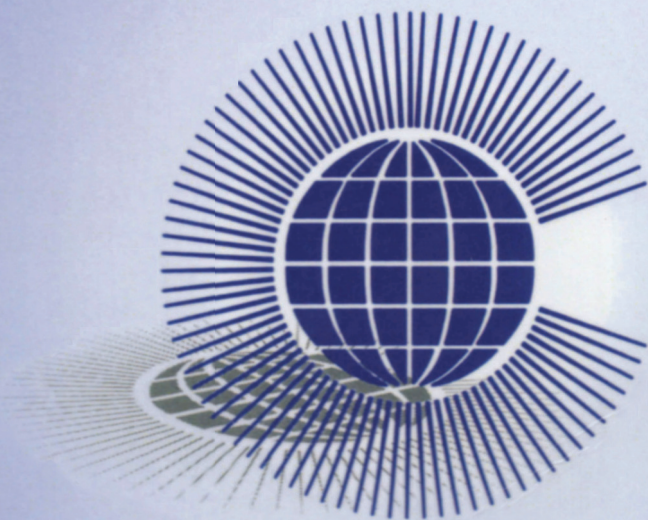


Better Information Practices

Improving Records and Information Management in the Public Service

Managing the Public Service
Strategies for Improvement Series: No. 6

Sam Agere
Victoria Lemieux
Peter Mazikana



Commonwealth Secretariat

**Better Information Practices:
Improving Records and Information
Management in the Public Service**

Published by: Commonwealth Secretariat,
Marlborough House,
Pall Mall,
London SW1Y 5HX.

Copyright © Commonwealth Secretariat 1999

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

May be purchased from:
Commonwealth Association for Public Administration
(CAPAM)
1075 Bay Street, Suite 402
Toronto
Ontario
CANADA M5S 2B1

Tel: 1 (416) 9203337
Fax: 1 (416) 9206574

or from:
The Publications Unit
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7747 6342
Fax: +44 (0)20 7839 9081

ISBN: 0 85092 582 7

Printed by the University of Toronto Press Inc.

**Better Information Practices:
Improving Records and Information
Management in the Public Service**

**Managing the Public Service
Strategies for Improvement Series: No. 6**



**Commonwealth Secretariat
1999**

FOREWORD

A strong and achieving public service is a necessary condition for a competitively successful nation. The Management and Training Services Division (MTSD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat assists member governments to improve the performance of the public service through action-oriented advisory services, policy analysis and training. This assistance is supported by funds from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. (CFTC).

Commonwealth co-operation in public administration is facilitated immeasurably by the strong similarities that exist between all Commonwealth countries in relation to the institutional landscape and the underlying principles and values of a neutral public service. In mapping current and emerging best practices in public service management, the Management and Training Services Division has been able to draw on the most determined, experienced and successful practitioners, managers and policy-makers across the Commonwealth. Their experiences are pointing the way to practical strategies for improvement.

The publication series, *Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement*, provides the reader with access to the experiences and the successes of elected and appointed officials from across the Commonwealth.

Records management is becoming an important instrument of the management of change process upon which modern management principles and practices depend. The success of the public sector reforms that are taking place in many Commonwealth countries depends on the extent to which records and information have been organised and stored. They are instrumental in interpreting the past as well as forecasting and planning for the future.

The Secretariat has been receiving an increased number of requests from member states for assistance in the area of records and information management. This publication is intended as a contribution to the improvement of managing records. New methodologies have been explored, tested and implemented.

The series complements other MTSD publications, particularly the *Public Service Country Profile* series which provides a country-by-country analysis of current good practices and new developments in public service management. Our aim is to provide practical guidance and to encourage critical evaluation. The *Public Service Country Profile* series sets out the **where** and the **what** in public service management. With this new *Strategies for Improvement* series, I believe that we are providing the **how**.

Mohan Kaul
Director
Management and Training Services Division

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commonwealth Secretariat is grateful to Sam Agere, Victoria Lemieux and Peter Mazikana for co-authoring this publication, drawing on their professional knowledge and experience in working with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Records Management Trust in conducting a needs analysis, and designing, installing, training and sustaining Information and Records Management Systems in the public service of a number of Commonwealth countries.

The Secretariat is grateful to the Chief Secretary, Mr. Joseph Edmeade, Mrs Morlene Whittaker, Permanent Secretary and Ms. Jacqueline Flemming, Assistant Secretary in the Establishment Division of the Government of St Kitts & Nevis, and to Mrs Gloria Payne-Banfield, the Secretary to the Cabinet in the Government of Grenada. These top and senior officials collaborated with the authors in creating conducive environments in which to conduct the needs analysis and in developing practical frameworks for the implementation of the newly-designed systems.

Particular thanks are due to the International Records Trust, London, the City Council of Toronto in Canada and the University of the West Indies who kindly allowed some of their materials to be used as examples in this publication. Thanks are also due to Roy Chalmers and Greg Covington for their assistance in the production of this publication.

Although in editing, every attempt has been made to retain the accuracy of the contributions, the final responsibility for any introduced errors or inaccuracies rests with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

CONTENTS

Foreword	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Records and Information Management Practices and Procedures	15
The Cost Factor in Records and Information Management	18
Management of Active Records	20
Computerisation	39
Training and Human Resources Development	42
Records Appraisal and Scheduling	45
Managing Semi-Current Records	72
File Closure	74
File Transfer	78
Records Centre Operations	84
The Management of Non-Current Records	92
Records Disposal	93
Archives	97
Organisational, Legislative and Policy Framework	110
Appendices	117
Bibliography	133

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICES IN RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

The keeping of records and storing of information in an organisation have, in the last few years, become critical not only for historical purposes but also, and more importantly, for current and future managerial and policy development. They have been used as tools and instruments with which to understand organisations and to use them as a basis for improvement, comparison with other agencies and secure resources.

Records management is a term used to refer to the way official records (correspondence, files, information) are organised in such a way that they have a meaning, and can be used continuously by the users such as managers, records professionals, educational institutions, legal authorities, the donor community and any other interested parties. Anne Thurston defines recorded information as “information which provides legal evidence. It can be verified, its context can be demonstrated and it can be shown that it has been protected from corruption”¹

Records management is increasingly becoming an important instrument which underpins the management of change process upon which modern management principles and practices depend. The public sector reforms, for example, that are taking place in many parts of the world depend on records and information that have been logically organised and stored, thus giving a meaning to the user. They are instrumental towards the interpretation of the past as well as forecasting and planning for the future.

Development in technology has also had an impact on the way in which records are kept and information stored. Many records in organisations are now computerised making it necessary for the users to be computer-literate in order to interpret the information accurately.

Records management has not only become an instrument for good management but has also developed into a recognised discipline and field of study, both in educational institutions as well as in government departments. It has, therefore, become an international instrument and message which can be given the same meaning and be shared between and among the users in different parts of the world. Within Commonwealth countries which have a common tradition in language, administration, law and education, the best practices of managing records can now

be shared as in a global village. Dissemination of information is therefore facilitated by the common traditional norms. The objectives of this publication:

- To share the best practices in records and information management in reforming the public services, as an instrument of the state.
- To design an improved records management system which can address deficiencies in the system which hinder successful implementation of the reform process.
- To demonstrate the development of a Retention Schedule where it is not available.
- To prepare for the introduction of the computerisation of personnel records.
- To show the example of a manual used by ministries and departments.
- To formulate guidelines for the use of the schedule and indexing.
- To make senior government officials aware of the utilisation of the system.

BACKGROUND

The recent developments in the political, economic and social fields have been underpinned by an organised system of managing records. They have also had an impact on the administration and management of government departments. The decline in the ideological confrontation and the consequential development and emphasis on the market economy as a dominant philosophy, the democratisation demands and process and the increase in the development of social movements for change have demonstrated that shared information has been effective in the development process.

In the political arena, there is evidence that the role of the state has been or is being redefined to meet the new demands by citizens for transparency and accountability. The movement towards greater democracy, culminating into open and just government, has depended on organised and well-managed information systems and records. The promotion of good governance and accountability would not have been that successful without available and accessible records and information which citizens can use as a base for their demands. Governments that have tried to suppress information have been frustrated by the spread of information in their countries from the international community. It is possible for citizens to see whether the government is transparent and accountable through the availability of

records which can be used as evidence in policy shifts. Well-managed records and information systems are therefore important instruments for guarding transparency through the formulation of standards of conduct for public officials. In some countries such as the UK, Parliamentary Standards Committees make information available and public for ease of interpreting inappropriate behaviour or deviations from the norms by public officials.

In the economic field, some governments have redefined the role of the state through, for example, concentrating on areas it can best manage and leaving other responsibilities to the private sector, public enterprises and non-government organisations. The state, in the demarcation of powers for example, would be responsible for creating a conducive environment for investment. In doing so, it must make information available about its governance, democracy, protection of citizens, rule of law and, above all, its management of resources and revenue. The tender procedures are clearly transparent only when there is access to the established criteria and recourse to appeal when there is evidence of wrong-doing.

Records management has become a critically important instrument not only in managing but also in reforming the public sector and the civil service machinery of government. For any reform to take place, there must be some current information about it which can be retrieved and modified. In some countries, difficulties have been experienced in obtaining accurate statistics about the size and cost of the civil service. Consequently, the number of ghost posts (posts which do not exist but for which payment is made by Treasury) could not be ascertained and exact expenditure unknown because there are no proper and accurate records and information systems in place.

In still other countries, some ministries and departments have duplicated their functions and responsibilities. One of the reasons for such duplication or overlap is that records are not properly stored and information is not shared by ministries so that they know what each of them is doing. Duplication is not only a waste of time and resources but also expensive in the sense that staff are paid for replicating the functions of other departments.

The seriousness of the problem has been identified as a result of increased budget deficit, recurrent expenditure and inability to collect the government debts. The reform of the public service has been slow in some countries either because of the absence of information or because records are not managed in such a way as to be easily retrieved for use. In some developing countries the donor community has recommended the use of computers where they do not exist as part of technical assistance. The computerisation of records has contributed greatly to the efficient use and storage of information within government departments. It has contributed immensely to the solutions of many administrative problems in that information on the latest developments in technology is disseminated quickly, thereby facilitating

communication between the users and consumers of development policy. In this context, it has assumed the role of problem-solving in the process of implementing government policy as well as delivering the services efficiently.

The main purpose, therefore, of maintaining good management of public service records is to facilitate the development of a new approach to and an understanding of the importance of all recorded information and to use it as a meaningful tool in reforming the service. It also aims to build bridges between the policy-makers and the consumers of services in improving their skills in understanding and using recorded information for the development process. In many developing countries, the public service is inadequately served in the area of modern information technology. The management of information systems has been so archaic in some respects that there has been an overwhelming reliance on files within filing systems, and inadequate physical storage space for files and papers. The lack of storage facilities tends to create nightmares for people who have to retrieve and use the information with accuracy and timeliness. One of the consequences of such a poor storage system is that the capacity to make good quality decisions is adversely affected.

In reviewing the performance of the entire public service machinery as part of the reform, it has always been necessary to review the objectives, functions, rules and regulations, procedures and practices. While the reviews aimed at improving productivity and better quality of service, they have brought about by introduction and adaptations, more modern techniques and approaches suitable to the particular needs of the organisation. The reviews stressed the importance of creating opportunities for innovations and management of change. They also led to a management ethos which places importance on experimentation, receptivity to new ideas and systems of management and flexibility to meet the new challenges of a rapidly changing environment. The overall outcome of these reviews was the development of organisational manuals, policies and procedures which would guide the newly-recruited staff towards the best practices and ways of doing things differently. These outcomes were also to be underpinned by recorded information which is properly stored and with a potential of being retrieved easily.

To the extent that records are available and retrievable, recorded information plays an important role in the re-organisation of the administration. Documentary evidence in developing countries shows that, where information has been recorded, the policy decisions have been made in time to meet the changing social environment as well as the global challenges. Information is therefore a source of power in influencing decisions and events in reforming the public service as a whole.

In instances where records and information have not been available and retrievable, it has been difficult to make policy decisions. Even if policy decisions were made,

the quality was poor and often had negative consequences, not only for the government but also for consumers, stakeholders and the donor community.

THE ROLE OF RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM PROCESS

Records and information management systems play an important role in many stages of the development process and in management procedures. They are used as essential instruments in facilitating the efficient management of the public service reform which is taking place in most Commonwealth countries. The changes that are occurring in many parts of the world have a direct impact on Commonwealth countries, which are part and parcel of the global village. The spread of information and the sharing of best practices in the public service reform process are made possible by the use of modern technology, recorded information and the availability of properly managed records. The spread of such knowledge is further facilitated by common skills in managing records and information and by the potential adaptability of systems in countries that have a common tradition in management, law, language and culture. In addition, management culture is easily inherited, transferable and adaptable.

The success of the public service reform programme depends on many factors, the most important of which is the proper and organised method of managing the records and information systems. In most organisations, registries and records constitute the heart of the operational system. Some of the goals of the reform programme such as efficiency, budget deficit reduction, increased productivity, commercialisation of public enterprises and improving the skills base of the human resources are now making stringent demands for an accurate and well-organised information base. The management of information in one country would need to be uniform in the same way that organisational resources such as finance are managed. Improvements in Public Service Reform will, of necessity, require a review of the ways that information, statistics and data are collected and utilised. Records management plays an important role in the management of change and in institutionalising the corporate culture of an organisation.

A needs assessment study conducted in St. Kitts and Nevis and Grenada revealed that the records management systems had broken down. It was not possible, for example, to retrieve records from the Registry and Archives, the classification system of correspondence was inadequate and most people used their memories to recollect the whereabouts of certain documents. The system was so widespread that if the registry officer was away from the office, nobody could easily locate the file. The method of handling and accounting for mail, files received, actioned and dispatched left much to be desired.

The room in which both current and semi-current records were stored became the dumping ground for broken chairs, fans etc. with records thrown in any order. The retrieval of records became more and more difficult and depended on memory. In the archives there were inadequate storage facilities for public access and use of archives, an absence of a clear organisational mandate and legislation base and a deteriorating condition of the archives holdings.

The two governments have realised the important role played by organised and well-managed information and records systems in the public service reform process. The project was considered crucial by the governments because they believed that they could be rescued from deteriorating standards of records management. The records had been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent over a long period of time that only a complete review of the system could contribute significantly to the improvement of their records. The management did not place such importance on records management until they found that they could not retrieve information from an important document received a few months before. Further, the governments found it difficult to review policies because records could not be identified and used at the time they were needed. Outlined below are some of the functional and specific management areas in which records and information management systems have been effective and easily shared.

Policy formulation, implementation and evaluation

The formulation of any policy by government takes various forms and stages. It also depends on a number of factors which together complete the policy formulation process. The forms and stages are based on the records that are available and retrievable. In addition, various types of information need to be in place to assist in making decisions. Policy analysis, for example, would require that facts and figures be well-organised and managed in order for the managers to know the state of affairs before changes are made. In developing a policy, the challenge is for the decision-makers to find new approaches and alternative courses of action which leave room for further initiatives by the actors in the policy process. The availability of choices depends upon a vast research agenda, information and records. The relevant research and information on key issues of policy formulation enables governments to take appropriate course of action in problem solving process. This information needs to be processed in accordance with the needs of stakeholders.

The implementation of policy requires co-operation in information and communication activities between and among key actors in the policy-making process, thereby strengthening the capacity of managing the policy itself. The implementation of policy is also facilitated by information capacity-building, an exchange of a whole range of knowledge in order to improve co-operation between

partners in development. Effective communication depends on the way the information is managed and disseminated to those who implement policy so that they can constantly assess the efficiency of the implementation process.

Many countries have developed information and documentation centres which systematically collect information and experiences on policy implementation and make it available to users and interested organisations. Such centres have the capacity to contribute to regional related projects which aim to promote information availability and exchange on co-operation issues. In such projects, international or regional, co-operation is facilitated by the availability not only of information but also of new technologies in which collaborative efforts can be maximised.

Much of this information is in the form of reports, meetings, research studies, statistics and other raw data. Information is now communicated easily with the development of new technologies such as organising dialogue through the internet, and e-mail. Modern information tools and instruments accelerate the ease with which communication can be enhanced. These include information technology hardware, software, training and applications (databases, electronic mail, internet access etc.) and document search, storage, retrieval and delivery service.²

The evaluation of policy has become an important exercise in determining whether the objectives are being achieved. The evaluation of any programme contributes to the successful reassessment of the utilisation of human and financial resources. In general, an evaluation should seek to determine how far the objective has been realised from both quantitative and qualitative points of view. The evaluation process should be recorded through well-designed instruments that are stored and that can be replicated. For this reason, a running file of the programme is maintained for ease of follow up of the process. An evaluation of a policy process becomes an essential tool to assist in drawing out lessons of past experience which can inform future work. All these policy processes, practices and procedures rely heavily on well-organised and managed information and records which can easily be retrieved for further use. The effective use of records has become so important that it is necessary to train staff in the proper storage of information. The development of relevant training materials such as case studies, training modules and methodologies are of value to the profession as well as to the actors in the use of records and information.

