

1.8 Records Management Principles

Records Management is the application of controls to the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of all formats of records which includes correspondence and forms, records classification, files, identification of staff member responsible for the record, retention scheduling, disaster planning, vital records protection, record conversion programmes, archival preservation activities and appropriate destruction of records.

A **Records Retention Schedule**, as detailed in Section 6.5, is a control document that lists the main records that DIT creates, receives or maintains in the course of its official business and indicates the length of time that records shall be retained for before final disposition and the method of disposition.

Schedules are based on a determination of legal retention requirements as defined in relevant statutes and regulations, financial requirements, administrative requirements and operational requirements. While the Retention Schedules prescribe the minimum period that DIT records must be retained, these may be retained for a longer period of time if it is deemed necessary by the Head of Function for operational or administrative requirements.

The final disposition (either destruction or transfer to storage) of records is carried out following review of the DIT Retention Schedules, as detailed in the **Disposition of Records / Data Register Form** in Section 6.6, after which time the records / data are either destroyed or transferred to DIT storage or Archives. The potential historical value of records is also a consideration.

The Records Retention Schedule applies to both electronic and paper records held by DIT and in the absence of any electronic records management systems, staff should be encouraged to employ good housekeeping practices in the management of electronic documents, i.e. employ a naming convention, have a back-up schedule, delete regularly (especially e-mails), use passwords as appropriate, produce paper copies if required to maintain the integrity of manual files, etc.

Effective electronic records management requires consideration of the appropriate electronic software in the context of an overall records management programme. Electronic records should have the same retention schedules as their paper counterparts. In the case of electronic records, the department which created or maintains these records must formally agree back-up and recovery procedures with the Information Services Department. This is to ensure that there is no ambiguity as to which department is responsible for records in the event of hardware failure or accidental deletion of records.

All records, both paper and electronic created or received by DIT staff in the course of their duties on behalf of DIT, are the property of DIT and subject to its overall control.

Further Information is available in Section 6.