, records retention schedules developed by one public service organisation for their administrative records can be used as a guideline in developing an organisation-wide records retention schedule for the administrative records of another public service organisation.

In the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, in order to establish government-wide retention periods and disposal actions for administrative records, the Ministry and Department Records Committees were advised to submit lists of homogeneous groups of administrative records (e.g. one group of administrative files might consist of files relating to co-operation and liaison with outside agencies or organisations, while another group of administrative files might relate to agency equipment purchases) to a government-wide committee set up to appraise and schedule all administrative records. Once the committee has completed the appraisal and scheduling of administrative records, its recommendations are to be documented in an omnibus Records Retention and Disposition Authority and submitted for final approval.

HOW TO APPRAISE

Traditionally, there are considered to be two general types of values that records may have:

- (i) primary value; and
- (ii) secondary value.

Primary value is the continuing value of records for the transaction of the business of the creating agency or a successor in function or as evidence of those transactions. Secondary value is the enduring value that records have for purposes other than the transaction of the business for which they were created.

ASSESSING PRIMARY VALUE

In the traditional appraisal model, primary value is further sub-divided into:

- administrative value;
- financial value; and
- legal value.

Administrative value is the primary value of records for the continuance of the administration or operations of the creating agency or a successor in function. Some records, such as administrative memoranda, have relatively short-term administrative value; others, such as statistical or internal reports, may have long-term administrative value. The following list of questions can be used as guidelines to determine if records still have administrative value to an agency; if the answer to these questions is 'yes', the records no longer have administrative value:

- Have the documents ceased to be used for the purpose for which they were originally created?
- Has the original function of the documents been served?
- Are staff preserving these documents simply because it is the easy thing to do or what they are used to doing?
- Is the business or activity referred to in the documents finished?
- Are the documents being preserved simply to protect staff members from potential administrative reproach?
- Could one find the same document elsewhere, for example in the form of a duplicate?

Financial (or fiscal) value is the primary value of records for the continuance of the financial business of the creating agency or a successor in function or as evidence of the financial business of the agency as may be needed, for example, to conduct an audit. These records may include ledgers, budgets, invoices, cancelled cheques, payroll records and vouchers. The following list of questions can be used as guidelines to determine if records continue to have financial value to an agency; if the answer to these questions is 'yes', the records no longer have financial value:

- Has the original purpose of the document been achieved?
- Is the financial transaction to which the document relates completed?
- Are the rights of the agency relative to the financial transaction to which the document relates protected?
- Have the rights of all parties to the financial transaction to which the document relates been protected or served?
- Could one find the same document elsewhere, for example in the form of a duplicate?

Finally, legal value is the primary value of records for the continuance of the legal business of the creating agency or a successor in function or for the protection of its legal rights or those of its employees or third parties. Patents, contracts, property titles, and legal opinions are all examples of records that will have continuing legal value to a public service agency. The following list of questions can be used as guidelines to determine if records continue to have legal value to an

agency; if the answer to these questions is 'yes', the records no longer have legal value:

- Is the special legal matter with which the document is concerned completed?
- Has the document achieved its original legal purpose?
- Are the rights of the agency protected even if the documents are destroyed?
- Are the rights of all individuals that might be affected by the matter dealt with in the documents protected even if the documents are destroyed?
- Could one find the same document elsewhere, for example in the form of a duplicate?

Legislation or policies may prescribe the retention of particular categories of record for a specified or indefinite period. In addition, other legislation, usually called a statute of limitations, may prescribe time limits for bringing certain types of legal action before the court. A statute of limitations may work in different ways in different circumstances. For example:

- The time limit on bringing a criminal action may not be the same as that for bringing a civil action, and in each case there may be different time limits for different types of actions. For example, under the St. Kitts and Nevis Limitations Act, actions of contract and tort cannot be brought after six years, while actions upon a specialty can be pursued for up to twelve years.
- The time limit on bringing an action may not be from the date of the record to which it relates. For example, the time limit for an action for breach of contract may run from the date of completion of the contract, not from the date of the contract itself.
- Different time limits may apply depending upon the form of the record itself. For example, the time limit for an action for breach of contract may be longer for a contract under seal than for one under signature.
- In some types of action relating to the affairs of minors, such as medical liability, the time limit may not begin to run until the minor reaches the age of legal responsibility.