Pillars of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness

The successful management of records and information in an organisation contributes to the maintenance of some of the democratic processes and principles. An efficient state, for example, that has to be accountable to its own citizens and stakeholders must of necessity depend on an efficient and effective instrument. For

the instrument to be effective, it must have records and information available for the users to assess for themselves the extent to which the state is being accountable to society. One of the pillars of accountability and transparency in a democratic state is the extent to which people have access to information to assist them in evaluating whether the government is transparent or not. In some countries, governments have legalised freedom of expression which is also related to freedom of information. Information only becomes a powerful instrument in governance when it is organised in such a way that it is retrievable, usable and a meaning can be drawn from it. Some autocratic governments would want to control the flow of information so that society had no access to any wrong-doing by the state. Indeed, it is a way of undermining democracy.

The efficiency and effectiveness of a policy depends on the availability and use of records so it is possible to see whether resources are used at minimum cost while achieving the goals of the state. Both efficiency and effectiveness can now be quantified through statistics, records and available information. Qualifiable products are much simpler to interpret than qualitative results in which there are elements of subjectivity.

The democratic process is often underpinned by the election process which also depends on accurate records and information being stored in a system from which it can be retrieved. The absence of names, ages and addresses of voters in a voters' roll can undermine the success of any election process, thereby nullifying the democratic process. This leaves room for suspicion and allegations of rigging the elections.

Collection of revenue and allocation of resources

The major revenue collection of government comes through various forms of taxation, such as income tax, sales tax etc. For the collection of revenue to be effective there must be information about people who pay tax, and it must be accurate and available. It must equally be stored in such a way that it can be used consistently or periodically with the hope of getting the same result.

Many countries have had difficulties in collecting taxes, mainly because the information on tax-payers is either inadequate or cannot be retrieved or replicated. If records are not in good order, inspection and evaluation of tax payments will be extremely difficult and will lead to a loss of revenue.

The collection of debt by government for services rendered is often made difficult because the records are not in order or the information is not computerised.

Tax avoidance or tax evasion, depending on which concept is illegal, has been exacerbated by the lack of effective management of information systems. When the taxable base is narrowed as a result of poor records keeping system, the income derived from taxation also is reduced, thereby affecting the allocation of resources by government. The reduction in revenue collection negatively affects the delivery of social services such as education, health, housing etc. Inadequate funding for major services will result in a decline in living standards, poor quality of life, low level of literacy, and homelessness. The pillars of social development, namely health, education and shelter will deteriorate leading not only to social unrest and political instability but also to an increase in poverty amidst few employment opportunities.

The allocation of financial resources to ministries by the Ministry of Finance and the management of the budget system is unlikely to be efficient in the absence of proper records and information systems being in place. Many officials are unaware of the importance of records and information until they are confronted with the absence of such information. Some governments have experienced budget deficits because of their inability to balance revenue and expenditure. In some cases, governments have been paying salaries and wages to civil servants who do not exist. Such posts, popularly known as ghost posts, are the result of poor records and information management.

Negotiations and arbitration in grievance matters

From time to time, government is in conflict with its own workers or other groups in society. The resolution of the conflict requires negotiations between the two conflicting parties. Staff associations always have to negotiate with government over salary increases and improvements in the conditions of service. The negotiating positions often taken by each side are based on available information and records. The associations, for example, often argue that their wages are below the inflation rate and compare themselves with employees in other sectors. The government, on the other hand, argues that it cannot afford the proposed wage increases on account of dwindling revenue collection and management of debt. Whatever the merits and demerits of the arguments, both sides rely heavily on their records, statistics and information being reliable and easily retrievable.

Many Third World countries have had to negotiate with the Bretton Woods Institutions, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, over assistance in solving the balance of payments problems, debt crises, loans and grants. Because they do not always have accurate information about their own countries, they have often not fared well in the conduct of negotiations. The little and unreliable information available has often led them to negotiate from a position of weakness. They have ended up getting a poor deal. In many cases, they have

had to accept conditionalities for assistance because they have lacked alternative options based on accurate information. Consequently, Third World countries are very much disadvantaged in their attempts to negotiate with donors or partners in development and in the North/South debate.

In still other countries, information has been available, but the staff have had no skills in interpreting that information. This makes it necessary for managers to be computer-literate so that they can use the available information more accurately and for the good of the organisation.

One of the tactics often used in negotiations is to have information and knowledge about the parties involved in the conflict. Knowledge of the positions of the opposite camp in certain areas provides an advantage in knowing their weaknesses and points of strength.

Public Service reform and personnel records

Many countries have initiated reforms of the public service so that it can perform better and improve the delivery of services to the people. The reforms have demonstrated the need for accurate information and records so that details of those areas requiring change are known.

One of the most important instruments that underpins the reform process is the Personnel Records. “There are two categories of personnel records: statistical information which is concerned with overall members and personnel information about individual staff members. Data in both categories are often hard to locate, and are inaccurate and out of date in some countries. More commonly, what staff information exists is hidden away on personal files which are infrequently updated. There are often disparities between payroll data, staff and establishment lists kept centrally and personnel information within the organisations. Most of the time, this is probably due to ineffective communication systems, clerical inaccuracies and lack of interest in maintaining accurate records. Another reason could be that some managers prefer not to share detailed information about the staff in their organisation, especially when this exceeds establishment quotas.”³

Basic statistical information about staff in ministries is always required for a number of reasons. First, to make a quantitative assessment of training needs; second, for promotion, advancement and transfer; and thirdly, for the overall performance of staff. In some ministries, the number of established posts, filled posts, and temporary posts is not always readily available to make a decision on staff. The accurate information on age, sex, grade, department and category of staff is important when consideration is given for downsizing or right-sizing the public service.

Another type of information which is often not well documented and made available within ministries is the job description and job analysis. Job analysis is the process used to identify important elements of a job as its purpose, the main duties involved and its relationship with other jobs in the ministry. The initial product of job analysis is a job description. Other products include a job specification, person specification and training specification.⁴ In addition, job analysis has many uses including job evaluation and classification, organisational human resources planning, selection, recruitment and placement, induction and schemes of service, performance appraisal and health and safety. Such information is important in personnel management, human resources development and planning and budgeting.

In many developing countries, experience has shown that job descriptions often do not exist or are out of date, are too superficial or describe an idealised hope rather than a realistic job. Senior and top level staff such as Permanent Secretaries do not have job descriptions clearly written down. However, there is a general understanding of what the post-holder does although it is not well documented. Such information is always necessary in reviewing the performance of the Permanent Secretary of in restructuring the organisation.

In addition, job descriptions, objectives and functions of some ministries are either absent or not clearly laid down for people to see. The absence of clearly stated goals of some ministries becomes visible at the time the reviews are conducted or when determining the performance of the ministry. Some top officials in ministries had never seen their job descriptions or the objectives and plans of their ministries. If such staff do not have their job descriptions to what extent can they enforce performance appraisal of their staff (subordinates) when they themselves are not clear about theirs?

DOCUMENTATION

The efficiency and effectiveness of any government and the speed with which policies are formulated and managed depend upon a number factors of which documentation is one of the critical factors. Documents of all kinds; ordinance, rules, regulations, procedures, policy agency reports, audit reports, parliamentary reports, public accounts committee reports, to name but a few, provide an obvious source of information about ministries and their immediate environment. In reforming the public service, the critical information that is essential to understanding what the organisation is like, includes what plans, if any, it has for change, what its objectives are, how it has behaved in the past, how it is structured and supposed to function, the kind of procedures its staff are meant to follow and how it is staffed and financed.

In some countries, it is surprising to see that some top managers are not familiar with these basic tools of information which are necessary for an effective organisation. In still others, documentary evidence is hard to obtain, partly because no one can locate it and partly because people are sometimes reluctant to allow others to see it on the grounds that it is confidential or secret. Second, it can be time-consuming and difficult to digest because of the way it is organised and stored. It requires a lot of patience to identify the required information amidst the disorganised manner in which records are maintained.

The purpose of this publication is to develop the best practices in records and information management. Such records must be user-friendly, be conducive to innovation, must accelerate communication and above all reduce costs.

The publication is also an attempt to answer some of the questions raised and problems identified in managing the records systems. These problems are a result of a needs identification survey conducted by the authors in the countries of St. Kitts & Nevis, Grenada and the Gambia. While the problems and needs take different forms in each country, they have common features. The situation observed in these countries is very similar to other countries where such studies have not been conducted.

The following are some of the problems identified:

- In the Financial and Economic Ministries there was no retention schedule for financial vouchers and receipts, making it difficult to know what monies were paid in and out at any one time.
- When a file is bulky, it is either closed or a new one is opened without reference to the first volume.
- There is an absence of policy on which files should be kept or sent to the archives or destroyed. Consequently, all the files are piled up in one room making it inaccessible to the users.
- In some instances, temporary files are opened with a result that many staff have more temporary files which are not cross-referenced.
- In the absence of an efficient system, the records clerks make up their own filing/indexing system, making it difficult to correlate the information and even difficult to retrieve as the same information is in so many files. When files go missing there is a tendency to open new ones.
- There were in some cases, no system of control and flow of information between departments even in the same ministry.

- The physical deterioration of files, correspondence and other documents is a common problem faced by many countries.
- There was no organised and systematic way of sharing information between and among ministries and between Headquarters and provinces or regions.
- The staff responsible for records often occupy the lowest positions in the service, for example untrained secretaries and office orderlies. Such categories of staff are not very conscious of the importance of records management. Most of them have not been trained in records management. In libraries, there is often a large percentage of books that are lost mainly due to lack of proper system as well as a lack of importance attached to information.

REFERENCES

1. Thurston, A., Project Proposal for establishing International Centre for Recorded Information Management: An unpublished paper of the International Records Management Trust, 1996
2. Capacity and Co-operation: ECDPM Strategic Plan 1998-2000. European Centre for Development Policy Management, 1997
3. Reilly Wyne and Clarke Ronald (1990) Training for Public Management. A Handbook for Management Development Human Resource Development Group, Commonwealth Secretariat, p 29
4. Ibid

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

All governments, big and small, create and receive records and information. These records relate to the activities of the ministries and departments and include general correspondence, routine accounting papers, personnel material, and records relating to special projects, programmes, conferences, and seminars. All these records require a system of dealing with them and it is in this respect that records management has a vital role to play.

PURPOSE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The aim of records management is to ensure that records are created, used, stored and retired in an orderly and controlled manner.

The major objectives of records management are:

- To provide improved filing procedures so that related information can be filed together and thus retrieved with ease when required.
- To control the manner in which information is created and the way in which incoming and outgoing mail is received, processed, distributed, used and stored.
- To provide economical storage of information by identifying, scheduling and disposing of outdated information, thereby reducing capital and recurrent investment and expenditure in filing equipment and floor space.
- To identify and make appropriate arrangements for the custody and preservation of records that are vital to the organisation or have historical, research and other long-term value.
- To effect cost savings to the organisation through the control of the creation, distribution and retention of copies of reports, forms and other multiple documents.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY

- **Records** – any medium in or on which information is recorded. Medium includes paper, magnetic tape and disc, microfilm, audio-tape, film, slide, photograph.
- **Current records** – records which are in active use.
- **Semi-current records** – records whose use has declined and are used only from time to time. They are semi-active.
- **Non-current records** – records which are no longer in active use and are being kept in order to fulfill other secondary uses such as legal and audit requirements or for research value.
- **Archives** – records which are no longer used for day-to-day administration and are preserved for reference and research use. For a record to qualify as an archive it must have been deemed to have a lasting administrative and/or historical and reference value. Less than ten per cent of records have this value.
- **Public records and public archives** – records and archives generated by central government, local authorities and parastatals. Such records are normally under the custodianship of a national archives. Records of companies, churches, non-governmental organisations and individuals are referred to as private archives.
- **Life-cycle concept.** Each record has a life which is characterised by creation, usage, storage and eventual retirement through destruction or preservation as an archive.

COMMON RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Antiquated and inadequate filing systems resulting in misfiling and failure to retrieve material.

Unsystematic opening and closure of files without predetermined criteria resulting in inaccurate file titles and retention of information which is no longer required.

Inadequate circulation system resulting in slow circulation of information and failure to locate or pinpoint circulating files.

Lack of file retirement procedures resulting in haphazard transfers of records from records rooms to storerooms.

Lack of procedures for storage and retrieval of semi-current and non-current records resulting in failure to locate records stored in strong-rooms and store-rooms.

Organisations which do not have proper records management procedures lose money through:

- an unmanageable tangle of papers within the office;
- wasted clerical effort in search of information;
- loss of important operating information;
- extravagant use of high-cost office space and equipment;
- loss of vital records required for the legal and financial defence of the organisation.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

There tends to be a distinction between what is said to be records management and what is information management. The former is seen as the management of manual systems while the latter is the management of automated or computerised systems. At the end of the day, however, both systems are dealing with information and an organisation wishing to computerise must have as its starting point the proper organisation and streamlining of the records management system. A good records management programme ensures that the right amount of information reaches the right person at the right time and in the right form. It further ensures that vital and valuable records can be identified and preserved as necessary.

THE COST FACTOR IN RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information and data are costly and valuable resources that should be managed in the same manner as other costly and/or valuable resources. In order to improve and reduce the management costs it is essential to determine and measure the costs involved in the collecting, processing, distribution and storage of information. To achieve this, financial information, among other things will assist and enable the following questions to be answered:

- Is the information needed and is it worth the cost?
- Is the information and data being processed in the best way and at the least cost?
- Can existing methods be changed or streamlined to save money and improve operations?
- Are there duplications or other unnecessary steps and how much can be saved by eliminating them?
- How else can information costs be reduced without compromising quality?
- Should the organisation automate or use more recent technology and how much will be saved by this?
- How much should be charged for an information product?
- What is the risk in dollars of taking or not taking certain actions?

It is difficult to quantify the cost of information. It is estimated that a high percentage of activity and its costs relates to the preparation, obtaining, processing, storing and outputting data and information for use in running an organisation. In addition to personnel costs, information activities incur expenditure in the following areas:

- Facilities such as rent and other overheads.
- Supplies obtained for processing, e.g. pencils, paper, pens and other items.
- Maintenance – the cost of maintaining the facilities and equipment used for processing information. To this must be added the indirect costs for

maintaining equipment partially used for information activities, e.g. vehicles used to collect information.

- Telecommunications are used entirely for information purposes and are a fully accountable item.
- Transport and travel expenses incurred for the purpose of obtaining, verifying, correcting or delivering information. This item must include costs such as hotel accommodation, meals, and other living expenses.
- Training of personnel involved in various aspects of information processing is another expense.

Effective management of information and information resources is essential in reducing costs, and improved information management can save significant amounts of money. Many organisations incur excessive costs because of a number of factors.

- Duplicate collection of information, including cases where two divisions or departments within the same organisation carry out independent surveys to obtain the same data.
- Costs of unreliable information. Unreliable information is that which will no longer be current, accurate or complete, requiring work to correct and leading to poor managerial or operational decision making based on uncorrected and unreliable data.
- Costs of failing to obtain or use pertinent information as can happen when for instance over-payments are made to benefactors because critical data about the recipients is not available.
- Failure to use current information processing technology.
- Inability to retrieve stored information, such costs must include the resources expended in unsuccessfully attempting to obtain information and the problems involved in making decisions without the needed information.
- Collecting data that is not needed. Many systems are designed at a time when there is a real need for certain information or data. However, changing circumstances may reduce or cancel the need for this once needed data. To continue to collect and process such data will be expensive and resources should be applied towards reviewing information needs and eliminating the collection and processing of data no longer needed.

MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVE RECORDS

REGISTRY SYSTEM

Most government ministries and departments operate with centralised registry systems. When a central registry is used, all the organisation's records are maintained in that registry. However, as some departments and units of the ministry or department can be found in physically separate locations, each of these units might have its own registry within its locality.

Functions of the central registry

The functions of the Central Registry are to:

- receive and process incoming mail;
- process and despatch outgoing mail;
- maintain a filing system and file mail that is received or generated internally;
- distribute mail and other information as required;
- retire semi-current and non-current information;
- store and maintain the non-current records;
- conserve and preserve archives.

