



RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRANCH RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GUIDE

DIVISION:	Executive Services
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RELEASABILITY:	DoDEA
PURPOSE:	This guide provides a comprehensive outline on records and information management in accordance with Administrative Instruction 15, Volume I and II, DoDEA Regulation 5015.01, and Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 5015.02.
POLICY:	The information and intellectual capital contained in DoDEA records will be managed as national assets. Effective and efficient management of records provides the information foundation for decision making at all levels, mission planning and operations, FOIA and legal inquiries, business continuity, and preservation of U.S. history.
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What is a Record?

According to 44 United States Code (U.S.C.) 3301, a record is defined as “...all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a Federal agency under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the United States Government or because of the informational value of data in them.”

Furthermore, records are documentary materials, created or received, in the course of agency business, regardless of format (paper and electronic documents – Emails, PDF, Word documents, PowerPoints, Excel worksheets, Databases, Reports, Photographs-digital and print, Film and Radio, Graphics, Posters, etc.). This can include everything from DoDEA’s Annual Budget Reports to documents outlining key business transactions and decisions.

Categories

Records and Information occupy three categories ONLY: **Permanent**, **Temporary**, and **Unscheduled**. These categories assist in determining if a document has an applicable disposition schedule and, if so, for how long it should be maintained.

1. **Permanent Records** – Documents with an enduring, historical value that warrant continued preservation by the federal government beyond the time they are needed by the agency for administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes. Permanent Records are eventually transferred to the legal and physical custody of National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
2. **Temporary Records** – Documents with a short-term value that are approved by NARA for destruction after a specified retention period.
3. **Unscheduled Records** – Documents whose final disposition has not been approved by the Archivist of the United States. Until a final disposition is approved, all unscheduled records must be treated as permanent.

Note: *Information that does not fit into one of the above categories is considered non-record materials. Such materials may include unofficial copies of documents kept only for convenience or reference, stocks of publications, and library or museum material intended solely for reference. Also included are personal files, i.e., documentary materials belonging to an individual that are not used to conduct agency business.*

Why Manage Records?

Both federal regulations and DoD policies require that federal records be created, maintained and used, preserved and disposed in order to document the transaction of federal business and missions. Records and Information Management is not just a federal requirement that ensures the mission and actions of federal offices are properly documented. It is also a smart business investment to ensure optimized productivity in support of better decision-making.

DoDEA File Plan

DoD Policy requires that all DoDEA offices develop and maintain approved Office File Plans. A file plan helps the office understand what types of records they maintain and what to do with them when they are no longer needed for current government business.

DoDEA’s file plan is a comprehensive blueprint which contains information applicable to DoDEA records. The DoDEA file plan must include the following information:

1. Office of Record.
2. Records Liaison Officer (RLO) Name.
3. File Number.
4. File Title and Description.
5. Disposition Instructions.
6. PII/SORN number (if applicable).
7. Location (Hardcopy and Electronic).
8. Authority (from the NARA GRS).