- In other types of action, such as health and safety, there may be no time limit.

ASSESSING SECONDARY VALUE

In assessing secondary value, sometimes called 'historical' or 'archival' value, the appraiser is determining if the records have enduring and lasting value for society in general. Secondary value will include the value of the records for research in such areas as politics, diplomatic history, military studies, administration, economics, social studies, cultural studies, scientific research, local studies, language studies, geography, and a wide range of other academic disciplines. In this context, research should be interpreted very widely and include not only academic research in any discipline but also personal research for recreational or practical purposes. It also encompasses the use of the records as evidence for the long-term accountability of the government to its citizens.

Secondary value can be further sub-divided into:

- evidential value;
- informational value; and
- intrinsic value.

Evidential value is the secondary value of records providing evidence of the origins, structure, functions, procedures and transactions of the creating agency. This is not to be confused with probative value or legal admissibility. Rather, it refers to the value of the records by virtue of their containing evidence of an agency's purpose, functions and activities. The following is a list of categories of records possessing evidential value which should be retained:

- records relating to the origins of an agency;
- records relating to the organisation of an agency, such as organisation charts;
- records relating to an agency's structures, functions, policies, programmes and activities, such as its enabling act; minutes; agendas and papers of internal committees or government-wide committees for which the agency provided the secretariat; directives; policy and procedures manuals; annual reports; planning and programming files; official publications; and advertising material related to an agency's functions;

- records that make it possible to measure the impact or effectiveness of an agency's programmes or activities, such as evaluation reports, studies, and pertinent correspondence;
- records that illustrate an agency's internal operation and are related to:
 - (i) the delegation of authority;
 - (ii) relationships of power; or
 - (iii) trends in thought, such as files produced or belonging to influential individuals within the administrative apparatus;
- records relating to the formulation of legislation and policy arising from the core functions of an agency, including both successful and unsuccessful programmes; and
- control documents to be retained so long as the records to which they relate, for example: a copy of each version of an agency's file classification and coding scheme; copies of all records retention schedules for an agency's records; correspondence registers that continue to be the only or main means of reference to records that have been scheduled for retention; indexes to registers; and software manuals and other systems documentation essential to the continued use of electronic records scheduled for retention.

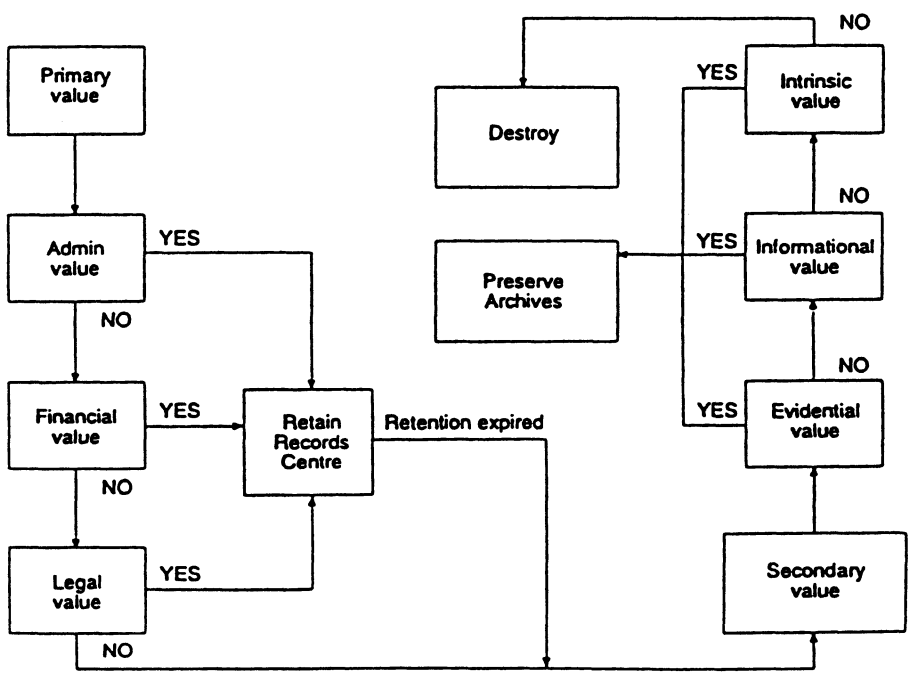
Informational value consists of the secondary value of records for reference and research deriving from the information contained in them and often unrelated to their original purpose. There are a number of tests by which informational value may be judged:

- the uniqueness of the information; it is not necessary to retain records if the information in them is wholly or substantially available in a variety of other sources and forms, for example, if the same information could be found in:
 - records in other formats (photographs, maps or plans) or media (microfilm or electronic);
 - in other records of the agency, including regional or local office files;
 - in the records of other agencies; and

- in published works;
- the form of the information and of the records; in general, the more compact or accessible the form, the more likely that the records should be retained. However, there will be exceptions to this rule when the interests of the agency would be served only if less compact or summary forms of information are retained as well. For example, in certain instances, it may be desirable to retain both summary reports on hospital cases as well as the medical case files themselves;
- the importance of the information; for example, records should be retained if they contain significant and revealing information about:
 - an event, such as national independence;
 - an important individual;
 - an important subject;
 - an important institution;
 - an important place;
 - an important group;
 - an important occurrence, movement or trend in political, economic or social history;
 - developments in science and technology, such as reports on discoveries, inventions, and technological innovations and their applications; or
 - questions about accepted ideas.

Finally, intrinsic value is the secondary value of records deriving from their historical or cultural associations, format or monetary value. In this case, it is the uniqueness of the association or the form, rather than the uniqueness of the information that is the determining factor. For example, the constitution of a country may be widely available in print, but the original will have intrinsic value. Similarly, an ephemeral document bearing the autograph of a famous person may have intrinsic value, whereas the same kind of document signed by other person

would not. Other documents may have an intrinsic value by virtue of their age. For example, in St. Kitts and Nevis, the *Registration and Records Act* of 1881 stipulates that records pre-dating 1750 may not be destroyed, the reason being that there are so few records of that age left in existence. Finally, the craftsmanship that has gone into the creation of a document may bestow intrinsic value upon it, such as in the case of an illuminated manuscript.



DUPLICATE RECORDS

It is common to find many duplicate records within and between public service agencies. Duplication occurs because work and decision-making processes are distributed between many offices. For example, a permanent secretary may receive a letter relating to a programme that falls within the purview of one of the agency's administrative units. Before forwarding the letter to the head of the unit for action, a copy is made for the permanent secretary's files. The letter is then received by the head of unit who forwards it for action to an appropriate officer within the unit, but not before taking a copy. The designated officer researches the issue and drafts a reply, keeping a copy of the research notes, the incoming letter and the reply for his own files before forwarding the reply to the head of the unit for signature. The head of unit retains a copy of the response and forwards the original to the permanent secretary. Finally, a copy of the response is made for the permanent secretary's files and the original is sent out. Thus, duplicate copies of both the

letter and response exist in three different filing systems: that of the permanent secretary, the unit head and the action officer.

It is important to be aware of the existence of duplicate copies of records within a public service agency in order to avoid assigning too much value to records that are mere copies. For example, if unaware of the existence of duplicate records in other filing systems, persons scheduling the records located in the different filing systems described in the above example might conclude that all three copies must be kept to meet on-going administrative, legal, financial and other values when only one copy need be retained. In addition, persons scheduling the records might recommend that all copies be sent to the Archives when, again, only one copy need be transferred for permanent preservation. Hence, where duplication exists, records appraisers must determine which copy will be considered the 'record' or 'official' copy. The record copy usually is to be found in the office of the person who has primary responsibility for the function or business transaction with which the records are connected. This is called the 'office of primary responsibility.' For instance, in the example above, it may be most appropriate to designate the copy found in the office of the action officer as the record copy, as this person has official responsibility for the function and therefore has the most complete record.

Once the record copy has been identified, other copies will only have administrative value to their creators and will, therefore, warrant much shorter retention periods. The record copy will be the only copy requiring evaluation for legal and financial primary values, and secondary values. Likewise, all but record copies may be destroyed when they no longer have administrative value.