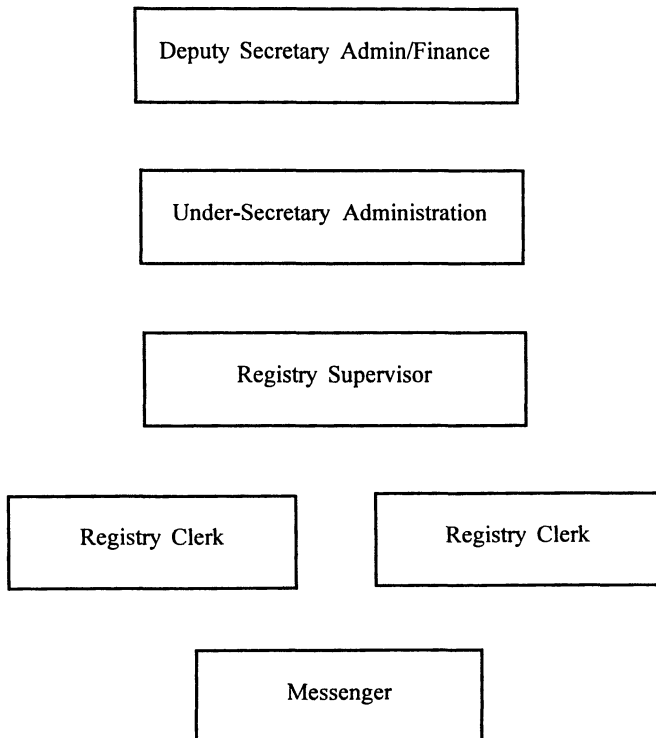
Location

The Central Registry is usually located within or in close proximity to the main administrative block and close to the offices of the Chief Executive Officer, i.e. the Permanent Secretary or Head of Department.

The registry is a distinct office with counters which control access. The windows of the registry have to be burglar-proofed to prevent unauthorised entry. Fire extinguishers have to be installed within each Central Registry and all staff in the Central Registry trained to use the fire extinguishers. Smoking in the registry is strictly forbidden and "No Smoking" signs must be installed in all Central registries.

Organisational structure

The staffing and organisational structure of the Central Registry is determined by the size of the ministry or department. The diagram below shows the structure of a small central registry in a government ministry.



The above structure, the duties and responsibilities of the staff of the Central Registry are as follows:

Job Title	Quantity	Duties and Responsibilities
Registry Supervisor	1	To be the head of the Central Registry. Duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and managing of the registry system • Receiving and opening mail • Classifying mail • Opening and closing files • Handling confidential mail • Referring mail to Head of Ministry • Staff supervision • Staff development • Maintaining the registry computer system
Registry Clerks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving and filing correspondence • Retrieving and issuing files • Compiling and circulating running files • File-tracking • Mail despatch • Maintaining the semi-current and non-current records • Scheduling and disposal of files • Maintaining equipment • Data input
Messenger/ Office Attendant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routing communications to offices • Moving communications from office to office • Keeping registry neat and tidy

Registry equipment

Filing Cabinets are the primary unit of records storage in the registry. The filing cabinets are arranged in the order of the file classification system. Each drawer must have a label to show the contents. Within each drawer there are guides and dividers to indicate contents and to assist with retrieval. The files are stored vertically and hung in suspension files.

Some registries prefer using open shelving which is able to achieve higher storage densities per given floor area.

Other vital registry equipment includes the following:

- paper punches
- staplers
- date stamp

Departmental registries

There are cases where it is not practical to have one central registry. This often arises when the operational units are physically separated. In these circumstances, there is need to create departmental or unit registries. The major requirement is that, if departmental registries are created, then their systems should be formalised. What should be avoided is the creation of office registries which are not part of the registry system and yet which often end up undermining the central registry system through the retention of records that should be filed in the central registry. At regular intervals, it is necessary to check all offices to ensure that they are not maintaining their own individual registries.

HANDLING OF MAIL

Processing of incoming mail

- Mail is collected in a mail bag by a messenger or office attendant from the Post Office. Some is hand delivered. Mail is collected at least twice a day.
- The mail bag is handed over, by the messenger, to the Registry Supervisor. It is advisable that the bag is opened in the presence of a witness, i.e. one of the registry staff.
- Mail is sorted by the Registry Supervisor into two categories, i.e. official and personal. The personal mail is sent to the addressee. The official mail is further sorted into top secret, secret, confidential, remittances and ordinary.
- Remittances or registered mail are identified, recorded in a Remittances Register and handed over to Finance/Treasury. The latter sign the register to acknowledge receipt. The Remittances Register contains the following information:
 - Date received;
 - Remittance type;
 - Details of sender;
 - Officer handed over to;
 - Date handed over;
 - Signature of receiver.
- Official mail, which is ordinary, is opened by the Registry Supervisor or one of the Registry Clerks and date stamped. Secret or confidential mail

is opened only by the Registry Supervisor or by the head of ministry or department.

- The ordinary or confidential mail is registered in the mail register.
- The mail is classified by the Registry Supervisor. In classifying, the Registry Supervisor determines the appropriate file into which the incoming communication must be filed. The file number is endorsed next to the date stamp or on the top left hand corner.
- Ordinary mail is passed on to the registry clerks who retrieve the relevant file. An outcard is filled and left in the place where the file has been retrieved from. At all times, the outcard must be filled in so that, either the file is in the cabinet, or, in its place, there is an outcard. The alternative to using an outcarding system is to have a register where the files being issued are recorded.
- The mail is put on the file and folioed and either sent to the head of the ministry/ department or to the officer who should deal with the issue. Folioing is that process by which each item being put onto a file is given a number starting at one with the first item filed and rising as other items are added.

Confidential, secret and top secret files

The higher that one goes up into the ministry, the likelihood that there will be highly confidential matters to be dealt with. The main requirements of dealing with these items is to make sure that they are easily distinguishable and that their confidentiality is protected. It is usual practice to designate the files so that, for instance, Confidential files are green in colour, the Secret files are dark blue and the Top Secret are red.

If the confidential, secret and top secret files are kept in separately designated filing cabinets within the registry, the cabinets should have security locks and the keys should be kept by the Registry Supervisor. The Registry Supervisor should be security vetted to the highest level.

Handling of out-going mail

- Three or more signed copies of the outgoing mail are received in the registry.

- The original is identified and despatch details recorded in the Despatch Register/Book. These details include:
 - Details of outgoing communication
 - Despatch date
 - Name and address of addressee
 - Signature of recipient (for hand deliveries)

The original is then put in an envelope and sent out.

- The Despatch Register/Book can be used as a delivery book, although as much as possible, this should be avoided. The delivery book should be separate.

The second copy is filed in the relevant file.

The third copy is put into a flimsy or running file. At the end of each week, the Flimsy File is assembled. While the Flimsy File often provides a back-up in case the file copy cannot be located, its primary role is to inform officers of the communications that have been generated in a given period. Thus, the Flimsy File should be put together regularly, preferably at the end of each week. It should then be circulated to designated members of staff. A circulation list is used as follows:

Flimsy File Circulation List

FLIMSY FILE CIRCULATION LIST			
MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT	WEEK ENDING		
	Date In	Date Out	Signature
Head of Ministry/Department			
Dept Head			
Dept Head			
Officer			
Officer			
Officer			

The date-in and date-out columns are designed to speed up the circulation of the files by showing the date the officer received the file and the date he/she sent it out. The date-in column is completed by the messenger/office attendant who takes the file from office to office.

The flimsy files are usually retained and disposed of after one year.

Performance Indicators for mail handling system

The following are the performance indicators that will be assessed when a systems audit is undertaken on the mail handling system. Their fulfilment or otherwise will constitute a measure of the operational efficiency of the system.

- Mail is being collected from the Post Office at least twice a day.
- Mail is being processed and routed within two hours of receipt.
- All mail received is being recorded in the mail book.
- All mail is being date stamped and folioed.
- Mail is being filed before routing.
- All files on issue have an outcard.
- Despatch register has entries of all outgoing mail.
- Delivery book has signatures to evidence receipt.
- File copies are being accurately placed.
- Flimsy files are being circulated each week.

FILE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Classifying

Classifying is the identification of the file into which a communication must be put. The person whose job it is to decide on to which file a letter, memorandum or circular should go must:

- be familiar with the filing system in use in the organisation;

- be able to read and understand what the letter or communication is all about;
- be able to open a new file if none exists, and to keep an eye on areas that may need change – and to be able to implement that change without altering the structure of the system.
- Be able to converse with various levels of management, so as to be informed and kept in the picture of the policies of the organisation.

File classification system

There are several types of file classification systems that can be used. The most popularly used are the alpha numeric and numeric systems. The essence of a filing system is that it must mirror the functions and activities of the organisation because it is these that give rise to the documentation which needs to be filed. An example of a numeric filing system is at Appendix 1.

The system illustrated is basically numeric with each distinct activity/function of the organisation constituting a subject/function/activity division. Each division is allocated a number being a series at intervals of fifty as shown in the appendix. The divisions are not structured in alphabetic sequence because such a sequence would collapse with the addition of new activities and functions. The divisions are, however, indexed alphabetically for ease of access.

Within each division, file and file sub-divisions are created as illustrated and given numbers within the subject division. The numbers, e.g. 101, 102 can be files by themselves or they can be the headings for a sub-grouping of files. For example:

100	Finance
101	Accounting Instructions
101/1	Handling of Cash in Transit
101/2	Accounting for Donor Funded Projects
101/3	etc.

There is flexibility in the creation of the sub-divisions within each filing division and users can select subject categories of relevance and make additions as necessary. The divisional structure, however, should not be altered without the prior authorisation of the Registry Supervisor.

The provision of 50 spaces for files and file sub-divisions within each major division is meant to provide for the creation of new files and file sub-divisions as functions change or expand.

File titling and numbering

- File titles must be precise and must mean exactly what the contents of the file contain.
- If there is more than one subject in a letter then a copy/copies must be made so that the correspondence goes on to both or more files.
- The words miscellaneous and general, should be avoided, as this leads to omnibus files, i.e. files containing many unrelated subjects.
- File titles must be in simple language and abbreviations must not be used. Abbreviations sometimes have more than one meaning, and office abbreviations mean nothing to the newcomer.
- File titles should be altered to meet the need of the correspondence, especially if the subject/activity grows.
- The file numbers should remain simple.
- Folioing is useful. This is the numbering of each piece of paper on the file from bottom upwards.

INDEXING SYSTEM

Scope of the indexing system

The main objective of the indexing system is to provide a tool that will facilitate the identification and retrieval of records and information required for the execution of Government duties and business, wherever that information may be held within the ministry and department. The indexing system must be designed in a way that makes it possible to index the files and records in both the formalised and structured Central Registries in the ministries and departments as well as the files and records in the subsidiary, formal and informal filing systems as may be found in other units and offices.

The indexing system is meant to facilitate the retrieval of information. The purpose of creating records is not only to document the activities of the organisation but to

provide a body of information which can be used by the organisation for the carrying out of its duties and functions. Organising information without a means of retrieving the information serves no purpose. One of the mechanisms that facilitates the retrieval of this information is the index which can be described as a pointer, indicator or systematic guide to the items or information contained in a filing system or database.

The structure of the indexing system must be such as to facilitate the retrieval of the information. Different people wishing to retrieve information will have different reasons for retrieving the information and are likely to approach the retrieval process differently. There is also the likelihood that they will specify their requirements differently. While some of the users will know what they are looking for, others will have only vague notions of what information sources are most useful to meet their needs. The indexing system must be designed so that it is able to support both types of users.

The indexing system should cover various categories of current records including:

- Files contained in both the formal registries as well as the subsidiary systems
- Registers
- Personal Files

Index to the file list

The major instrument for the identification and retrieval of information is the Main Index to the Current Files in the ministry and department. The index embraces all the current files held in the ministry and department.

One type of indexing system which can be used is based on the titles of the files and documents in the ministries and departments and on the KEYWORD indexing concept.

It involves the indexing of the file titles and descriptors of the documents or records, and gives information on the whereabouts of the information being sought, leading the searcher to the required document. The system is developed on the premise that file, document and record titles, and specifically the words in the titles, convey the subject content of the document to which the title pertains.

The Keyword Indexing System that can be used by registries is a simplified version of indexing systems which are commonly used by librarians to index information

on book titles. Keywords comprise those words within a file title or records descriptor that can be used by someone seeking information on a particular issue or subject.

Each word that could be used by a searcher seeking information becomes a keyword that is indexed, with a card being created under it. The card also contains information about the other aspects of the file title or records descriptor, thus enabling the person seeking information to be directed to the relevant file or document. The index does not give the user the actual information contained in the document but merely directs the person to the document.

The following example illustrates how the indexing is done.

<u>File Reference Number</u>	<u>File Title</u>
HD/O1	Training of Staff

For the above file, two index cards would be created as follows:

Index card 1

<u>TRAINING,</u> of Staff
File Ref. No. HD/O1 Location: Personnel Dept Registry

Index card 2

<u>STAFF,</u> Training of Staff
File Ref.No. HD/01 Location: Personnel Dept. Registry

Notice that on each of the cards, the title of the file is indicated. In the case of the first file, the file title was indicated by merely completing the remaining parts of the file title. On the second card, after putting the main entry, the full file title is then repeated. In all cases, the file reference number is shown in full, so that, whichever of the cards a user consults, he/she is guided back to the same file. The

location of the file is also shown. This is because, the index cards may cover the records in several offices and sections within the ministry/ department and it is thus necessary to indicate the place where the records are physically located.

The word of is not indexed as it is not a keyword. What this means is that it is not expected that a user will come and look for information under "of". It is expected that the user will think either of TRAINING or STAFF, not "of".

The following rules should be observed in determining what should be indexed:

Files: The file titles should be indexed. File is used here to denote various types of file covers including, file folders of the manilla type, lever arch files, box files and accessible files.

Registers: The name of the register constitutes the title. Examples are:

- Incoming Mail Register
- Personal File(PF) Register
- Indents Register
- Advances Register
- Cheques Received Register

The titles of the above registers are the ones that would be indexed. It is again important to draw attention to the fact that the index is an index to the file/record titles and not to the inside contents. Thus, there may exist other indexes specific to the contents of a register.

Books: Books such as are used in some ministries and departments should also be indexed. The books referred to here are those that are used to record information, not published books. Examples of such books are Vote Books and Voucher Books.

Other types of records: There are other types of records which do not have titles as such. These include financial records of various types and their identification is usually according to what they are. Examples include vouchers, cheque stubs, goods received notes, requisitions, and ledgers. It is these descriptors that are indexed.

When the indexing exercise has been completed, covering all offices and records in the ministry or department, all the cards are put together and rearranged in the

alphabetical order of the first word on each card. The cards are arranged alphabetically.

The above indexing system, based on file and document titles, has the advantage that it is simple and easy to understand and can be produced relatively cheaply and quickly, whether manually or by computer. The index entries are based on the words in the title itself, thereby removing the necessity for human interpretation of the indexing terms. The language of the index therefore mirrors the terminology of the filing system itself. The integration and cumulation of the entries from different filing units is also relatively simple.

There are, however, some limitations which must be understood and appreciated. The title index is really a crude form of indexing and can demand a great deal of imagination and searching skills on the part of the users. The file titles do not always constitute an accurate summary of the contents of a file or document. The title is also a summarisation at the highest aggregated level and does not represent the sub-themes and other subjects represented in the file or document. The lack of control over indexing language can also be a drawback.

Indexes to personal files

The following rules can be used when creating alphabetic indexes for personal files:

- A register or index cards should be used. The names are then arranged in alphabetic order within the register or the cards. It is preferred that cards be used, since registers are inflexible in arranging the names within each alphabetic section. There are also problems in that it is difficult to forecast the rate at which each of the alphabetic sections will grow and therefore to leave sufficient room for each section.
- If a register is used, each letter of the alphabet should be allocated a separate section of the register with empty pages left in between sections to provide for expansion as new employees come on board.
- Within each alphabetic section, the names are then arranged in alphabetic sequence. In arranging the names within the section, the sequence of the names is decided by the alphabetic sequence of the letters coming after the first one.

In this way, the second letter of the surname determines the precedence of the name. Thus, Jeffers comes before Jenkins, while the latter comes before John. If the first two letters are the same, then the sequence is determined by the third letter.

Where these are again similar, the fourth letter is considered and so forth until a sequence can be determined.

- If the surnames are exactly the same, then the sequence is determined by the first names or the initials. Those whose names therefore start with a, b or c would come before those whose first names begin with x, y or z. If only the initials are available, the sequence of the first initial would also be the determining factor.

The personal files index can be simple or sophisticated depending on the administrative requirements of the ministry or department. At the minimum, it should cross-reference to the employee number. A remarks column is useful to record comments on the employee, such as maiden or married name, and termination of employment. To standardise the information to be contained, the following format can be adopted when registers are used.

NAME	Employee Number	Employment Date	Marital Status	STATUS			
				Retired	Retrenched	Dismissed	Other
Johnson Victor	1724	01.01.82	Divorced		x		
Jones Hazel	2883	30.04.59	Married			x	

In the case of cards, the above details would also be recorded but in a different format.

Indexes to registers

Each ministry and department should also decide on other indexes that can be created to facilitate the retrieval of information. The number of indexes created depends on the functions of the ministry/department and on the number of registers in use. Each register is amenable to indexing, the only limitation being the validity or usefulness of the resulting index. Consider the following registers and books that are found in some Establishment Registries.