Exhibit 1. File Plan Excerpt

Office File Plan					
Office of Record: Executive Services Records Liaison or Custodian: n/a Records Management Officer: Samuel Gotti			File Plan Last Review Completed On: 07/03/2019		
File Number	File Title & Description	Disposition	PII/SORN	Location	Authority
MISSION					
206-09.1	<p>FILE TITLE: Financial Transaction Files related to Procuring Goods and Services, Paying Bills, Collecting Debts, and Accounting.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Financial transaction records include those created in the course of procuring goods and services, paying bills, collecting debts, and accounting for all finance activity, per the following definitions. Many records included in this item are maintained by accountable officers to account for the availability and status of public funds, and are retained to enable GAO, Office of Inspector General, or other authority audit.</p>	Temporary. Cut off after final payment or cancellation. Destroy 7 years after cutoff.	NO	<p>Hardcopy: n/a</p> <p>Electronic: \\ds.dodea.edu\americas\MC VA-COMMON\ES\((01)) Executive Services File Station\((GPC))</p>	GRS 1.1, item 010 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001)
203-01	<p>FILE TITLE: Records Management Program Records</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Records related to the policies, procedures, and management of agency business records from creation to eventual disposition. Includes records created and maintained while planning, managing, evaluating, administering, and performing the function of agency records management. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing oversight of entire records management program • Transferring, destroying, and retrieving records • Inventorying records and conducting records surveys • Scheduling records • Providing other records management services to customer units (such as records storage/reference assistance, and technical assistance with files plans and other records management questions) • Conducting records "clean out" days • Conducting special projects <p>Records include: Agency records management program surveys or evaluations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of surveys or evaluations • Reports of corrective action taken in response to agency program surveys or evaluations • Disposal authorizations, schedules, and reports • Records schedules, legacy records schedules (SF 115, ERA print-outs, Request for Records Disposition Authority, and related studies, coordination actions, archival appraisals, and approvals or disapprovals.) • SF 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt • OF 11, Reference Request • Transfer Request (TR), Legal Transfer Instrument (LTI); SF 258, Agreement to Transfer Records to NARA of the United States 	Temporary. Cut off after the project, activity, or transaction is completed or superseded. Destroy 6 years after cutoff.	NO	<p>Hardcopy: n/a</p> <p>Electronic: \\ds.dodea.edu\americas\MC VA-COMMON\ES\((01)) Executive Services File Station\((RIM))RM Files 203-01</p>	GRS 4.1, Item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0002-0007)

The disposition instructions indicate whether a file is temporary or permanent, as well as when files should be cut off, destroyed, and/or transferred to a Federal Records Center (FRC) or NARA. The file cutoff is the point when an active file is no longer needed for current business operations and should be moved to an inactive status.

Files may be cut off by:

1. Calendar Year (January 1 - December 31).
2. Fiscal Year (October 1- September 30).
3. Month or Quarter, for records with retention periods of less than one year.
4. Trigger Event, such as separation of personnel, final contract payment, project completion, or when no longer needed for current business.

Once a file is cut off, the retention period begins. In other words, if a temporary file is cut off at the end of FY 2019 (i.e. September 30, 2019) and the disposition instructions indicate it is to be destroyed after two years, then the record would be destroyed on October 1, 2021. Some files may have time based destruction periods, while others will have destruction periods based on an event. Examples include: “Destroy 5 years after cutoff,” “Destroy when superseded or obsolete,” or “Destroy 10 years after termination of federal employment.”

In addition to providing details on records cutoff and destruction, the disposition instruction may also include directions for transfer to a FRC, such as the Washington National Records Center (WRNC), or NARA. All DoDEA file plans will be reviewed and approved by the Records Management Officer on an annual basis, in accordance with OSD and DoDEA policy, to ensure that records continue to be accurately identified and maintained. Any record which does not fall within one of the file types outlined on the file plan should be treated as permanent until the appropriate retention and disposition schedule can be identified or the record is scheduled with NARA.

Note: *In the event that the cutoff is not specified in the disposition instructions, DoDEA Division Chiefs/Supervisors should coordinate with their Records Liaison Officer or DoDEA’s Records Management Officer to determine the appropriate cutoff at the time of document creation based on business need and in accordance with the above categories. Generally, this will be either at the end of a Calendar or Fiscal Year (CY/FY), or completion of a project. After a record is cut off, it is considered inactive and cannot be added to or altered. Cutoff or inactive files must be kept separate from active files, both in paper and electronic form, to prevent misfiling.*

DoDEA Filing System

DoDEA records will be maintained in accordance with a functional file system approach. A functional file system allows for three levels of file categorization, starting with the most general and moving to the more specific. This file system identifies and arranges records following the principle that identification or coding of records is intertwined with the function they document.