SETTING RETENTION PERIODS

The purpose of appraisal is to make it possible to dispose of records promptly when their primary value has expired, whether that disposal is by destruction or by transfer for archival preservation. It is necessary to balance economy and sound administration to ensure that such disposal is not undertaken either too late or too early in the life of the record. Thus, one of the functions of appraisal is to determine the life cycle of the records by assigning retention periods to all of the records of a public service agency, or in the case of administrative records, public service-wide retention periods. A retention period is simply the length of time for which the records have primary value.

Making decisions on the primary value of records for the agency's own purposes is really risk management. The records manager must weight relative costs: actual financial costs, or the loss of administrative effectiveness and political accountability. All the costs of not having information available should it be needed versus continuing to retain records on the off-chance that the information

will be used must be considered. There will be a time in the life of a record when the savings from disposal are greater than the risks associated with losing the information. Thus, it is not necessary to retain records until there is no possibility that they will ever be required again. This is often a common mistake made by records creators or users, who tend to overestimate the value of the records and prescribe overly lengthy retention periods. Instead, retention periods should represent the point of balance between risk and continued retention.

The retention period for records can be sub-divided as follows:

- Active retention period – this is the period of time for which the records have continuing administrative value to the creating agency. Records creators and users are best able to determine and set active retention periods. As records are likely to be required regularly during the current or active phase of their life cycle, their place of custody for this period will be the originating office.

Active retention periods for subject files generally is given as the current year plus whatever additional length of time, specified in years, that the records will retain administrative value. The code CY can be used to signify current year. For example, the active retention period for a series of files relating to co-operation and liaison with other agencies and organisations might be expressed as CY+2.

Active retention periods for financial records generally is the current fiscal year plus whatever additional length of time, specified in fiscal years, that the records will retain administrative value. The code FY often is used to signify fiscal year. For example, the active retention period for a series of budget files might be expressed as FY+1.

Active retention periods for case files, or particular instance files as they are sometimes called, is normally the duration of the particular case or action to which the file relates, plus whatever additional length of time, specified in years, that the files retain administrative value. This can be expressed by use of the code SO to indicate superseded or obsolete. An additional description of the specific event that will lead to closure of the file and therefore cause it to become superseded or obsolete should be provided in the records retention schedule. For example, the active retention period for a series of land files might be expressed as SO+2, with the files becoming superseded and obsolete upon finalisation of the application for land.

- The semi-active retention period – is the remainder of the time for which the records will have primary value, by virtue of being required to meet on-going financial or legal needs as determined by the appraisal.

It should be noted that only unique records series or record copies of records series will require semi-active retention periods to meet retention requirements for on-going financial and legal value.

As the rate of reference to records during the semi-current or semi-active phase of the records life cycle is much lower than while the records are in current use, the place of custody for the semi-active period of retention usually is a central records centre facility. Removal of semi-current records from current records storage areas will free limited records storage space in offices and ensure that semi-current records are retained in a secure and controlled environment until their disposal. However, it is important to note that the cost of transfer to a records centre is unlikely to be justified if the semi-active retention period is very short. Deciding between such action and the other options, such as retention in the agency for the full period or immediate disposal at the end of the first period will require evaluation of the respective costs and risks.

The semi-active retention period traditionally is given in fiscal years for financial records and in calendar years for all other types of records.

DETERMINING FINAL DISPOSITIONS

It is important that not only retention periods be specified in records retention schedules but what disposal action is to be taken at the end of that period.

There are two basic disposal options: (i) destroy and (ii) transfer to Archives. Records should be scheduled for destruction at the expiration of their primary value if, based on the appraisal, they have no continuing secondary value. Records should be scheduled for archival preservation at the expiration of their primary value if they have continuing secondary value. Usually as little as between five and ten per cent of all records created by an agency will merit transfer to Archives. This should not be confused with the setting of a quota to transfer 10 per cent of all records to Archives.

Even when the records are deemed to have secondary value, not all series merit full archival preservation. For example, in a series relating to conferences it may be desirable to keep only those files on conferences organised by the creating agency, and destroy files on conferences which agency staff simply attended. Particular instance records, or case files, because they are usually voluminous series in relation

to their secondary value, are seldom preserved in totality in the Archives. Other options include:

- selective retention;
- item by item review;
- sampling; and
- transfer of a representative selection or specimens.