- Register of Incoming Correspondence
- Register of Outgoing Correspondence
- Establishment Register
- APFL Register
- PFL Register
- PF Register
- Establishments Division Registered Slip Record Book
- Documents for Delivery by Hand
- Establishments Division Equipment Book
- Public Service Commission Mail Book
- Establishment Division Mail Book
- Appointments Book

Taking the above into account, several indexes could be constructed. The following are a few examples.

- Index to Incoming Correspondence by Name of Sender
- Index to Incoming Correspondence by Name of Addressee
- Index of Outgoing Correspondence by Name of Addressee
- Index of Appointments by Name of Official

As can be seen from the above examples, the number of indexes that can be put together is large. The main consideration is the use to which the indexes will be put, compared with the amount of labour required to make the index entries. Each ministry and department is required to assess its requirements for specialised indexes.

Computerised indexes

The indexes shown above are largely for manual records management systems. While in many Commonwealth countries, most ministries and departments are operating with manual records management systems, there are many who have automated their systems or are in the process of doing so. This offers the opportunity to apply automated processes to indexing.

One option that can be considered is the acquisition of records management software that is ready made. There are many packages available off the shelf. Some of the software packages already incorporate automatic indexing facilities so that as the file and record titles are entered, they are automatically indexed for retrieval.

Another option available is the creation of database systems, with the file classification systems being input and with facilities for sorting information according to several possible parameters. Such a development would also make it possible to incorporate indexing mechanisms.

In applying computer technology to indexing, there is need to take cognisance of major developments that have already been pioneered.

- The concept of the THESAURUS was developed to facilitate and control indexing languages so that there could be uniformity and consistency.
- The Key Word In Context (KWIC) is a subject-type title indexing system in which all the words in the titles of documents are compared by the computer against a preselected stopword or stoplist. This stoplist is input into the computer before indexing commences and contains all those words which may appear in the titles but which have no value and should not be indexed. Examples of such words are "of", "the", "this" etc. This is very similar to the words that we do not index in terms of the indexing system outlined above.
- The Key Word Out of Context (KWOC) indexing system is meant to be an improvement on KWIC. It is constructed in exactly the same way although there are some minor differences.

FILE RETRIEVAL, ISSUE AND TRACKING

Files leave the registry for the following reasons:

- A communication is received, filed and routed for action;

- An officer requests the file.

File issue system

There are two principal methods used to record the issuing of files. First, a register can be used to record the details of the file being issued. The details recorded include the file reference number, the file title, the date of issue and the person to whom it is being issued. There will also be provision to indicate the date that the file is returned.

Alternatively, an outcarding system can be used to control file issues. A set of outcards is kept in the registry. No file should leave the registry unless an outcard has been filled. Below is an example of an outcard.

File Outcard

FILE OUTCARD				
File Ref. No.	Title	Date issued	Person issued to	Date Returned

File retrieval

The retrieval procedures are as follows:

- A communication is received for filing or the file is requested for reference or use.
- An outcard is taken and the following issue details are recorded:
 - File reference number
 - File title
 - Date issued
 - Person issued to
- The file is retrieved.

- The outcard is put in the filing cabinet in the place from which the file is being removed.
- The file is issued.
- On return, the outcard is retrieved and the file put back.
- The date of file return is endorsed on the outcard.

File tracking

One of the biggest problems facing organisations is the tracking of files as they move from office to office. While the registry staff may do their work assiduously, and faithfully record the file issue details, this serves little purpose in that, if they go to the office where the file has been issued, at times the file is no longer there, having been passed on to another officer. In order to overcome this problem, there are basically two possible solutions. One is to insist that files moving from one officer to the next must be routed through the registry so that the issue details are amended accordingly. This works well if there is a good messenger service and the messenger regularly and frequently visits each office. The other solution is to use File-Pass-On-Slips.

Each officer is issued with a pad of file pass-on slips. If an officer wishes to send a file to another officer without the file going back to registry then the file pass-on-slip should be used. It is completed and given to the messenger to take back to registry. Registry then amends the outcard as necessary. Officers violating this procedure should be reported and sanctioned as appropriate.

FILE PASS-ON SLIP	
Name:	Date:
File Ref No.: File Title: Officer passed to: Date passed:	

COMPUTERISATION

Computers are increasingly being used by government ministries and departments throughout the world. While the extent of computerisation differs markedly from one country to the next, the problems being faced in relation to the management of electronic records are fairly similar.

Records management interfaces with computers in two respects. In the first instance, units that have computerised are already generating electronic records. Like other records these must be managed through the life cycle from the point of creation, through usage, retention, appraisal, scheduling and disposal or archiving. During creation, data is captured and stored. Unique identifying information must be assigned and there must be procedures to support authentication and version control. During storage and use, mechanisms are required to facilitate search and retrieval and to track the information. Appraisal criteria must be developed for the electronic records and the records scheduled for retention or disposal.

A number of other key issues must be addressed in respect of electronic records.

- What is the raw data for each computer application?
- Where is the electronic data stored?
- Is the storage of the data controlled?
- Can users change data on the storage media?
- Is there a record of the change?

Secondly, computers can be used to automate the records management system itself. There are a number of registry activities that can be computerised, including:

- File and Document Management
 - recording of details of all files and documents;
 - storing and retrieving of a wide range of information including file number, title, current location, retention/disposal information, date received, date reply due.
- File and Document Tracking
 - tracking the movement of files from the registry to the officers, and from office to office.
- Searching and Retrieval
 - automatic indexing of file titles and file descriptions;
 - provision of instant access to information about the file or document.

- File Scheduling, Retention and Disposal
 - management of retention schedule;
 - provision of storage details for semi-current and non-current records;
 - disposal bring-up.
- Reports
 - generation of various reports as required.
- Security
 - protection of access to certain categories of information.

The computer can thus be used essentially to facilitate the processing, distribution, usage, storage, disposal and retention of information. It is important to note, however, that unless the registry computer is linked in a network to the other computers in the ministry or department, or unless there is an imaging system, the computerised registry system is a system which gives information about the existence and whereabouts of other information. The actual information itself will continue to be manually held in the physical files within the filing cabinets.

If it is decided to computerise the registry, the following represents the basic configuration that could be aimed at.

HARDWARE

586 desktop computer

- 100 MH² processor
- 16 MB RAM, expandable
- 1 GB HDD (or higher)
- 3.5" floppy disk drive (1.44)
- 14" SVGA colour monitor (.28)
- 102 keyboard and mouse

Printer

- 4 MB RAM
- High print quality/resolution
- parallel and serial interface ports
- surge protector and UPS

SOFTWARE

Systems Software (Pre-loaded)

- MS – Dos 6.22 (or later)
- Windows 3.1/Windows 95 or higher

Application Software

- Virus Guard (Pre-loaded)
- Selected Records Management Software

The computers should be located and installed in the Registry and should service exclusively the records management function.

TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

There is need to have registry and records management staff trained and fully competent. There are several levels of training available.

REGISTRY STAFF

Basic registry work is performed generally at post-school certificate level, i.e. the equivalent of the Ordinary School Certificate in the United Kingdom. Training for this level of staff is usually in the form of registry courses at various levels including registry procedures, classifiers course and registry supervision. These are generally short-term programmes of a few weeks' duration.

There are also records management courses offered at polytechnic level which are at diploma or certificate level. These tend to be of one to two years' duration.

RECORDS MANAGERS

Records managers and other senior staff can take training programmes at university level. There are many universities that offer courses at bachelor, masters and doctorate levels. It is advisable that some staff be trained at these levels so that they can provide management to the records management systems.

CORE RECORDS/REGISTRY MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Below are some of the core skills required of those who work in the registries.

Module I	<p><i>Introduction to Records and Information Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The registry system • Principles and practices of records management • Records management and the governmental systems • The role of information in an organisation
Module II	<p><i>Management of Current Records</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File classification systems • File equipment and supplies • Indexing • File retrieval and issue • File circulation • Handling Incoming and outgoing mail • Handling confidential mail • Registered Mail • Computerisation
Module III	<p><i>Management of Semi-Current Records</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of semi-current records • File closure procedures • File retirement procedures • Organisation and maintenance of semi-current records stores • Retrieval and issue of semi-current records • The Records Centre Concept • Computerisation
Module IV	<p><i>Management of Non-Current Records and Archives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appraisal of records (legal, financial and other considerations) • Compilation of records schedules and standing instructions • Disposal of time-expired records • Identification and preservation of archives • Definition of archives • Archival value • Storage conditions for archives • Duties and functions of national archives • Access to archives

TRAINING OF USERS

The success of any records management programme depends on the co-operation and discipline of the users. It is therefore essential that awareness training be given to the users from time to time. The training must cover all categories of staff from the chief executives down to the junior staff.

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.

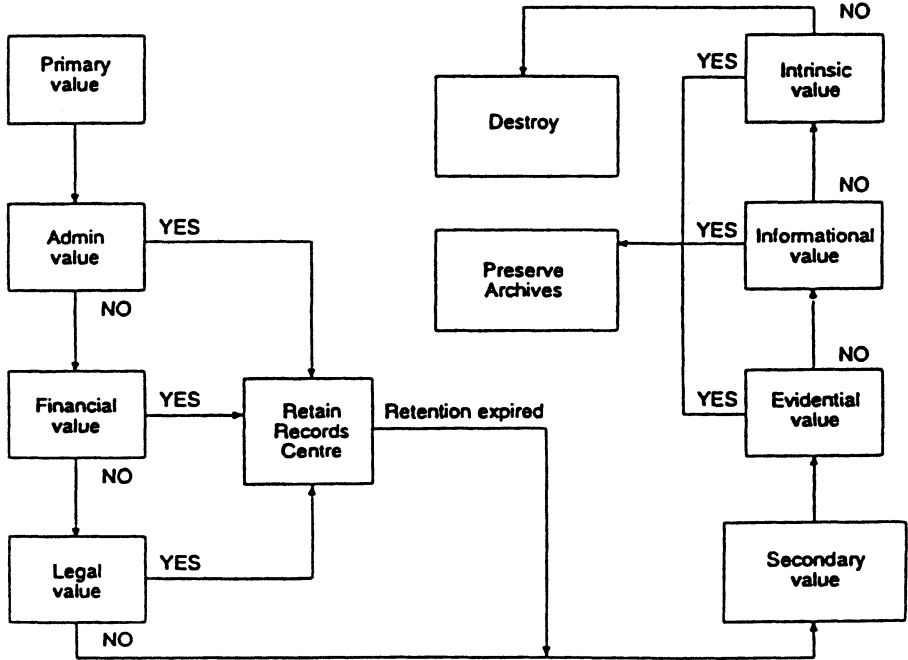
Informational value consists of the secondary value of records for reference and research deriving from the information contained in them and often unrelated to their original purpose. There are a number of tests by which informational value may be judged:

- 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: _____

**REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION
AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY- SUPPLEMENT**

RRDA #:

ITEM NO:	DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (title, type, description, purposes and special notes)	DATES	FILE #s.	RETENTION			FINAL DISP.	ACC. RES.	COMMENTS
				MEDIA	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><i>W.G. Green</i></u>	Date: <u>23/1/97</u>
Campus Records Manager: <u><i>Whemery</i></u>	Date: <u>23/1/97</u>
University Archivist: <u><i>A. Senanayake</i></u>	Date: <u>29/1/97</u>
Univ./Campus Registrar: <u><i>M. Palu</i></u>	Date: <u>20/1/97</u>
Univ./Campus Bursar: <u><i>John B...</i></u>	Date: <u>1/2/97</u>

REQUEST FOR RECORDS RETENTION
AND DISPOSITION AUTHORITY- SUPPLEMENT

RRDA #: M96-23

Page 1 / of 3

ITEM NO:	DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (title, type, description, purposes and special notes)	PRIM./FILE CROSS-REF	MEDIA	RETENTION		FINAL DISP.	ACC. RES.	COMMENTS
				A	IA			
1.	<p>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.</p> <p>-</p> <p>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.</p>		paper	0	0	D	-	RRDA M95-1- permits the destruction of committee records retained by members once they are no longer needed.
			paper	0	0	D	-	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.	<p>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.</p>		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

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.

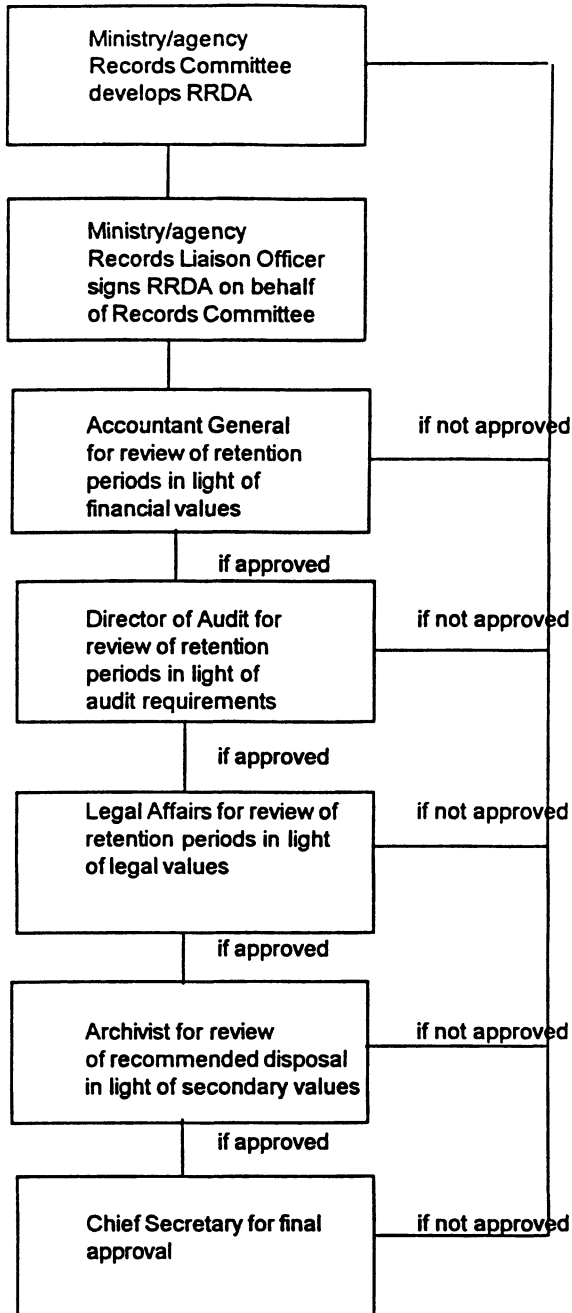
Often, stakeholders in the retention and disposal of records comprise a committee that periodically reviews and approves records retention schedules. Alternatively,

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



MANAGING SEMI-CURRENT RECORDS

When records are referred to infrequently in the course of daily operations they are said to have become semi-current and to have reached the intermediate phase of the records life cycle. Records generally are considered semi-current if they are referred to less than once per month per cubic foot of records (30cm). At this point, best records management practices would see us closing files according to established file closure criteria and procedures in preparation for removing them from their storage places in registries or office filing cabinets to a low-cost, warehouse-style repository or storage area, most commonly referred to as a record centre. Here, the records would be kept pending their final disposal, either by destruction or transfer to Archives, under approved records retention schedules.

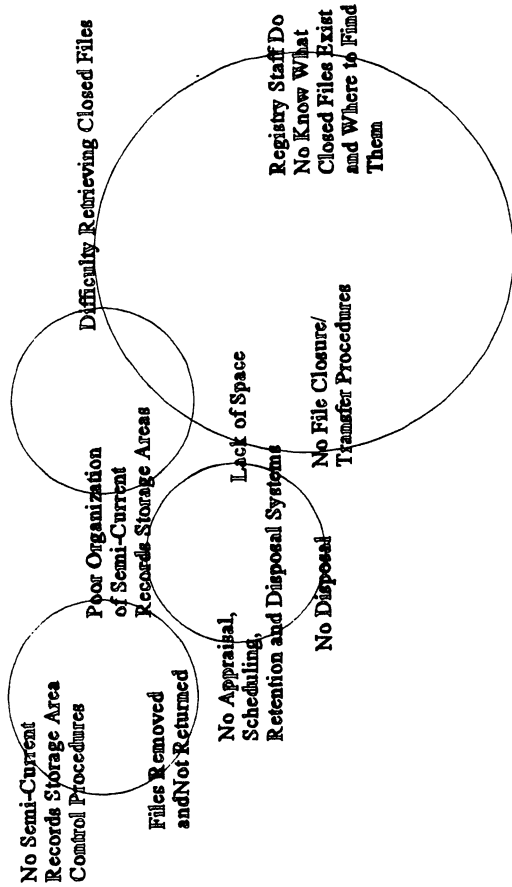
Unfortunately, in many public service organisations, the orderly removal of semi-current records from records storage space in registries or offices is not taking place according to a well-defined system for managing the records life cycle. The resulting build up of semi-current records is responsible for bulging files and filing cabinets that become unwieldy to use, making the retrieval of relevant information more difficult. Eventually, if semi-current records are left to accumulate unchecked, they outgrow existing filing cabinets and office space.