Exhibit 2. DoDEA Functional Filing System

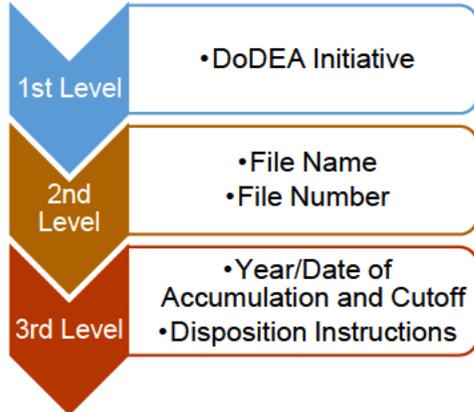
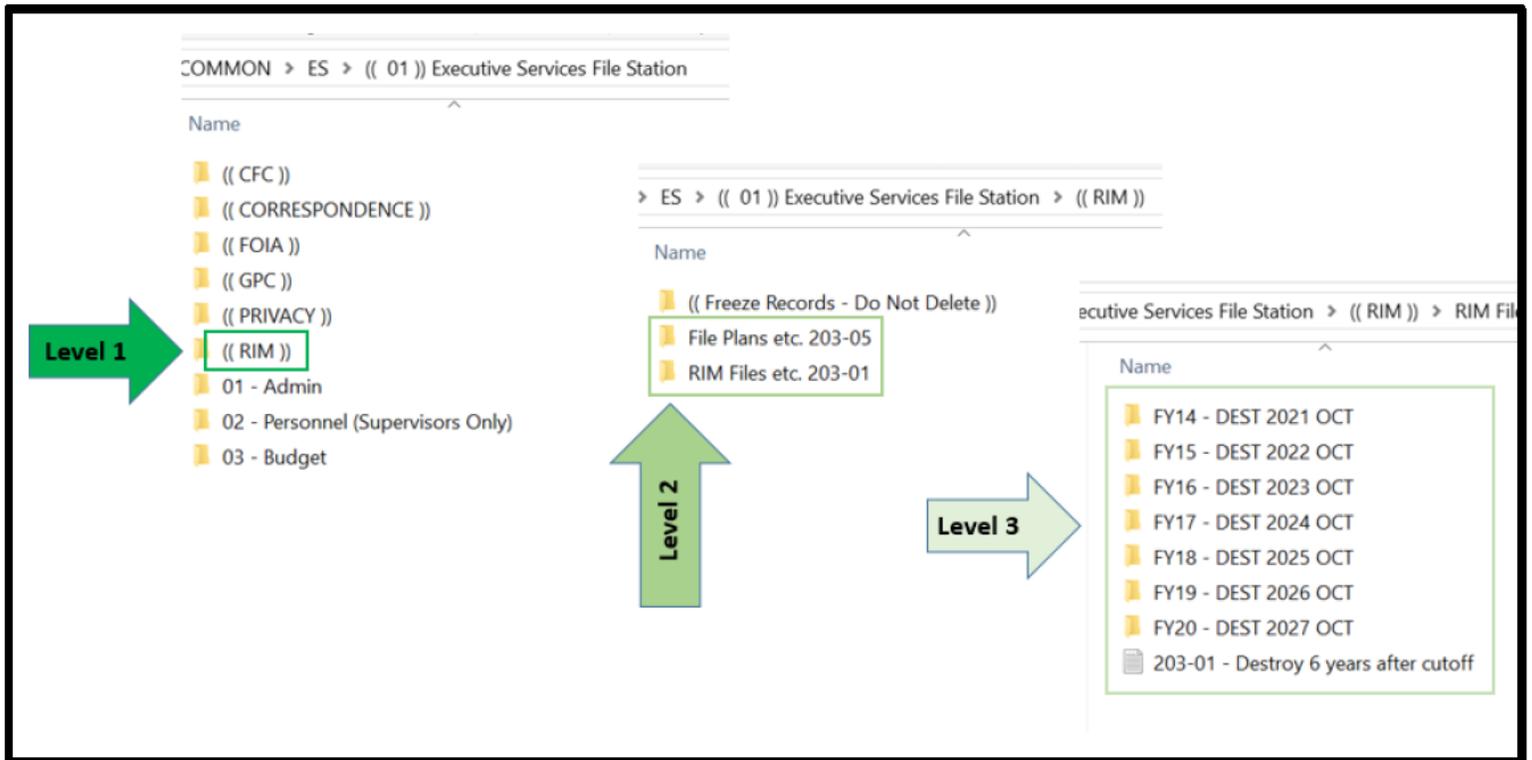


Exhibit 3. DoDEA Functional Filing System Example



Managing DoDEA’s Paper Inventory

Paper records must be maintained in accordance with the same rules and regulations as electronic records. DoDEA paper records will also be maintained with a functional file system approach. All folders must be labeled with the following:

1. File Name.
2. File Number and Disposition Instructions.
3. Year/Date of Accumulation and Cutoff.
4. Destruction Dates.
5. PII SORN number (if applicable).