Selective retention refers to the selection of only those files in a records series deemed to have secondary values. For example, only committees internal to the agency or for which the agency provided the secretariat might be retained out of a series of committee files.

Item-by-item review may be necessary when disposing of building plans or other records relating to the ownership, construction, refurbishing and use of public buildings in order to determine which buildings have historical or architectural importance.

Sampling may be appropriate for hospital patient files, where sheer volume precludes the retention of all files. Usually, sampling is only appropriate where the records contain significant quantities of information that can be analysed statistically. There are many forms of sampling, but before deciding on the form it is important that the purpose of the sample be clear. The forms of samples are as follows:

- Random statistical samples, which are closest to the objective representative ideal. However, objectivity of the sample will depend on the completeness and homogeneity of the records, the use of a random numbers table that gives each item an equal chance of selection, and the careful determination of the sample size in relation to the size of the whole series and the number of statistical variables. The advice of an archivist and a statistician is essential if this option is being considered.
- Numerical or serial samples (e.g. one out of every five files) may be acceptable as an alternative to random samples, if the existing order of the whole body of the records is random and the individual units are separable and of equal value.
- Chronological or time series samples (e.g. all the records for every fifth year) may be appropriate when the records are homogeneous within and

between years and arranged in annual sequences. However, they will only measure long-term variations, ignoring changes between selected years. There is also a risk that some of the years selected will be atypical.

- Alphabetical samples (e.g. all the records relating to individuals or organisations with names beginning with a particular letter of the alphabet) may be appropriate when the records are homogeneous and the letter chosen gives a sample of adequate size and does not impart a regional or ethnic bias to the sample.

Transfer of a representative selection or specimens for archival preservation is another disposal option. This option may be appropriate in the case of personnel files for which it is desirable to retain files only for individuals who reach a specified rank or who are noteworthy. When a series of records are not to be preserved in their entirety or in the form of samples, it may be possible to preserve specimens to illustrate the ways in which action was taken and to represent the format of the records. Such specimens are usually selected so that they include at least one example of each type of transaction and of each form of documentation. They may be additional to the selective preservation of individual records when these do not provide an adequate representation of the varieties of transactions or documentation.

Whenever full preservation in the Archives is not specified and one of the other options is to be used, the basis on which the disposal is to be carried out should be specified in the records retention schedule in detail (e.g. one out of every five files to be taken as specimens).

DOCUMENTING APPRAISAL DECISIONS

Appraisals of records should be documented in a records retention schedule. These documents should identify all the records created or maintained by an agency or unit of an agency, note the appraisal decisions that have been taken in respect of them, specify the periods for which they are to be retained and their place of custody during those prescribed retention periods, authorise their disposal at the appropriate time, and indicate the disposal action to be taken.

Records retention schedules can be divided into two basic types:

- continuing, or those that give on-going authority for the retention and disposal of a given series of records; and
- one-time, or those that give authority to dispose of a specific series or group of records, covering a precise date span and of a specified volume.

This type of records retention schedule is usually used to clear out backlogs of outdated records.

The records retention schedule should contain the following information elements:

- Records retention schedule number. This is the reference code for the schedule. It is best to use a simple numbering scheme, such as the year in which the records retention schedule was prepared, a slash, and a sequential number, as follows: 97/1, 97/2, 97/3, etc.

Usually a central agency with overall responsibility for co-ordinating a public service-wide records and information management programme is responsible for distributing and recording all records retention schedule numbers in order to avoid duplication and to facilitate the tracking of records retention schedules as they move through the approval process. Pertinent information about all records retention schedules should be kept in a central register, such as the records retention schedule number, the name of the agency scheduling the records, the records series title, the date of the schedule, and the date of approval (which is to be filled in once the records retention schedule is approved).

- Name of organisational unit. The form should include a space for the name of the office responsible for the creation and maintenance of the records being scheduled.
- Date. The date on which the records retention schedule was prepared also should appear on the form. This information will assist later on in reviewing schedules to ensure that they have not become outdated.
- Contact name and telephone number. It is important to include space on the form for the name and contact number of a person who can answer questions about the purpose and value of the records being scheduled.
- New request/amendment. Initially, all records retention schedules will be new; however, after the public service agency's records retention scheduling programme is well-established, it will be necessary to review and, in some cases, amend existing schedules to reflect changes that affect records retention periods and disposal actions, such as changes in legislation or regulations; a re-organisation of the public service; the introduction of new functions and the discontinuance of others; the transfer of functions between agencies; the introduction of new work patterns or record keeping systems (e.g. as a consequence of automation), and changes in security rules.