As part of a Commonwealth Secretariat project to improve the records and information management systems of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, a series of Awareness Workshops were held for senior civil servants, including permanent secretaries, heads of departments and assistant secretaries. The workshops were meant to introduce the project, raise awareness about records management and the requirements of the civil service reform programme and to solicit support for the systems to be introduced and the resulting changes. During the workshops, participants identified the most pressing records management problems they currently faced. Lack of storage space for records was unanimously identified as a major area of concern.

At this point, the usual practice for public service organisations is either to purchase new filing cabinets and/or expand their registries or offices to accommodate the mounting cache of records or, if this is not possible, to rid themselves of the problem by destroying records. Neither solution is advisable. The purchase of new filing cabinets or the acquisition of additional registry or office space unnecessarily raises public service organisations' operating costs, while *ad hoc* destruction of records places them at risk of losing valuable records. The causal loop diagram below shows the relationship between the build up of semi-current records and such problems as the inability to retrieve information.

With proper management of the records life cycle wherein semi-current records are removed regularly from records storage space in registries and offices, many problems now responsible for inefficiency and ineffectiveness in public service organisations can be avoided. To facilitate regular removal of semi-current records, public service organisations should have in place criteria and procedures for file closure and transfer to a records centre into which semi-current records can be placed pending their final disposition, and a records retention scheduling system that guides the overall retention and disposal process.

Causal Loop diagram Closed File Retrieval Problems



FILE CLOSURE

Ideally, as has been noted, the removal of semi-current records from registries and office filing cabinets should be carried out regularly. Usually, this is done once per year as part of an annual file closure exercise. Initially, however, when semi-current records have been allowed to accumulate over a number of years, the public service organisation may have to begin with a 'clean up' review of all files in its several storage locations.

The managed closure of files begins with a review of the files in a registry or office. The person conducting the review should ensure that files are not too bulky, as bulky files are difficult to use. When files become unwieldy because of their thickness, retrieval of relevant information is problematic and documents contained in the file may be damaged. Files that have reached a certain thickness should be closed and a new volume or part opened. Typically, the maximum acceptable file thickness is one inch (3cm).

A new file volume or part should never be opened without careful consideration as to why the file has become so bulky, because bulkiness can be a signal that there is some deficiency in the filing system. A file may have become too thick because its subject area is too broad, in which case the file classification system should be adjusted to create more detailed subject categories. Or, the file may be too bulky because the chronological scope of the file is too long for the rate of document accumulation, in which case the date span of the file should be shortened (e.g. into chronological years).

Most importantly, the person conducting the review should ensure that files containing semi-current records are removed from current records storage equipment and areas. This is to be accomplished by establishing a cut-off time to the current life of all files in registries and office records storage areas so that they do not remain open indefinitely. The cut-off time triggering the closure of a file will differ according to the type of file.

For subject-based files, that is files that are established and organised according to their subject content, files may be closed either one year from the date of the last document on file or three years from the date on which the file was opened, whichever comes first. Regardless of the chosen time frame, file closure must be in keeping with the purpose for which the file was created and the operating environment in which the file is used. For example, it does not make sense to close a file one year from the date of the last document on file if the file relates to a conference held every second year, because the file creator can be expected to want

APPENDIX G
Inactive File Form

INACTIVE PART

DATED FROM:

TO:

AFFIX TO TOP OF FILE

DO NOT ADD ANY MORE DOCUMENTS

FOR SUBSEQUENT CORRESPONDENCE SEE:

INACTIVE PART

to review the documents on file again in a year's time. Unless the person conducting the file review is very well-acquainted with the purposes and uses of a file, it is recommended that creators and users of files be consulted prior to establishing the cut-off time that will trigger file closure.

For particular instances or case files, that is files for which the subject or purpose is the same although each file deals with a specific person, institution, place, project or case, file closure should take place when all current administrative action to which the file relates has been completed. For example, personnel files should be closed upon termination of employment and emergency medical files may be closed upon treatment and release of the patient.

Closed files must be differentiated from active files to ensure that new documents are not mistakenly placed on them. Thus, an inactive file form should be placed on top of all other documents on a closed file. Also, the date of the first and last document on file should be recorded on the file jacket or cover. Finally, the word 'CLOSED' should be written in red ink diagonally across the file jacket or cover.

Although no new action may be taken on a closed file and no new documents added, some closed files may have continuing administrative value and should be kept available in or nearby the registry or originating office for a certain period so that action officers may refer to them. Such files may be removed from filing cabinets or other equipment designated for active files to cabinets, shelves or boxes in a storage area specially designated for closed files. The usual practice is to retain closed files in closed file storage areas for one year, assuming their rate of reference continues to fall off, at which time they should be dealt with in accordance with an approved records retention schedule and either transferred to a records centre, if they have an on-going retention requirement, or disposed of by destruction or transfer to Archives.

As, at some point in the future, action officers may need to refer to files which have been closed, it is important that the status and location of files be known at all times. Without such information it is impossible to retrieve all but the most current information or access the institutional memory needed for efficient and effective operations, public accountability and sound decision-making. Thus, a numerical index to all files, indicating their status and location, should be created and maintained, whether on loose-leaf sheets of paper, index cards or a computer.

The numerical index should indicate the file number, file title, file volume or part numbers, their outside dates, status (e.g. whether active or closed), and location (e.g. cabinet 1, storage area 3, etc.). It should indicate the unique number of the records retention schedule authorising the file's retention periods and final disposition, the disposal dates of the file's various volumes based on its approved

records retention schedule, and the file's recommended disposal action. Whenever action is taken on a file (e.g. closure and relocation), it should be noted on the numerical file index. For example, when a file is closed, the date of the last document on the file, the fact that the file has been closed, and its new location (e.g. closed file drawer, cabinet 1) should be recorded in the index to facilitate future retrieval. In addition, when the file has been closed because it has become too bulky and a new file volume or part has been opened in its place, the particulars of the new volume should be recorded in the index. The figure below shows a sample numerical file index.

File #:	HD/TDS/01	File Title:	Training of Staff	Ret.Sch.#:	97/7
Vol. #	Dates	Status	Disp. Date	Location	
1	1979-1986	Closed	01/94	Archives Accession # 95-2	
2	1987-1992	Closed	01/98	Records Centre (Accession # 93-1, Box 5, Location # 5-3-1)	
3	1993-1997	Closed	01/2004	Closed File Cabinet	
4	1997 -	Active		Active File Cabinet	

Numerical File Control Index

FILE TRANSFER

To facilitate later implementation of records retention schedules, semi-current records being boxed for transfer to and storage at a records centre should be separated by disposal date and action as specified in the approved records retention schedule covering the specific files to be boxed.

The following procedure is recommended for boxing records to send to the records centre:

- The records should first be divided into two groups based on their approved final disposition: (i) those with a final disposal of destruction and (ii) those with a final disposal of transfer to Archives in some form.
- Next records in the two groups should be sorted into categories by disposal dates as follows:
 - records for disposal within one to three years;
 - records for disposal within four to seven years; and
 - records for disposal after more than seven years.

The result of the sorting may be as many as six different groups of records. Within each group, records should still be arranged according to their original method of organisation (e.g. by file number).

An example will serve to illustrate the methodology for sorting and boxing semi-current records to be transferred for storage to a records centre. Suppose we have a group of semi-current subject files consisting of information about other organisations, committee minutes, agendas and papers, bank account records, and personnel files. In our hypothetical example, each group of files relating to a similar subject is covered by its own records retention schedule specifying the files' retention period and disposal action as follows:

- Files relating to other organisations are to be kept for the current calendar year plus an additional three years and then destroyed.
- Files containing government committee minutes, agendas and papers are to be kept for the current calendar year plus an additional five years and then transferred to Archives.

- Files containing bank account records are to be kept for the current fiscal year plus an additional six years and then destroyed.
- Personnel files are to be kept until termination of employment plus an additional ten years and then transferred to Archives for selective retention.

Following the recommended methodology, we would first separate the files into two groups based on their final disposal action as follows:

- those that are for destruction, that is:
 - the files relating to other organisations;
 - the files containing bank account records; and
- those that are for transfer to Archives in some form, that is:
 - the files containing committee minutes, agendas and papers; and
 - the personnel files.

Next, we would further sort the files in each of the two groups according to the duration of their retention periods. Since both types of files for destruction are to be kept for between four and seven years, the files would not be further sub-divided. However, the files for transfer to Archives would be sub-divided into two groups:

- those with a retention period of between four and seven years, that is, the committee minutes, papers and agendas; and
- those with a retention period of more than seven years, that is, the personnel files.

After the records have been sorted, they should be packed by category into standard-sized records centre storage boxes.

Although more time-consuming to sort records prior to packing for transfer to a records centre, pre-sorted records will contribute to more efficient records centre operations. When records are pre-sorted, entire boxes can be sent for destruction or to Archives at one time, thus releasing space in the records centre for an incoming box. When records are not pre-sorted, a box may contain records with a mix of short- and long-term retention periods. Even after all of the files with short-term retention periods have been disposed, the box may contain a single file

with a long-term retention period and therefore have to be retained until the retention period for this single file has been met before the space occupied by the box can be made available for incoming records. Moreover, when records with different final disposals are intermixed, there is a greater risk of accidental destruction of valuable records.

Generally, standard record centre storage boxes are one cubic foot (30cm) in size. In addition, they may be pre-printed with spaces to record essential information about their contents. Regardless of whether the records centre storage box is pre-printed, the following information should be recorded on the exterior of the box to facilitate the continued management of the records once they have been transferred to the record centre:

APPENDIX P

Completed Records Centre Box

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES MONA CAMPUS RECORDS CENTRE.		
ACC. NO.	DISP AUTH. NO.	BOX NO.
<i>95.2</i>	<i>M95-1</i>	<i>1</i>
CONTENTS. <i>Committee Files, 1965-1992</i>		
DISP. DATE	FINAL DISP.	R.C. NO.
<i>1998</i>	<i>Archives</i>	<i>1-4-3</i>

- the name of the transferring agency (e.g. Ministry of Lands and Labour, Housing Agency, Central Registry);
- the records retention schedule number covering the records in the box;
- the final disposal date of the records in the box (this should be calculated on the basis of the record with the longest retention period in the box);
- the disposal action to be taken once the records in the box have met their retention period (e.g. destruction or transfer to Archives);
- the box number, which for each group of records to be transferred is usually a consecutive number from one onwards.

To ensure that control is maintained over semi-current records as they are being transferred to the records centre and during their period of storage, the transferring agency should prepare a listing of the records being transferred. Normally, the records are listed on a form that accompanies all records being transferred to the records centre. A records transfer form should be completed for each group of records being transferred to the records centre. This document may take many forms but generally includes the following information:

- records series title;
- transfer date;
- inclusive date of records;
- destruction date;
- media types;
- name of transferring agency;
- records retention schedule number;
- box contents description; and
- box number.

At least one copy of this form should be retained by the transferring agency as a record of what it has transferred to the records centre. Usually, two copies of the

REQUEST FOR RECORDS TRANSFER OR DISPOSAL

Ministry:		Department:		Action Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer to RC <input type="checkbox"/> Destruction <input type="checkbox"/> Archives <input type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/> SR <input type="checkbox"/> Specimens <input type="checkbox"/> Samples	
Section:		Office:			
Location:		Contact Name & No.:			
Records Series Title:					
Volume:		Outside Dates:			
RRDA#:		Item No:			
Signature of Records Liaison Officer: _____					
Box #:	Description:	Start Date:	End Date:	RC /Archives Acc #	RC/Archives Location:
Destruction Certificate					
I hereby certify that I have this date destroyed the records listed on this form and that I further certify that only items authorized for destruction under an approved RRDA were destroyed.					
Destroyed by: _____ Date of Destruction: _____					

RM2 30/10/97

form are sent with the records to the records centre. After the record centre staff assign an accession control number and storage location codes to the records, they

should record this information on the records transfer form, retain one copy of the form for their files and return a copy to the transferring agency. The transferring agency then should replace its original copy of the form with the copy containing the records centre's accession control number and storage location code information. The transferring agency's numerical file index should also be updated with the records centre accession control number and storage location code information so that, should any of the records be requested by an action officer, they can be easily retrieved from the records centre.

RECORDS CENTRE OPERATIONS

A records centre is a central facility designated to store semi-current records for the duration of their retention period. The primary function of a records centre is to serve as a cost-effective and efficient alternative to storing semi-current records in agency offices or storage areas, where the cost of storage space may be relatively high. Best records management practice favours centralised storage of semi-current records in records centres to realise cost savings through economies of scale, to eliminate the need for each public service agency to relocate its semi-current storage with each office move or agency reorganisation, and to prevent the accumulation of abandoned semi-current records in storage areas for which no public service agency takes on-going responsibility. Records centres not only provide a safe and secure storage space for such records, but their staff provide service back to the transferring agency by retrieving and delivering semi-current records if they are needed for reference purposes and by disposing of records according to approved records retention schedules.

To serve its purpose effectively, a records centre should meet the following minimum requirements:

- It should be located where it is not so far from the offices that will be making requests for records stored in it that those requests cannot be handled within a reasonable amount of time, and not so near to prime commercial space as to reduce the cost-effectiveness of the facility.
- It should be located away from areas and other buildings that introduce sources of risk to the records such as fire, floods, infestation or sabotage. For example, a records centre facility would never be situated in an area prone to flooding.
- It should be appropriately staffed to support its operation. At a minimum, a records centre clerk will be needed to carry out the functions performed by the records centre, such as receiving records for storage, assigning accession control numbers and storage locations, retrieving and refiling requested records, and implementing final disposition of records stored in the records centre.
- It should be designed and laid out to ensure the protection of records against loss by water damage, fire, infestation, harmful natural elements (e.g. sunlight and dust) or sabotage. The ideal facility will:

- be designed and constructed to prevent deterioration of records by natural sources (e.g. no windows in records storage areas to minimise the entry of natural light);
- be air-conditioned to keep temperature and humidity stable and at acceptable levels to prevent the deterioration of records;
- be designed and constructed to specifications that reduce the risk of destruction by natural disaster;
- have in place fire detection and suppressant systems, and be subject to regular fire inspections;
- not have water pipes running through or above areas where records are stored;
- be designed and constructed so as to reduce the accumulation of dust and dirt in the facility (e.g. no open windows, cement floors);
- be designed and constructed as a secure facility and have in place security systems;
- have an uninterrupted power supply to ensure that air-conditioning, fire suppressant and security systems remain running at all times; and
- will have adequate lighting to facilitate retrieval of records.

A public service organisation may choose to construct a purpose-built facility, retrofit an existing building, or, an option that may be best-suited to small islands, convert one or more shipping container(s) into a records centre facility.

In 1991, when the University of the West Indies was establishing its Archives and Records Management Programme, it required a records centre at its Mona Campus in Jamaica. At the time, there was no existing building that could be retrofitted to serve as a records centre and it was decided that a facility would have to be built. To keep the costs of construction to a minimum, the University contracted a company to convert two shipping containers into a new records centre. The contractor built a foundation on which to place the containers, welded the containers together, constructed a wooden floor, lined the container with dry-wall (gypsum rock board), and installed six rows of Dexion steel shelving. The facility was then air-conditioned. It has been serving effectively as the records centre for the Mona Campus since that time, providing 1,000 square feet of records storage space. A second container has recently been added to double the available space.

RECORDS CENTRE INVENTORY CONTROL SYSTEMS

Inventory control and retrieval systems for the records centre must be put into place and followed to ensure that there is maximum efficiency in the use of the facility and that records are retrievable.

Upon transfer of semi-current records from the originating agency and their receipt at the records centre, records centre staff should accession the records. Accessioning is the process and procedures involved in transferring physical custody of records. At this point, the records centre, as the new custodian of the records, becomes responsible for their protection, the tracking of their movement within and outside the centre, and ensuring their proper disposal (e.g. destruction or transfer to Archives).

Accessioning entails assigning a unique accession number to a given group of semi-current records transferred to the records centre, that is, all the records that arrive at one time and in one batch from a single agency. This number usually is recorded in an accession register, which may be manual or automated, to ensure that accession numbers are not duplicated. An accession register generally includes the following information:

- the date on which the accession was received;
- a brief description of the records;
- the number of the records retention schedule under which the records were transferred;
- the date of final disposition and action to be taken; and
- the quantity of records expressed in linear feet/metres.

In assigning an accession number, it is best to use a simple system. A combination of the year and a sequential number is often used (e.g. 1998-1, 1998-2, etc.).

Normally, an accession control record should also be created for each accession. In a manual system, accession records traditionally are kept in card form and filed numerically by accession number, but accession control records are automated easily.

In a manual system, it is helpful to maintain an index by record series title of each accession in storage in the records centre to assist in retrieving the records. The index cards or sheets should be filed alphabetically, and will indicate the accession

number and physical storage location of the files associated with a given records series title.