Cabinet drawers should then be labeled by their Function. Where a drawer spans more than one function, guide cards must be used. Where there are several files spanning one file number in a cabinet, a “dummy” file folder may be used as the first in the series. This file should be taped shut so no documents are inadvertently filed in it. Subsequent folder labels need to only show the file number and year or other date of creation. The abbreviations listed below may also be used for labeling paper records.

Exhibit 4. File Label and Guide Card Example

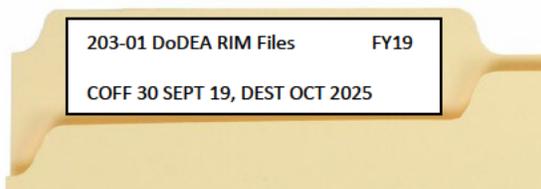
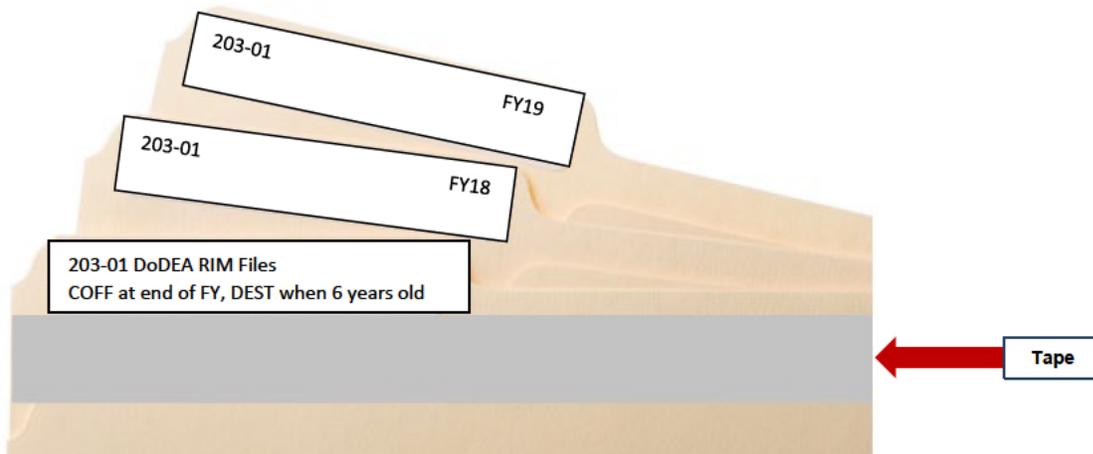


Exhibit 5. Dummy Label Example



The following standard abbreviations may be used when labeling records:

COFF- Cutoff

DEST- Destroy

OBSOL- Obsolete

PERM- Permanent

RET- Retire

SS- Superseded

TEMP- Temporary

TRF-Transfer

Converting Paper to Electronic Records

When converting paper records to electronic records, one must consider the disposition of the record. Hard copy records with a disposition of permanent or that are unscheduled cannot be destroyed once converted to an electronic form without the approval of DoD and NARA. Temporary records may be converted to an electronic form if the conversion does not change the nature or content of the records.

As a best practice, it is recommended that only those records with a retention schedule of three years or longer be converted to electronic form. Per NARA requirements, scanned documents must also have a minimum resolution of 300 pixels per inch. So be sure to use proper equipment.

Prior to converting hard copy records (temporary or permanent), DoDEA Chiefs or Division Records Liaison Officers should alert the DoDEA Records Management Officer to ensure compliance with all records management requirements. Once converted, all documents should be saved on the approved shared drive location.

Managing DoDEA's Electronic Records

Electronic records are governed by the same records disposition principles as all federal records and should be identified as early as possible in their life cycles to ensure proper preservation and disposition. Such records may be created via e-mail or chat services, software programs (e.g., Word, Power Point, Excel, Adobe, etc.), websites, social media platforms, or converted from hard copy (via scanning) into an electronic format. In addition to being maintained on shared drives, SharePoint, and Outlook, electronic records may also be maintained in databases, Federal Information Systems, social media platforms, and the cloud (ServiceNow Platform).