- Related records retention schedules. Space should be left on the form for the reference number of records retention schedules for any series of records which are related to the series being scheduled. For example, the number of the records retention schedule for a hard copy version of a series of records should be cross-referenced to the records retention schedule for its electronic version.
- Continuing/one-time. There should be a space to indicate whether the records retention schedule is authorising continuing or one-time retention and disposal.
- Records series name. A name should be assigned to the records being scheduled which reflects the purpose or function of the records series and which can be used for identification purposes.
- Date range. For one-time records retention schedules, it is customary to provide the outside dates of the records being scheduled, for example: 1980–1987. It is not necessary to specify days and months. For continuing records retention schedules, the common practice is to provide the start date of the records being scheduled followed by the words 'to date' to indicate that authority will be given for retention and disposal of future records, for example, 1980 to date.
- Method of organisation. The form should provide information about the method by which the records are arranged in records storage cabinets or areas, for example, alpha-numerically by file classification code, geographically, alphabetically by name, etc.
- Volume. It is customary to provide the total volume of records being scheduled only when preparing a one-time records retention schedule. This figure usually should be given in linear feet or metres.
- Records series description. A description of the contents, purpose and function of the records series being scheduled should be included as part of the records retention schedule.
- Approvals. There should be space on the records retention schedule form reserved for the signature of approving authorities.
- Item number. Ideally, a records retention schedule should cover one homogeneous series of records to which the same retention and disposal apply, in which case there will be only one item. However, records retention schedules sometimes cover more than one series of records.

Each records series in a schedule covering more than one series must be given a unique item number, since each series will warrant a unique retention and disposal. In addition, one often finds that records series are not homogeneous, for example registry subject files, and therefore it is not possible to apply the same retention and disposal to all the records in the series. When this is the case, the series should be divided into homogeneous sub-series or groups of records with the same value and therefore retention and disposal. A consecutive item number (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.) should be assigned to each of these sub-series or groups covered by a single records retention schedule.

- Description of each item covered by the schedule.
- Item dates. The outside dates of each item should be included. For continuing authorities, the start date of the records and the words 'to date' traditionally are used.
- File numbers. If the records being scheduled are numbered and arranged according to a file classification plan, it will facilitate later identification of the records if the range of applicable file numbers appears in the records retention schedule.
- Media. Records retention schedules should also indicate the type of media on which the records being scheduled are recorded, for example, paper (hard copy), microfilm or digital.
- Retention periods for each item covered by the records retention schedule.
- Recommended disposal actions for each item covered by the records retention schedule.
- Access restrictions. Certain records scheduled for full or partial transfer to Archives may be sensitive and should not be available for public research for a period of time. When this is the case, the records retention schedule should indicate the period of time for which the records will remain closed. It is not recommended to indicate that records will be closed indefinitely, as no records are sensitive for an indefinite period. Likewise, overly long periods of closure (100 years or more) are not recommended because the expense of preserving the records for long periods records may be difficult to justify given their limited use.

REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

RRDA #:

Organisational Unit: Magistrate's Department	Date: November 9, 1997
Contact Name: Silvia Gumbs	Tel. No.: 466-2170
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-time
Related RRDA's: N/A	
Records Series Name: Magistrate's Court Calendars	Date Range: 1985-1997
Method of organization: Chronological	Volume: (one-time) 12 linear metres
Records Series Description: These are bound volumes which for each magistrate's court case indicates the name of the defendant, the charge, the disposition of the case	
Related Series: N/A	
Approvals: <i>Instructions to approving officers: please sign, date and forward this document to the next approving officer in the list.</i>	
Records Liaison Officer: _____	Date: _____
Accountant General: _____	Date: _____
Director of Audit: _____	Date: _____
Legal Affairs: _____	Date: _____
Archivist: _____	Date: _____
Chief Secretary: _____	Date: _____

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REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION
AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY- SUPPLEMENT