Once records have been accessioned, they must be physically placed on shelves in the records centre. It is best not to arrange records in a record centre by agency, as this method of arrangement will require that boxes be shifted when public service agencies re-organise. In keeping with best records management practices, each row, shelf and space on a shelf should be assigned a unique number or address, along the lines of the following:

Top View of Shelving

	Shelf 1			Shelf 7			Shelf 13		
Row 1	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Row 2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
	Shelf 1			Shelf 7			Shelf 13		

Side View of Shelving

Shelf 1	Shelf 7	Shelf 13
Shelf 2	Shelf 8	Shelf 14
Shelf 3	Shelf 9	Shelf 15
Shelf 4	Shelf 10	Shelf 16
Shelf 5	Shelf 11	Shelf 17
Shelf 6	Shelf 12	Shelf 18

Using this system, each box within an accession receives its own unique address or location based on its placement on the shelves as follows:

- Box 1= Row 1, Shelf 1, Space 1 or 1-1-1;
- Box 2 = Row 1, Shelf 1, Space 2 or 1-1-2;
- Box 3= Row 1, Shelf 1, Space 3 or 1-1-3;
- Box 4= Row 1, Shelf 2, Space 1 or 1-2-1, etc.

The advantage of the records centre addressing system described above is that the location or address of a given box is completely independent of its content or relation to the other boxes that form part of the same accession. Giving each box a separate location code or a records centre address eliminates the need to physically re-arrange boxes in order to tighten up shelf space if some of the boxes in an accession are removed or if additional boxes are received at a later date. For example, if one box in an accession is disposed according to an approved records retention schedule, a new box from a completely different accession can be assigned to the space released by the previous box to achieve maximum efficiency in the use of records centre storage space. In addition, boxes need not be arranged on shelves in accession and box number order, but can be placed on shelves according to their rate of retrieval (e.g. boxes containing records with a higher rate of retrieval can be placed on lower shelves) to improve efficiency.

RECORDS CENTRE INVENTORY CONTROL SYSTEMS

An efficient inventory control system will ensure that any requests for material stored in the records centre can be dealt with quickly and accurately. Therefore, all records stored in a records centre must be listed. Controlling records centre inventory is much easier if forms listing the records have accompanied the records to the records centre because the records will not require listing after transfer, which can be time-consuming and create backlogs. Location codes, indicating the physical location of each box within a given accession stored in the records centre, should be recorded on the forms as well as in any indices to the accessions. The records centre's copy of the transfer form, once the accession number and location codes have been recorded, may be filed in accession number order to assist the records centre with retrieval of its inventory of records. Another copy of the transfer form should be returned to the transferring agency as notification of the records centre accession number and storage locations to facilitate future retrievals.

RECORDS CENTRE RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS

Whenever a request for material stored in the records centre is made, it is vital that a record of what has been requested from the centre is maintained in order to ensure its return. A loan form should be created for any material removed from a box. Records centre loan forms are usually completed in triplicate, with one copy being placed in the box from which the material has been removed, one copy attached to the material to be loaned and one copy filed in date order to facilitate the tracking of borrowed material. Periodically, records centre staff should review loan forms to recall material that has been out on loan for an established period of

APPENDIX J

Records Centre Inventory Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES RECORDS CENTRE

RECORDS INVENTORY ACC. NO. 92.5 DISP. AUTH. NO. _____ PAGE 24



FILE NO.	DESCRIPTIVE AND DATE RANGE	DISP. DATE	FINAL DISP.	BOX NO.	R.C. NO.
5/6/18	^{K 32577} Examiners Reports - Licentiate. 1 B.A. Theology pt. 1 1967-73			41	2-7-2
5/6/18	pt. 2 1974-80				
5/6/18	pt. 3 1981-89				
5/6/22	^{K 3873} Examiners Reports - Education pt. 1 1967-75				
	pt. 2 1976-85				
5/6/25	^{K 3753} Examiners Report - Law pt. 1 1972				
5/6/25	pt. 2 1973-88				
5/6/25/1	^{K 3912} Examiners Report - B.Sc. Special Anatomy, Psychology - Biochemistry (cont'd)				
5/6/26	^{K 3118} Examiners Reports - Scholarship Exams pt. 1 1972-76			41	
5/6/26	pt. 2 1977-80			42	2-7-3
	pt. 3 1980-82				
	pt. 4 1983-84				
	pt. 5 1985-87				
5/6/26	pt. 6 1987-91				
5/6/27	^{K 3924} Examiners Reports - M.Sc. Acctg. & Marks Sheets pt. 1 1977-79				
5/6/28	^{K 3928} Examiners Reports - Ph.D. M.Sc. Govt. pt. 1 1971-75				
5/6/29	^{K 3934} Examiners Report Ph.D. M.Sc. Sociology pt. 1 1972-73				
5/6/29	pt. 2 1978-89				
5/6/37	^{K 3941} Examiners Reports - M.A. in Education pt. 1 1977-83			42	

time (e.g. one month). Regular reviews are important to ensure that borrowed material is eventually returned to the records centre, not misplaced.

In order to ensure the timely delivery of requested material, delivery procedures and mechanisms will have to be in place. A records centre that is located far from other public service agencies' offices may require its own courier to ensure that requested material can be delivered within a reasonable length of time.

Once material is returned to the records centre, it should be refiled as quickly as possible so that it will be available if requested again and not misplaced. When material is returned to the records centre and refiled in the appropriate box, the copy of the loan form should be removed and matched to the copy filed in date order. The forms for returned loans can be tabulated periodically to gather statistics on records centre reference, such as:

- how many references are made to a given series of records;
- the dates of records that are being referenced;
- who is using the records centre;
- how often users are requesting material from the records centre; and
- the location of records with high rates of reference;

to assist the records centre to run more efficiently.

THE MANAGEMENT OF NON-CURRENT RECORDS

When semi-current records are no longer needed for current business, they become non-current. At this point, the records are ready for final disposal or, as it is also called, disposition. Disposal is the process through which records appraisal decisions are put into effect. Appraisal and disposal need not take place immediately in conjunction with one another; in fact, they are usually separated by a prescribed period of retention. Through proper management of non-current records, that is, their disposal at the appointed time, we ensure the retention of only records of enduring value and secure destruction of all other records.

In many public service organisations, non-current records are neither identified nor managed. Often, like semi-current records, they are left to accumulate in registries or office filing cabinets until space constraints force either an expansion of space or destruction of the records. To prevent the build up of non-current records in offices or loss of valuable information due to *ad hoc* destruction of records, non-current records should be disposed of in accordance with approved records retention schedules by either destruction or transfer to Archives.

In public service organisations where non-current records have been left to accumulate in registries and offices, steps will have to be taken to identify records that are non-current and, if no records retention schedules exist, to develop them in advance of and in preparation for final disposal. A records inventorying or survey exercise is a tool often used to gather information about an organisation's records as the basis of appraising records to develop records retention schedules and of identifying those that are non-current and ready for final disposal.

RECORDS DISPOSAL

Disposal, or disposition, is the action taken on non-current records in accordance with an approved records retention schedule after all retention requirements have been met. Disposal is not synonymous with destruction; it can mean either destruction of the records or their transfer, in whole or in part, to Archives. Regular disposal of non-current records is necessary to avoid accumulation in registries, offices, records centres or other records storage areas of records that no longer have value to the public service organisation and to prevent loss of records of continuing value.

Public service agencies should establish a policy that prohibits the destruction of records unless under an approved records retention schedule in order to ensure that government and citizens are not placed at risk from loss of records required for on-going transaction of business, to meet legal or financial requirements, for accountability to the public, or for historical research.

Records retention schedules should be carefully monitored on an annual basis so that records which have become non-current and reached the end of their specified retention period can be either destroyed or transferred to Archives in a timely manner.

If disposal is being carried out on records stored in a records centre on behalf of a transferring agency, some time prior to the scheduled disposition of the records, the records centre should inform the transferring agency of the impending disposition. The transferring agency should be given a reasonable amount of time within which to reply to the notification and either certify agreement with the disposition of the records or request that the records be retained for a further period. If the transferring agency is requesting an extension of the retention period for the records, a legitimate reason should be given (e.g. because the records are required for litigation).

Once approved for final disposal, the records must be carefully selected and separated from other records stored in the records centre that have not yet met their full retention period to ensure that no accidental early disposal of records takes place. At this point, it is important that the records centre update its inventory control and retrieval systems (e.g. the location codes on records transfer forms and indices) to indicate that the records have been selected for disposal. This must be done in order to ensure that the records can be accounted for in the event of a request for them from the transferring agency.

In some cases, records will meet their full retention and become non-current while still in the custody of the creating agency. When the final disposition for such

records is destruction, best records management practices call for a central agency, such as a records centre, to co-ordinate the destruction to ensure that it is properly documented and securely performed using appropriate methods. If a central agency assumes responsibility for the co-ordination of all destructions, public service agencies must notify the central agency whenever there are non-current records to be destroyed. A special form developed for this purpose will streamline the process.

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

A number of different methods can be used to destroy records. The choice of method will be based on:

- the volume and dimensions of records to be destroyed;
- local restrictions on certain methods of destruction (e.g. banning of public burning);
- local availability of recycling services;
- desire for organisational control over the destruction process; and
- the confidentiality of the documents.

Pulping or shredding is the preferred method of destruction for the majority of paper records, but when this is not possible due to lack of available facilities or because the records contain a high level of contaminants (e.g. plastics and metals), incineration may be necessary, though environmentally unfriendly. Placing records in the garbage or dumping records into landfill sites is not advised as such action may lead to unauthorised access to confidential or sensitive information. Re-use by overwriting can be used as a means of destruction for records stored on computer disks and tapes, audiotapes and videotapes.

In all cases, destruction of records should be witnessed and certified to ensure that proof exists that a particular set of records was actually destroyed in accordance with its approved records retention schedule. Certification of destruction traditionally is documented in a destruction certificate. A copy of the destruction certificate should be filed with the appropriate records retention schedule so that there is a record of all destructions carried out under it. In addition, the transferring agency should retain a copy of the destruction certificate in the event that any questions arise surrounding the destruction of the records. It is also important that the transferring agency update its numerical file index to indicate that records once

stored in the records centre have now been destroyed, otherwise much time could be wasted searching for records that no longer exist.

APPENDIX L

Certificate of Destruction

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

CABLE AND TELEGRAPH
"UNIVERS"
PHONE: (809) 927-1661-9

TELEX: 2123
FAX: (809) 927-4869

MONA, KINGSTON 7,
JAMAICA, W.I.



Our Reference M91-2

CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION

I hereby certify that the University records described below were destroyed on MAY 31, 1994

in accordance with approved Records Retention and Disposition Authority M91-2

Record Description: FILING ROOM ACADEMIC AND SENIOR ADMINISTRATION STAFF FILES - 1986

Extent Destroyed: 3 LINEAR FEET

31.5.94
Date

Horace Stamp
Witness: (University Archivist/designate)

TRANSFER OF RECORDS TO ARCHIVES

Records, the final disposition of which is transfer to Archives in whole or in part, once received by the archives should be assigned an archives accession number. If the final disposition of the records is selective retention, or samples or specimens for Archives, the Archives usually will make a selection of the records to be preserved and destroy the remainder prior to assigning an accession number to the records. In order to facilitate future retrieval of the records, the Archives should send details to the originating agency and the records centre, if the records have been transferred from there, of which records have been selected for preservation in the Archives, the Archives' accession number for those records and, if applicable, which records have not been selected and therefore destroyed. Upon receipt of this notification from the Archives the originating agency should record the archives accession number in its numerical file index so that the records can be located easily if requested. Similarly, if the records centre transferred the records to Archives, the records centre's inventory control and retrieval systems should be updated with the Archives' accession number.

Record of Transfer to Archives from Records Centre

Records Title: <i>Faculty of Social Sciences Departmental Files.</i>	
Extent of Records Transferred: <i>3 Boxes</i>	Date Span of Records: <i>1968-1970</i>
Record Centre Accession #: <i>92.11</i>	RRDA #: <i>M96-23</i>
Archives Accession #: <i>MA97.5</i>	Date GENCAT Updated:
Signature of Transferring Officer: <i>[Signature]</i>	Date of Transfer: <i>1997</i>
Instructions: Complete one form for each transfer of records to the Archives and place completed form(s) on the appropriate RRDA file.	

ARCHIVES

Archives is the term used for records having permanent or indefinite value for historical or other purposes. Usually, only between five and ten per cent of an organisation's records will meet this definition. However, the term archives also applies to the institution with responsibility for the care and custody of these valuable records and to the building or other storage place in which such records are housed.

In many jurisdictions, there is no proper archival programme and therefore no mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate and permanent care of records of enduring value in order to make them available for use. In such jurisdictions, an archival programme should be established.

ESTABLISHING AN ARCHIVE

Establishing an archival programme involves:

- Developing an archives policy defining the Archives' purpose and goals, and the type of material it will acquire. Traditionally, public service organisations provide a legal basis for their archival programmes in the form of archives acts which establish a national archives, give it authority to acquire material in the national interest, set out the mandate of the institution, and legally establish a national archivist as the person responsible for the national archives.
- Begin actively acquiring records of enduring value. The acquisition of archival records is facilitated by appraisal and records retention scheduling.
- Gain intellectual control over the records in the archives in order to provide access to those records. This function is normally referred to as arrangement and description, or sometimes as processing, of archives and results in the production of a number of research tools, or finding aids.
- Gain physical control over archival holdings by ensuring that they are properly secured against theft, damage and environmental or human hazards.
- Begin to make archival holdings available to researchers (e.g. transferring agencies and members of the public).

ARCHIVAL STORAGE FACILITIES

Archival storage facilities, whether they consist of a separate building, a room in an existing building, a vault, or some other storage space, should meet certain basic minimum requirements to ensure long-term preservation of archival material.

The ideal conditions for archival storage facilities include:

- A fire-resistant environment, including no exposed or faulty wiring, fire detection and suppressant systems, installation of fire doors and walls, and a regular fire inspection programme. In addition, archival repositories should not be located in buildings with a high fire risk, such as older wooden buildings, or next to other facilities with a high fire risk, such as munitions factories or chemical laboratories.
- An area free from threats of flooding or threat of water damage. Archival repositories should be situated away from flood plains or coastal areas. In addition, they should be above the basement or ground level and archival material should be stored on shelves off the floor.
- An area free of insects, rodents, mildew, mould or fungus. Specialists should be consulted regarding site treatment to prevent infestations or the growth of mildew, mould or fungus. Locating the archival repository away from sources of potential water damage and above-ground will also help prevent infestation and mould or fungus growth, as will maintaining a constant temperature and humidity within the repository.
- An area with constant temperature and humidity. Temperature and humidity should be regularly monitored using a thermostat and hygrometer. Air conditioners and dehumidifiers should be used to maintain the environment at acceptable levels.
- An area with as little uncontrolled natural and fluorescent light as possible. Sources of uncontrolled and ultraviolet light can be limited through the use of curtains, shades, light filters, incandescent bulbs or storing material on the north side of a facility.
- an area which is secure, including proper locks and alarmed security systems. Moreover, archival facilities should not be located in areas prone to or likely to experience civil unrest or attack.

In addition, archival repositories should include the following functional areas:

- An archival processing area with adequate space to sort and box materials and which is located in convenient proximity to archival supplies and stationary and away from researchers.
- A secure and environmentally-controlled storage area for archival material large enough for existing material and any new material. Future space requirements can be calculated on an estimated standard growth rate of ten per cent of existing holdings per year. If planning for the construction of a new facility, its storage space should be large enough to accommodate at least 15 years' accumulation of records. It is also important to ensure that storage areas for archival material have adequate floor load capacity. The storage area should be fitted with metal shelving with a depth of between 12 and 15 inches (30–40 cm). If space for shelving is limited, mobile shelving can be used to increase the capacity of the storage area.
- Administrative offices.
- A research area. This area will include desks, tables, chairs, good lighting and sufficient work space for the use of researchers. It should also be located in an area with controlled access that facilitates monitoring of researchers while they work with collections.
- Other space, if needed, such as a conservation lab, a photography lab, an exhibit space, meeting or training rooms, a vault for valuable material, refrigerated storage for colour photographs and films, a room for playing audio-visual material, and a staff lunch room.

ARCHIVAL FUNCTIONS

Once the archival programme is established, the Archives should perform the following basic archival functions:

- appraisal and accessioning of archival material;
- arrangement and description of archival material;
- preventative conservation;
- provision of reference services.