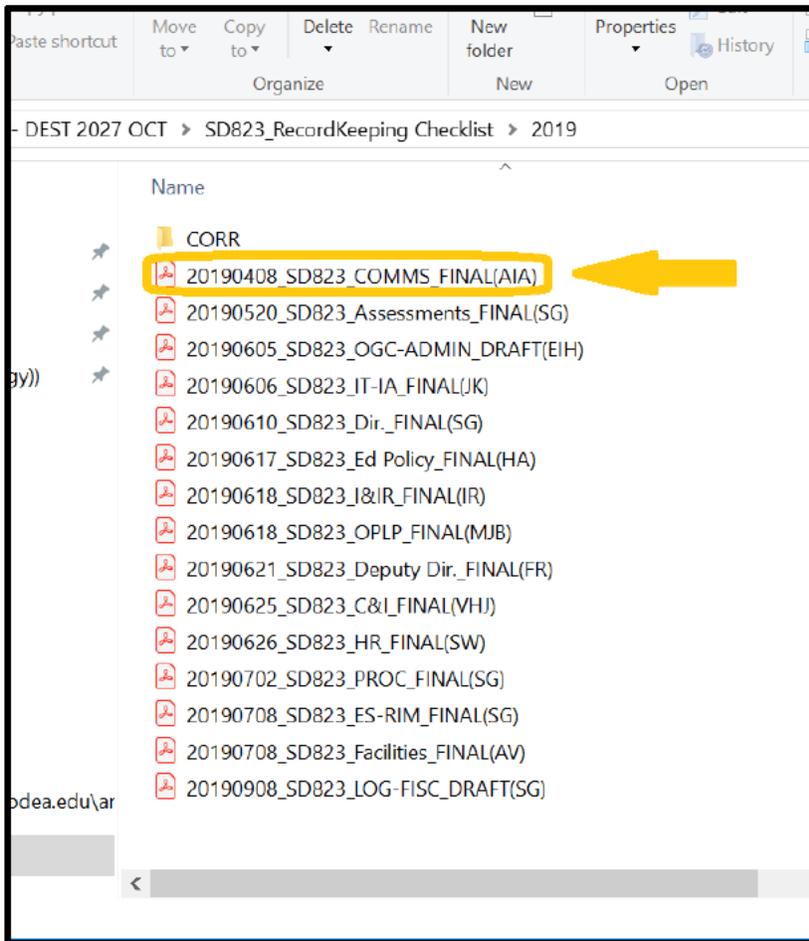
DoDEA File Naming Conventions

File naming conventions streamline the search process and reduce retrieval time by providing a standardized and instructive format. Whether you are looking at a budget document or a CFC pamphlet, the file name should be consistently familiar and comprehensive enough to describe a document's intent without the need to open the file. A consistent file naming structure ensures that any DoDEA employee can successfully pick up where another left off without spending an abundance of time locating the most recent version or duplicating efforts.

DoDEA File Naming Conventions will have the following features:

1. Date of Creation (YYYYMMDD).
2. Document Description (include Division/Branch and functional area).
3. Version Type (Draft or Final).
4. Version Number (where appropriate).
5. Initials of the Last Employee to Update the Document.

Exhibit 5. FNC Example



Utilizing the DoDEA File Naming Conventions:

Step 1 – Identify the date the document was created to be notated in the following format: YYYYMMDD.

Step 2 – Create a descriptive name for the document. The description should not be longer than 25 characters.

Step 3 – Add the proper acronym/designator for your Division/Branch and functional area (e.g. RM for Resource Management, or RM-FISC for Resource Management Financial Branch).

Step 4 – Identify whether the document is a draft or final, where applicable for permanent records.

Step 5 – Identify the version number where applicable to be notated by a “V” followed by the applicable number.

Step 6 – Identify the initials of the last employee to update the file.

Step 7 – Save the file using all of the above details in the following format:

YYYYMMDD_Title_Division_Draft/Final_Version#(initials)

Note: *Only files maintained on or transferred to the shared drive should be saved in accordance with these conventions. Approved SharePoint sites and cloud based applications capture much of the information required by the standard naming convention in its metadata. Therefore, including such information in the document title when the document is maintained on these platforms would be duplicative.*

Email Messages Preservation

Depending on the content, e-mails may be considered federal records. An electronic message is considered a record if it documents DoDEA’s mission, actions, or provides evidence of operations and business transactions. Another good metric is whether anyone else would need to retrieve the message to find out what had been done or to use it in other official capacity.