RRDA #:

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ITEM NO:	DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (title, type, description, purposes and special notes)	DATES	FILE #s.	MEDIA	RETENTION	FINAL DISP.	ACC. RES.	COMMENTS
					A	SA		
1.	Magistrate's Court Calendars	1985- 1997	N/A	HC	CY	10	A None	-

KEY TO CODES: CY= CURRENT YEAR
SO= SUPERSEDED OR OBSOLETE
A= FULL TRANSFER TO ARCHIVES
D= DESTROY
SR= SELECTIVE RETENTION IN ARCHIVES

FY= FISCAL YEAR
HC= HARD COPY
MF= MICROFILM
D= DIGITAL FORM
Q= FINAL DISPOSITION OTHER THAN DESTRUCTION OR FULL TRANSFER TO ARCHIVES

REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

RRDA #: M96-23

Organisational Unit: Dean's Office Faculty of Social Sciences	Date: 11.12.96
Contact Name: Mrs. Marva Green	Tel. No.: ext.2220-2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Request <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-time
Related RRDA's:	
Records Series Name: Dean's Office, - Faculty of Social Sciences, - Committee and General Files	Date Range: 1967-1991
Method of organization: Alpha/Numerical	Volume: (one-time) 38-R.C. Boxes = 11.58m
Records Series Description: This records series (RC. Acc.No.92.11) consists of copies of agendas, minutes, papers and correspondence from various boards and committees such as Social Sciences Academic Board, Appointments Committee, Board of Studies, Assessment and Promotions, Faculty Executive Committee, Board for Higher Degrees, Planning and Estimates, Council and files relating to matters affecting students in the Faculty of Social Sciences.	
Related Series: Most of the material in these files are related to the Committee file series maintained in the Registry Records Services which are also in bound form in the Archives.	
Approvals: <i>Instructions to approving officers: please sign, date and forward this document to the next approving officer in the list.</i>	
Head of Organizational Unit: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>23/1/97</u>
Campus Records Manager: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>23/1/97</u>
University Archivist: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>29/1/97</u>
Univ./Campus Registrar: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>20/1/97</u>
Univ./Campus Bursar: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>1/2/97</u>

RM10 10/11/95

REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY- SUPPLEMENT

RRDA #: M96-23

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ITEM NO:	DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (title, type, description, purposes and special notes)	PRIM./FILE CROSS-REF	MEDIA	RETENTION A	IA	FINAL DISP.	ACC. RES.	COMMENTS
1.	Copies of Agenda, Minutes, papers including but not limited to University and Campus Council, Social Sciences Academic Board, Appointments Committee, Faculty Executive Committee, Board for Higher Degrees, etc. - Files pertaining to matters affecting students, including Admissions list of applicants (1978-1986), examiners pass list (1982-1985), student withdrawals (1980-1987) and registration forms (1982-1990); recommendations and references, medical certificates (1980-1987), request for deferrals and transfers (1977-1987), request for transcripts (1972-1987), etc.		paper	0	0	D	-	RRDA M95-1- permits the destruction of committee records retained by members once they are no longer needed. The information on these files post-date the period when there are significant gaps in the student files would be filed on the student's official file held by the Registry Records Services.
3.	Files detailing matters affecting both academic & non-academic staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences - this includes - staff appointments/promotions & dismissals, headship, vacation leave, invitations to conferences, etc.		paper	0	0	D	-	Information on staff related matters are available from the Bursary, Appointments Section and the Registry Records Services thus, there is no

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A master set of approved records retention schedules should be retained by the agency with overall responsibility for the public service records and information management programme. Often, it is helpful for the agency to keep an index by title of records series to the records retention schedules in case a question arises as to whether a retention schedule exists for a particular group of records. In addition, each public service agency should retain copies of records retention schedules for the records it creates and maintains.

WHO SHOULD APPRAISE AND APPROVE RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES?

Records appraisal and retention scheduling must be performed as a co-operative process because of the many different records values and potential uses for the records that must be considered.