CAMPUS ARCHIVES FACILITY - OPTION 1

Functional Relationships and Flow

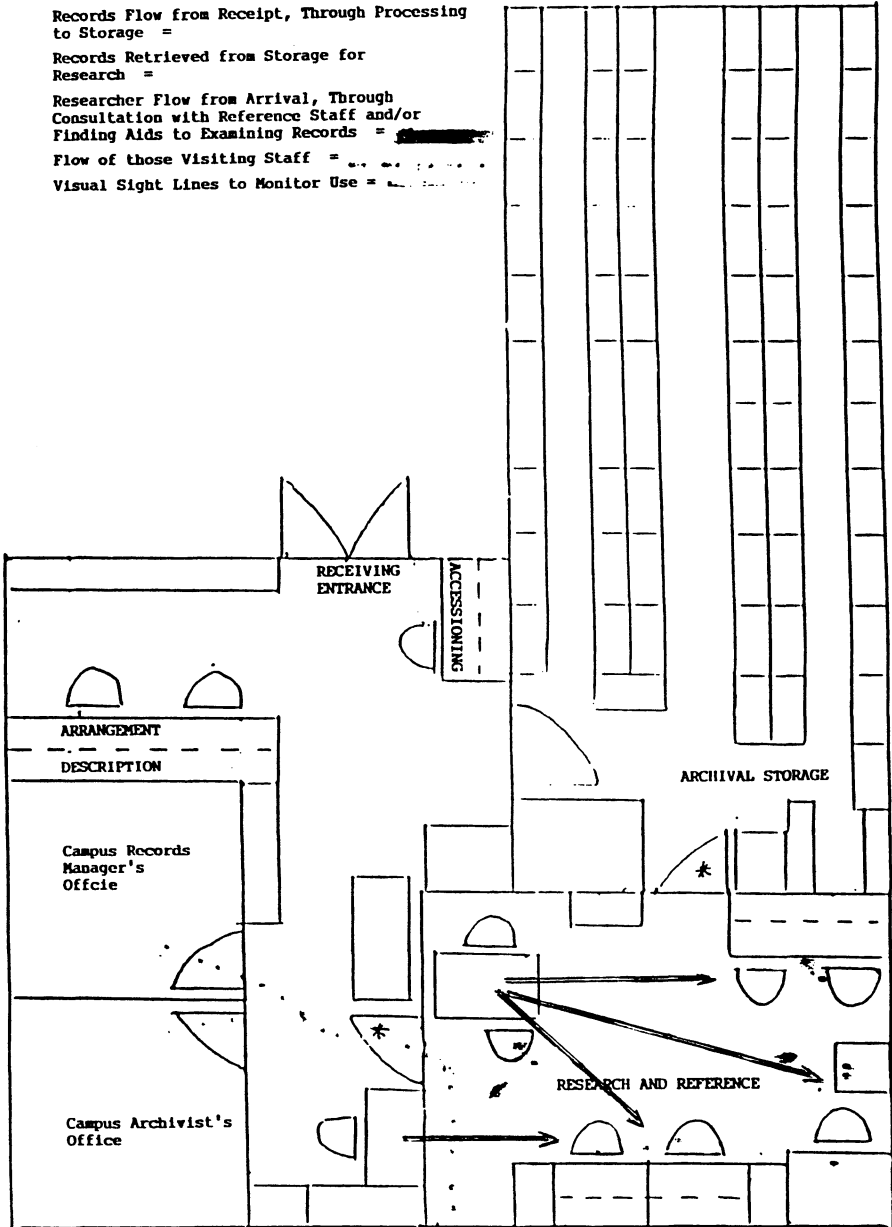
Records Flow from Receipt, Through Processing to Storage =

Records Retrieved from Storage for Research =

Researcher Flow from Arrival, Through Consultation with Reference Staff and/or Finding Aids to Examining Records =

Flow of those Visiting Staff =

Visual Sight Lines to Monitor Use =



APPROX. SCALE: 1/8" = 1'
3/4" = 5'

*Normally Researchers are not Allowed Beyond these 2 Doors

In many jurisdictions, the Archives is also the central agency with overall responsibility for a public service-wide records and information management programme. Where archives and records management functions are integrated, the Archives may also be responsible for:

- operating a records centre;
- providing advice and training to public service agencies on records and information management;
- developing records and information management policies, procedures, standards and guidelines for public service agencies;
- co-ordinating and monitoring records appraisal, retention scheduling and disposal.

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSIONING

Appraisal and accessioning are the mechanisms whereby archives acquire material of enduring value. One of the main objectives of appraisal is to determine what records have secondary, or enduring, value and therefore merit preservation in the Archives. The person with responsibility for the archival programme (i.e. the national archivist) also should be responsible for assessing the secondary values of records and determining which records should be transferred to the Archives. The archivist's role in assessing the value of records may be formalised by establishing this person as a signing authority on records retention schedules.

Records, the final disposition of which is transfer to Archives in whole or in part according to an approved records retention schedule, once received by the archives should be accessioned. Accessioning, as it applies to archives, involves transferring legal and physical control of records. An accession of records encompasses the whole of the records transferred to the Archives from one source at a given time.

As in the case of records centre accessions, each accession which is transferred to the Archives should be assigned a unique accession number. If the final disposition of the records is selective retention, or samples or specimens for Archives, the Archives should make a selection of the records to be preserved and destroy the remainder prior to assigning an accession number to the records. A simple numbering scheme should be used for accessions, such as the year plus a consecutive number. A letter code may be added to the number to differentiate archival accessions from those in the records centre (e.g. A1998-1, A1998-2, A1998-3 etc.).

The number of each incoming accession should be recorded in an accession register to ensure that accession numbers are not duplicated. The accession register usually will contain such information elements as:

- name of transferring agency;
- name of contact person in the transferring agency;
- accession number assigned to the incoming group of records;
- a brief description of the records in the accession;
- the outside dates of the records in the accession;
- the total volume of records in the accession.

In addition, archives normally prepare an accession control record for each accession. The accession control records may be kept on sheets and maintained in files or binders organised by accession number, or can be in automated form.

In order to facilitate future retrieval of records transferred from public service organisations, the Archives should notify the agency and the records centre, if the records have been transferred from there, of which records have been selected for preservation in the Archives, the Archives' accession number for those records and, if applicable, which records have not been selected and therefore destroyed.

The Archives accession number is the Archives' primary means of maintaining control over a given group of records. It therefore should be marked on all temporary storage boxes in the accession, and once the material has been arranged and described, on all the boxes, folders and other material comprising the accession.

ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

Arrangement and description of archival material, also called processing, is carried out to facilitate access and retrieval.

Arrangement is the process of physically organising archival records. There are two basic principles which govern the arrangement of archives: (i) Provenance (sometimes also called *Respect des Fonds*); and (ii) Respect for Original Order.

The term 'provenance' refers to the origins of records, that is, the agency or person responsible for their creation. According to the archival principle of provenance,

records created by one person or agency should not be intermixed or filed with records created by another agency or person. The principle is based on the notion that records derive their meaning and integrity as evidence from the unique circumstances and context of their creation. Intermixing records created by different agencies or persons leads to a loss of information about the circumstances and context of records creation which, in turn, limits users' ability to interpret the meaning and rely on the integrity of the records. For this reason, archival records created by different agencies or persons should never be inter-filed by subject. However, several different accessions originating from the same public service agency may be integrated during arrangement of archival records.

Respect for original order entails preserving the original organisation or order in which the records were created and maintained. For example, if the creating agency maintained the records in alphabetical order by file subject, the archivist must respect that order and not rearrange the records according to some other method of organisation. The reason why original order should be respected is that records' meaning and integrity as evidence comes, in part, from the location of individual documents on a file, the relationship between documents in a file, the location of a given file in a filing system and the relationship between files in a filing system. If these relationships are changed, important information needed to understand the full meaning of the records and establish their integrity as evidence may be lost.

During arrangement, basic preventative conservation of archival records is usually carried out. Normally, the records will be placed in acid-free boxes. Old file covers also will be removed and replaced with new acid-free file-folders. In addition, all metal paper clips, staples, pins, strings, tape, rubber bands and other fasteners that cause deterioration will be removed and replaced with archival-quality fasteners, such as inert plastic paper clips.

If the collection is comprised of restricted records, all containers should be stamped 'RESTRICTED' during arrangement. It is a good practice to store restricted collections separately from unrestricted ones to avoid accidental disclosure of confidential information. Particularly sensitive information may be stored in a secure vault. Should a particular file in a collection be restricted, it should be marked restricted, removed from its usual place of storage, and stored with other restricted records. A card may be left in place of the restricted file to indicate its new storage location.

If possible, it is best to fumigate archival records prior to placing them in secure, environmentally-controlled storage areas. Upon arrangement, all collections are normally stored in accession number order. However, oversized documents and other documents with special storage requirements, such as audiotapes, videotapes,

films, photographs, microfilm and electronic records, should be removed and placed in special cabinets or storage areas.

Description of archival records takes place once the records have been arranged, and follows the physical order the records. It starts at the highest level of arrangement, that is, the collection, or in archival terms the '*fonds*' level, and moves to the lowest level of arrangement, for example, the file-folder or item. Traditionally, each level of arrangement is assigned a control number. For example, at the level of the collection, the archivist will assign each accession or group of records originating from the same public agency a common number (e.g. Record Group 1) and within a given collection, all records comprising part of the same series the same number (series 1). These numbers allow the archivist to link the records together intellectually for the purposes of retrieval, despite the fact that they may have been received as many different physical transfers or accessions of records. The description of archival holdings should follow approved international standards, such as the International Standards for Archival Description (ISAD(G)). The process of describing archival material results in the production of a number of aids to locating archival material for research use, such as:

- inventories, which are detailed descriptions of the contents, origins and significance of archival collections;
- catalogues consisting of collection-level descriptions of archival holdings in card or automated form;
- thematic guides which are collection-level descriptions of archival holdings relating to a particular area of interest, such as politics, women, medicine etc.

PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION

Conservation, the physical care and maintenance of archival holdings, is essential to ensuring that records of enduring value will last. Conservation entails ensuring that archival collections are stored, processed and handled, particularly by researchers, in a manner that inhibits the natural deterioration process.

The main causes of deterioration of archival materials are:

- temperature, because heat combines with other elements, such as acids in paper, to create chemical reactions that deteriorate records;
- humidity because water attracts mould, mildew and fungi which cause deterioration;

- sunlight and ultraviolet light because excessive amounts of these forms of light accelerate the ageing process;
- insects or rodents because they eat archival material;
- acid, found in polluted air, in the products used to make paper, in certain types of ink and in leather bindings, because it can cause fading, darkening and chemical deterioration;
- fire and water, for obvious reasons; and
- people, because they can accidentally or intentionally damage materials and the acids and oils on hands can cause deterioration.

Steps should be taken to limit all of the above sources of deterioration in an Archives. For example:

- temperature and humidity should be maintained at constant and acceptable levels, which for textual records is between 19–20 degrees Celsius (66–68 degrees Fahrenheit) with a relative humidity of 45 per cent;
- exposure of archival material to sources of sunlight and ultraviolet light should be limited;
- archival material should be stored in acid-free boxes or containers and folders;
- metal paper clips, staples, pins, strings, tape, rubber bands and other fasteners that cause deterioration because they are acidic or rusty should be removed from archival material during processing and replaced with archival-quality fasteners, such as plastic paper clips;
- metal, not wooden, shelving should be used in archival storage areas;
- incoming archival material should be checked to ensure it is not infested and, whenever possible, fumigated before being placed with existing archival collections;
- food and drink should not be taken near archival material;
- archival facilities should be kept clean;
- there should be a regular fumigation programme for archival facilities;

- there should be no smoking permitted in archival facilities;
- flammable liquids, chemicals, paints or solvents should never be stored in an archival facility;
- archival material should be handled as little as possible; and
- there should be regulations for researchers to ensure proper handling of archival material.

REFERENCE SERVICES

Archival material is acquired and preserved in an archival repository because of its continuing usefulness; thus, an archival programme must incorporate a reference function into its operations. Reference services entail assisting researchers, whether public service employees or members of the public, who request information from the archives. The following measures will assist with the provision of reference services:

- preparation of adequate archival finding aids, such as catalogues and inventories, to all archival material;
- preparation of standard reference material; for example, if requests are received frequently for information on a particular topic, in order to save time, a special guide to sources on that topic might be prepared for distribution to researchers;
- registration of all researchers because having all researchers who visit the Archives sign a register, complete a researcher registration card or register in some other way will assist the Archives to keep track of visits for statistical purposes, as well as to identify persons who visited on a given day in the event of loss or damage of archival records;
- tracking all requests for information that are received by phone or mail, for example, by using a special form to record each request;
- establishment and distribution of rules governing the use of the Archives; and
- provision of copying services.

**University Archives and
Records Management
Programme, Mona**

Request For Information

Name of Requester:	Department/Section:
Date of Request:	Date Information Needed by:
Subject of Request/ Action Taken:	

Name of person who completed this request _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Information located	Length of time to complete _____

RM4 22/9/97



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES ARCHIVES

ACCESSION CONTROL RECORD ACC. DATE _____ ACC. NO. _____

TRANSFERRED FROM: _____

PREVIOUS CUSTODY/RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECORDS IF DIFFERENT FROM

TRANSFERRING BODY: _____

RECORDS TITLE: _____

DATE RANGE _____ EXTENT _____ R.G. NO. _____

R.C. ACC. NO. _____ DISP. AUTH. NO. _____ FINAL DISP. _____

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: _____

PHYSICAL FORMAT: TEXTUAL _____ FILES _____ BOUND VOLS. _____

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS/DRAWINGS _____ MAPS _____ MICROFILM _____

PHOTOS _____ B & W _____ COLOUR _____ PRINTS _____ NEGS _____ SLIDES _____

CINE FILM _____ VIDEO _____ MACHINE READABLE _____

OTHER: _____

ARRANGEMENT: NUMERIC _____ ALPHA NUMERIC _____ DUPLEX NUMERIC _____

BLOCK NUMERIC _____ ALPHA BY SUBJECT _____ BY PERSONAL NAME _____

SERIES _____ SUB SERIES _____ OTHER: _____

FINDING AIDS: R.C. INVENTORY _____ OTHER: _____

PHYSICAL CONDITION/CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS: _____

DESCRIPTION:

MAIN AND ADDED ENTRIES _____ ITEMIZED DESCRIPTIVE INVENTORY _____

SUBJECT INDEXING AT: FILE LEVEL _____ ITEM LEVEL _____ OTHER: _____

PREPARED BY: _____ DATE PREPARED _____ DATE ACKNOWLEDGED _____

*The University of the West Indies
Archives and Records Management Centre*

Regulations for Researchers



OPENING HOURS: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Mondays to Fridays)

No ink of any kind may be used in the research area; use pencils only.

Smoking is prohibited in the Archives.

Eating and drinking are prohibited in the Archives' reference area.

All archival materials must be handled carefully: use only one folder at a time and keep the papers in their existing order.

Do not place books or volumes face down.

Do not lean or press on archival materials.

Do not trace maps or other records.

No material in the archives may be removed from the reference area.

Permission to access restricted materials must be obtained in writing from the University Archivist or relevant university authority.

Researchers are advised that it is their responsibility to obtain copyright clearance to publish or otherwise reproduce archival material. Where possible, the University Archivist will provide the names and addresses of copyright holders.

If publishing material from the Archives please credit the archives as follows: The University of the West Indies' Archives, Record Group No., Accession No., Box No. (if appropriate), Item/Volume No., Title of document/Names of correspondents and Date.

Eg. RG 1 MA92.1 Box 5, Item No. 19 The University of the West Indies Regulations for Undergraduates, October, 1952.

ORGANISATIONAL, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Just as in the case of managing any other public service resource, efficient and effective management of public service records and information resources requires an organisational, legislative and policy structure that establishes general authorities, responsibilities and organisational structures.

Many of the problems that public service agencies experience with the management of their records and information resources arise as a direct result of a lack of clear authority and responsibility. For example, in the absence of legislation or policy giving public service officials authority to take decisions about the disposal of public records, often they are forced to place themselves and the organisation at risk by making unilateral and *ad hoc* decisions to dispose of records or, reluctant to take such risks, do not dispose of records, leading to accumulation of records and consequent space problems within public service agencies.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

An organisational structure for a public service records and information management programme must be established for the public service as a whole and within each public service agency, registry and office. At each level, specific authorities, responsibilities and inter-relationships must be defined. In addition, the organisational structural requirements for a public service-wide records and information management programme should be viewed in the context of short-term needs to implement new systems and long-term requirements for maintaining systems once implemented.

In the long-term, a senior official should be assigned responsibility for the overall public-service wide records and information management programme, including authority for programme development, implementation and compliance monitoring. One option, favoured by many countries, is to assign this role to the national archivist in order that the management of the entire life cycle of public records, from creation to final disposition, is co-ordinated by one official and under one agency. In countries where the national archivist does not oversee the public service-wide records and information management programme, problems can arise because processes for the management of records throughout their life cycle may be divided up between a number of officials and agencies with differing organisational and professional allegiances. Fragmentation of records and information management authorities and responsibilities can create barriers to effective management of records arising from organisational conflict and lack of process co-ordination. These problems can be avoided when authority and

responsibility for the management of records throughout their life cycle is integrated and assigned to a national archivist with oversight of an integrated archives and records service.