Electronic messages should be saved on the DoDEA shared drive in the appropriate file folder, either in real-time or in batches by month or subject. As a best practice, however, these messages should first be converted to PDF. Converting electronic messages to PDF helps ensure these records will be readily accessible in the years to come as the software used for electronic messaging develops and changes. Once converted and saved to the shared drive, emails should then be deleted from one’s inbox.

Federal Information Systems (FIS)

All DoDEA databases and information systems must be evaluated for their administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value, and scheduled with NARA. Examples of information from a database or information system that may be considered a federal record include: input/source records, system documentation (codebooks, record layouts, etc.), system outputs, and master

files. In addition, for information systems, inputs received from other systems or information transmitted to other systems must be identified and considered as part of the scheduling process.

DoDEA's FIS applicable disposition schedules MUST be noted on the DoDEA File Plans. The schedules for each system MUST be reviewed annually in order to ensure continued applicability. To that effect, a DoDEA Information Systems Survey MUST be completed and reviewed by the DoDEA Records Management Officer and Privacy Officer.

For future database and system development, the DoDEA Records Management Officer should be brought into planning conversations as early as possible to ensure all records management requirements are met.

Note: *All new databases and systems must be scheduled with NARA prior to becoming operational.*

Definitions

Disposition. Refers to the action taken on records at the end of their retention period:

- Destruction for temporary records
- Transfer for permanent records

File Series. Refers to a group of records arranged together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific type of transaction, or have some other type of relationship.

Functional File System. A system of files based on the major functions by which the records will be retrieved. With program records or mission-related files, these functions mirror the office organization and reflect the nature of the work being done there.

General Records Schedule (GRS). A schedule issued by the Archivist of the United States governing the disposition of specified recurring series common to several or all agencies of the federal government. These series include civilian personnel and payroll records, procurement, budget, travel, electronic, audiovisual, and administrative management records. The GRS does not apply to an agency's program records.

Inactive Records. Records that are no longer required in the conduct of current business and therefore can be transferred to an FRC or destroyed, per approved disposition schedule.

Information. Used synonymously with data, also inclusive of electronic files, folders, etc.

Naming Conventions. Is the office-approved method of naming electronic files to ensure standardization of practice which supports increased search capability and organization.

Office File Plan. Is an office-wide document managed by an assigned individual and should be updated during transition to a new folder structure. File plans should include, among other information, the new file locations, relevant file series, and disposition information.

Permanent Records (PERM). Records appraised by the Archivist of the United States as having enduring value because they document the organization and functions of the agency that

created or received them or they contain significant information on persons, things, problems, and conditions with which the agency deals.

Personal Files (also referred to as Personal Papers). Documentary materials belonging to an individual that are not used to conduct agency business. Personal files are excluded from the definition of federal records and are not owned by the government. Personal papers are required to be filed separately from official records of the office.

Records. Include all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a Federal agency under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business.

Records Cutoff. Is the point when documents are no longer added to the designated records folder – usually at the end of the calendar or fiscal year (CY/FY). The defined cutoff date establishes when electronic records will be dispositioned (deleted/destroyed or transferred) based on the OSD/DoDEA Records Schedule requirements.

Records Schedule. Categorizes records as either temporary or permanent, and provides mandatory instructions for the length of retention prior to disposition.

RMO (Records Management Officer). Is responsible for the compliance of an organization's Records Management program.

RLO (Records Liaison Officer). Is responsible for the compliance of a division/office's Records Management program.

Shared Drive. Also known as a network drive, is an electronic location for the storage and access of information by users with appropriate permissions.

Transitory Records. Records of short-term interest (180 days or less), including in electronic form (e.g., e-mail messages), which have minimal or no documentary or evidential value. The format or media of the record does not dictate its record value.

Unscheduled Records. Records whose final disposition has not been approved by the Archivist of the United States. Until a final disposition is approved, all unscheduled records must be treated as permanent.