Records creators and users are in the best position to assess administrative value because they are involved directly with the transaction or process documented by a given records series. Thus, they will be able to give guidance on how long the records are required to finalise a transaction or process. However, some records creators and users may have a tendency to be overly concerned with current work and think that nothing done in the past, especially if it was done by a predecessor, is of continuing importance. Others may be overly cautious and have a tendency to hoard any records that might conceivably serve as a precedent for future actions or as a justification for past actions. Still others will not be aware of the value of the records to other agencies or units. To guard against the potential pitfalls of solely relying on the opinion of records creators and users, appraisal decisions should be reviewed collectively within public service agencies.

With any given public service agency, the collective review process may be achieved by having key agency officials vet and sign off on each records retention schedule as it is prepared, or by setting up a committee comprised of key agency officials who meet periodically to review and approve several records retention schedules at a time. Whatever approach is adopted, the collective review process should involve the person with overall responsibility for the agency's records and information management programme (e.g. a records management officer) as well as representatives from each agency or sub-unit within the agency so as to ensure that all of agency's interests in the records are taken into consideration during the appraisal and scheduling process. Additionally, those involved in the review process should be at a level that gives them sufficient knowledge of the agency's functions and decision-making processes to determine the value of records.

In order to facilitate the preparation of records retention schedules in the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, each ministry and large department set out to establish its own Records Committee comprising the Ministry or Department Records Liaison Officer, the head of each department of a ministry or major unit of a department, and such other officials within each department or unit as bring an important perspective to the appraisal process, such as office managers. These committees are to meet as necessary to review records retention schedules prepared by Ministry or Department Records Liaison Officers. After review and approval by the Committee, the Records Liaison Officer is then authorised to sign off on the Records Retention and Disposition Authority Form and send it forward for final approval to a government-wide Records Committee.

Records creators, users and records management personnel within a given public service agency may be in the best position to assess administrative value, however they can usually only make an initial assessment of the financial values of records because they may not be aware of public service-wide financial processes or requirements and, therefore, may not be in a position to fully and accurately assess continuing financial value. For this reason, persons who are likely to be knowledgeable about financial value must be brought into the appraisal process. Similarly, records creators, users and agency records management personnel can make an initial assessment of legal values but may be unaware of and unable to fully and accurately interpret statutory requirements, public service-wide rules and practices, international legal obligations (such as treaty rights) or the requirements of international organisations (e.g. IMF or World Bank). Thus, a person with legal expertise is best suited to assessing the legal value of records. Nor can agency personnel be expected to identify records that might have secondary value. This is a difficult task because it involves forecasting all the hypothetical research purposes that the records might serve at some indefinite time in the future. An experienced archivist with wide-ranging knowledge of records and who is in consultation with historians and other researchers is best suited to appraising secondary values.

Signing authorities for records retention schedules should include all key stakeholders in the appraisal of records. In many jurisdictions, approving authorities for records retention schedules include the National Archivist, the Attorney-General or designate, the Minister of Finance or designate, and the Auditor General or designate. In some cases, a member of a national historical society, the research community or the Chief Justice will also be designated as an approving authority. In this way, the broad perspectives that are necessary for a thorough assessment of the value of records are built into the appraisal and scheduling process.

Often, stakeholders in the retention and disposal of records comprise a committee that periodically reviews and approves records retention schedules. Alternatively,

appraisal recommendations may be reviewed and approved by a 'round-robin' process wherein they are signed-off sequentially by each authorising official.

As a last check of appraisal decisions and to give authority to records retention schedules in which appraisal decisions are documented, recommendations should be submitted for final approval to an official or body with government-wide authority, such as a chief secretary, cabinet, a committee of the legislature or the legislature itself. Choice of final approving authority will be dependent on the socio-political context of the public service, although final approval should come from an official or body with sufficient authority to ensure that public service agencies will abide by approved records retention schedules but whose approval will not be so difficult to obtain that it will lead to unproductive delays. For example, one country may choose its legislature as the final approving authority for records retention schedules to ensure that opposing political parties have an opportunity to review proposed records retention periods and disposal actions, even though it is recognised that this procedure may slow down the rate at which records retention schedules are approved. Conversely, another country may choose to make an internal public service committee its final reviewing and approving body in order to obtain relatively fast approval of records retention schedules.

The approval process for records retention schedules should be documented in a policy or legislative instrument, as is the practice in most jurisdictions, to give it authority.

RRDA APPROVAL PROCESS