Authorities and duties of the senior official with overall programme responsibility should be established in policy or, preferably, legislation and form the basis of a job description for this post. The position should be placed at a level within the public service scheme of service (e.g. head of agency) commensurate with defined authorities and responsibilities. If responsibility for the programme is assigned to an official in an existing post, the person's skills may have to be upgraded to permit performance of new duties. If programme responsibility is assigned to an official whose position does not yet exist within the public service, for example, in the case of a public service without a national archivist, the post should be established and a suitable candidate recruited.

It is also necessary to plan and budget for positions to perform the functions and deliver the services of the records and information management programme. Usually, at least two additional posts are required: one to provide on-going records management training and technical assistance to public service agencies and one to manage a records centre facility. In addition, depending on the volume of work, these positions may require clerical support.

During the implementation phase of a public service-wide records and information management programme, it may be necessary to assign temporary responsibility for the programme to an official or agency other than the one which will have ultimate responsibility for the programme to allow the agency which has been assigned programme responsibility to build the necessary organisational capacity to take over programme management. Temporary assignment of programme responsibility allows the official who will have ultimate programme responsibility time to acquire new competencies and hire new staff, as necessary.

In addition, some jurisdictions have found it helpful when changing from old records management practices to new records management systems to establish a records and information management change team. Such teams usually consist of individuals at a senior level, for instance permanent secretaries, from each public service agency who, together, function as a steering committee to lead the change initiative. It also may include officials at less senior levels who have skills and competencies that enable them to provide technical assistance and training in support of implementation of the new systems. The change team usually takes responsibility for developing and implementing a records and information management project plan, and for co-ordinating the delivery of technical support and training to public service agencies.

Certain general authorities and responsibilities, comparable to those that exist for the management of financial resources within the public service, also should be established for all public servants involved in the management of records or performing record-keeping functions.

Heads of public service agencies and units within public service agencies should have overall authority and responsibility to ensure that their records are managed responsibly, in accordance with established policy and in a manner that promotes public service efficiency and effectiveness.

Those with responsibility for the operation of agency record-keeping systems, such as registry personnel, and each agency employee, also clearly must understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to specific agency or public service-wide records and information management policy, procedures, practices and standards.

The appointment of a records management officer for each agency is a critical element of the overall organisational structure for a public service records and information management programme. Through this person, the agency is able to establish and maintain its own records and information management programme in alignment with the broader public service-wide programme. Moreover, these individuals are an essential link in the chain of authority that will ensure that records are properly managed throughout their life cycle. It is not necessary for public service agencies to establish the records management officer as a new post, although in larger agencies this may be desirable; rather, the records management officer may be an official who already has responsibility for general administrative functions. The person appointed as an agency's records management officer should be at a level within the agency with sufficient decision-making authority to recommend new policies and procedures, appraise records, recommend retention periods and disposal actions, and provide direction to agency personnel on records and information management policy, procedures, practices and standards with which the agency must comply.

SCHEME OF SERVICE

Often, public service agencies find it difficult to retain knowledgeable registry and other records staff. Time and money is invested in training these employees only to see the very best leave for better positions after a relatively short period. The cause of this problem lies squarely in the fact that registry work is usually low paying and has a low status within most public service organisations. Further, registry work is perceived as being 'dead end', due to the lack of a defined career path for personnel involved in records and information management. As a result, staff looking for pay increases, improved status and position advancement must look outside of registry and records-related work. High turnover of registry and other

records staff ultimately has a negative impact on registry operations and the management of records throughout their life cycle, as much valuable experience and knowledge is lost with every employee who leaves. Moreover, loss of experienced and knowledgeable registry and records staff means that public service agencies often lack a cadre of trained records personnel who can be relied upon to perform more complicated records and information management functions, such as records appraisal, scheduling, and disposal.

In order to promote the development of a trained, experienced and knowledgeable cadre of records personnel, a career path should be established for records management personnel within the public service scheme of service. The career path should start at the most junior levels, for example, a filing clerk within a registry, and end at the most senior level, for example the person with overall responsibility for the public service records and information management programme. At each level, the requisite education, experience and competencies needed to perform the work should be identified. It is important that a training programme be developed to support implementation of the scheme of service and individual employees' advancement along the records management career path.

The Government of Jamaica has established a career path for records and information-related personnel. Standards for the Public Information and Documentation Group (PIDG) of employees were drafted in 1996. The Records and Information Management Group (RIM) followed in December 1997 and encompassed the traditional clerical posts in registries up to senior managers with special responsibility for registries and libraries within government agencies. The career path evolved out of a "Proposal for the creation of an Information Resources Division in each Government Department" drafted by a sub-committee of the Archives Advisory Committee. The proposal identified current problems with the management of records and information within the Jamaican public service and drafted a model scheme of service for records and information-related personnel to address those problems, integrating a career path for staff involved in the registry, library and information systems areas and establishing responsibility for these staff to a Systems and Information Manager. The Ministry of Finance and Planning has adopted the model, merging its registry, library and information systems into one unit under a single director.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Records management and archives legislation is an essential component of the wider legislative basis for accountable, effective and efficient government. Further, it provides the essential framework which enables the records and information management programme to function with acceptance and authority.

The following content elements are traditionally included in the legislative and policy framework for public service records and information management programmes:

- Definitions and interpretations. Usually this section includes definitions of the term records, public records and technical terms, such as records retention schedules.
- Establishment of an advisory body with responsibility for providing advice to the minister or head of the records and information management programme on broad records and information management policy issues.
- Establishment of the Archives' mandate. Legal status and authority must be given to the Archives and its roles, functions and responsibilities defined, particularly if it is assigned responsibility for records and information management as part of an integrated records and archives service.
- Assignment of various authorities and responsibilities for the management of records throughout their life cycle to the head of the records and information management programme, head of public service agencies, records personnel and records creators.
- Prohibition of the destruction of public records without proper authorisation and establishment of the procedures that must be followed to obtain proper authorisation.
- Provision of penalties for unauthorised destruction of records or other breaches of the act.

In addition, many public service organisations have enacted complementary legislation to establish a code of access and confidentiality for public records, including those in the care and custody of the Archives, and to protect valuable cultural property.

Public service agencies have a number of options from which to choose in establishing the legislative and policy framework for their records and information management programmes. First of all, the framework may be detailed and prescriptive, or general. The advantage of a detailed and prescriptive framework is that it establishes a clear mandate as the basis for implementation of various records and information management programme elements and functions. However, its weakness is that it becomes outdated much more quickly and requires more frequent changes, changes for which it may be difficult to obtain approval. A less

prescriptive, more general framework requires fewer amendments; however, enforcement of programme policies and standards may be difficult because of the vagueness of provisions.

Secondly, the various content elements of the legislative and policy framework can be enacted as one omnibus piece of legislation, or separately. For example, in jurisdictions with integrated archives and records management services, an archives act usually establishes records and information management programme functions, including the procedures for scheduling and disposing of public records. In other jurisdictions, the Archives' legal status and mandate are dealt with in an archives act, while matters relating to records and information management are addressed in a separate public records act. In addition, some jurisdictions address aspects of the protection of records of historical value in a cultural properties act, while systems for the legal deposit of publications are established in legal deposit acts. Further, it is increasingly common in many jurisdictions to establish separate access to information and privacy legislation governing all aspects of the access to public records.

Finally, the public service organisation will also have a choice as to the legislative instrument used to establish the framework for the management of its records. A mixture of statutes, regulations, cabinet or executive orders, policy instruments, procedures manuals and standards is possible. It is recommended that at least the general aspects of the legislative and policy framework be set out in one or more statutes (e.g. the Archives' legal status, roles, responsibilities and authorities, and procedures for scheduling and disposing of public records). More detailed aspects of the framework and those elements that are likely to change more often, such as schemes of service for records personnel, may be dealt with in subsidiary legislation, such as regulations, or policy documents.

The approach taken to establishing a legislative and policy framework for the records and information management programme, whether it is detailed and prescriptive or general, established as one omnibus piece of legislation or as separate enactments, and established as statute or in some other instrument, will depend on the public service organisation's constitutional, legislative and professional environment, in addition to its particular requirements and preferences.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

File Classification System

100	Finance
150	Personnel
200	Administration
250	Audit
300	Education
350	Health/Medical
400	Agriculture
450	Fishing and Game
500	Population
550	Environment
600	Entomology
650	Veterinary
700	Prisons
750	Water
800	Mineral Resources
850	Transportation
900	Judicial
950	Police
1000	Immigration/Emigration
1050	Community Services
1100	Tourism
1150	Trade and Industry
1200	Land
1250	Amenities

Index to File Classification System

SUBJECT	FILING DIVISION
Administration	200
Agriculture	400
Amenities	1250
Audit	250
Community Services	1050
Education	300
Emigration (and Immigration)	1000
Entomology	600
Environment	550
Finance	100
Fishing and Game	450
Game (and Fishing)	450
Health/Medical	350
Immigration (and Emigration)	1000
Industry (and Trade)	1150
Judicial	900
Land	1200
Medical (Health)	350
Mineral Resources	800
Personnel	150
Police	950
Population	500
Prisons	700
Tourism	1100
Trade and Industry	1150
Transportation	850
Veterinary	650
Water	750

SAINT LUCIA

No. 16 of 1993

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS**PART I****PRELIMINARY****Section**

1. Short Title.
2. Interpretation.

PART II**ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AUTHORITY OF SAINT LUCIA**

3. Establishment and Constitution of National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia.
4. Seal.
5. Meetings.
6. The Archivist.
7. Functions of the Authority.
8. Delegation of functions.
9. Obstruction.
10. Office of the Authority.
11. Committees.
12. Staff of the Authority.

PART III**MISCELLANEOUS**

13. Reproduction of public archives and public records.
14. Prohibition on removal out of Saint Lucia of public archives or public records.
15. Declaration of protected historical records.
16. Protection and preservation of protected historical records.
17. Control of sale of protected historical records.
18. Regulations.
19. Repeal and Savings.

I ASSENT

[L.S.]

STANISLAUS JAMES,
Governor-General.

20th October, 1993.

SAINT LUCIA

No. 16 of 1993.

AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the National Archives Authority of St. Lucia and for dealing with matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

[23rd October, 1993]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Assembly and the Senate of Saint Lucia, and by the authority of the same, as follows —

PART I

PRELIMINARY

Short Title. 1. This Act may be cited as the National Archives Authority of St. Lucia Act, 1993.

Interpretation. 2. In this Act—
 “ Authority ” means the National Archives Authority of St. Lucia established under section 3 ;

“ Minister ” means the Prime Minister ;

“ public archive ” means

(a) any public record which —

(i) is twenty-five years old ; and

(ii) has been specified by the Archives as being of enduring or historical value ; or

(b) any record or other material acquired by the Authority under section 7 (1) (h) ;

“ public record ” means any record in the custody of any Ministry, department of Government or statutory body ;

“ record ” includes any medium in or on which information is recorded ;

“ statutory body ” means any Commission established by the Constitution and any body corporate.

PART II

ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AUTHORITY OF ST. LUCIA

Establishment and Constitution of National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia.

3.—(1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the National Archives Authority of St. Lucia, which shall consist of a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman, and not less than five not more than seven other members all of whom shall be appointed by the Minister by instrument in writing.

(2) There shall be a Secretary of the Authority who shall be appointed by the Minister on such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit.

(3) A member shall, subject to subsections 4, 5 and 6 hold office for such period as the Minister may direct in the instrument appointing such member, but shall be eligible for re-appointment.

(4) Where a member has expressed his inability to act as such member or is absent from Saint Lucia for a long period, the Minister may appoint, any person to act temporarily in his place.

(5) A member, other than the Chairman, may at any time resign his office in writing addressed to the Chairman and upon the date of receipt by the Chairman of such letter shall cease to be a member of the Authority.

(6) The Chairman may at any time resign his office in writing addressed to the Minister and upon the date of the receipt by the Minister of such letter shall cease to be Chairman and a member of the Authority.

(7) The Minister may at any time by instrument in writing revoke the appointment of any member of the Authority.

(8) A vacancy shall be deemed to arise in the membership of the Authority in case of —

- (a) the death or resignation of a member ;
- (b) the revocation by the Minister of the appointment of a member ;
- (c) the absence from Saint Lucia of a member without leave of the Minister ; or
- (d) the failure of a member to attend three consecutive meetings of the Authority, without permission.

(9) Members shall be eligible for such remuneration whether by way of fees or travelling or other allowances, as the Minister may determine.

(10) The names of all members of the Authority as at first constituted and every change in the membership thereof shall be published in the *Gazette*.

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

Seal.

4.—(1) The seal of the Authority shall be kept in the custody of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman or such officer of the Authority as the Authority may approve and may be affixed to documents or instruments pursuant to a resolution of the Authority in the presence of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman and the Secretary to the Authority.

(2) The seal of the Authority shall be authenticated by the signature of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman and the Secretary to the Authority.

(3) All documents or instruments, other than those required by law to be under seal, made by, and all decisions of, the Authority may be signified under the hand of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman.

Meetings.

5.—(1) The Authority shall meet at such times as may be necessary or expedient for the transaction of its business and each meeting shall be held on such days and at such time and place as the Authority may determine.

(2) The Chairman or, if he is for any reason whatsoever unable to act, the Deputy Chairman, may at any time call a special meeting of the Authority and shall call a special meeting within seven days of the receipt by him of a requisition for that purpose addressed to him in writing by any two members.

(3) The Chairman or, in his absence, the Deputy Chairman, shall preside at all meetings of the Authority and in the case of the absence of both Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the members present and constituting a quorum shall elect a temporary Chairman from among their number who shall preside at that meeting.

(4) The quorum of the Authority at any meeting shall be the Chairman and three other members.

(5) Subject to this section, the Authority shall have power to regulate its own procedure.

The Archivist.

6. There shall be an Archivist who shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority and who shall assist the Authority in the discharge of its functions under this Act.

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

- 7.—(1) The functions of the Authority shall be — Functions of
the Authority.
- (a) to preserve public and private records of national significance and facilitate access thereto ;
 - (b) to be the permanent repository of public archives ;
 - (c) to co-ordinate the management of public records ;
 - (d) to prepare guidelines concerning the retention or destruction of public records ;
 - (e) to prescribe rules for the protection of historical records ;
 - (f) to make available and publish lists, indices, guides, inventories and other such facilities as may be necessary as aids to the use of public archives ;
 - (g) to reproduce, edit or publish any public archive which has been transferred to the Authority subject to any terms and conditions on which it was so transferred ;
 - (h) to acquire by purchase, donations, bequest or other material which is likely to be of enduring historical value ;
 - (i) to prescribe by notice any public record to be of enduring or historical value ;
 - (j) to examine any record containing references to or which had its origin in but lies outside Saint Lucia, with a view to securing, either by loan or by purchase, the original or any copy thereof ; and
 - (k) to provide for the restoration, rehabilitation and conservation of public archives.
- (2) The Authority may request any statutory body, or department of Government for access to its premises for the purpose of —
- (a) inspecting and examining its records ;
 - (b) giving advice relating to the filing, maintenance and preservation of its records ;

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

(c) recommending the transfer of its records to the premises or office of the Authority ; and

(d) making recommendations with regard to the retention or destruction of its records.

(3) Where a department of Government or statutory body, declines to comply with a request under subsection (2), the Authority may make representations in the matter to the Minister who may take such action as he deems necessary to secure compliance with this Act.

Delegation of Functions.

8. The Authority, may by direction in writing and subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, delegate any of its functions under this Act to the Archivist or to any one or more members of the Authority.

Obstruction.

9. Where the Authority or any person delegated by the Authority is prevented or, obstructed in performing its or his functions under this Act, the Authority may submit a report with respect to such prevention or obstruction to the Minister who may take such action as he deems necessary to ensure compliance with this Act.

Office of the Authority.

10.—(1) The office of the Authority shall be situated at such place as the Authority thinks fit and the Archivist shall be responsible for the day to day management and administration of the office.

(2) The Archivist shall have power to do all such things as appear to him necessary for maintaining the utility of the office and may in particular :

- (a) compile and make available indexes and guides to, and calendars and texts of, the records of the Authority ;
- (b) prepare publications concerning the activities of and facilities provided by the Authority ;
- (c) regulate the conditions under which members of the public may inspect public and other records or use the other facilities of the Authority ;

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

- (d) provide for the making and authentication of copies of and extracts from records required as evidence in legal proceedings or for other purposes ;
- (e) make arrangements for the separate housing of films, and other records which have to be kept under special conditions ; and
- (f) lend records, in cases where the Authority gives its approval for display at commemorative exhibitions or for other special purposes.

11.—(1) The Authority may appoint a committee of the Authority to examine and report to the Authority on any matter whatsoever arising out of or connected with any of its functions under this Act. Committees.

(2) Any such committee shall consist of at least one member of the Authority together with such other persons, whether members of the Authority or not, whose assistance or service the Authority may require.

(3) Any such committee shall meet at such times as may be necessary or expedient for the transaction of business ; and such meetings shall be held at such place and time and on such days as the committee may determine.

12. The Authority shall be provided with a staff adequate for the efficient discharge of its functions under this Act and the offices of the members of the staff shall be public offices. Staff of the Authority.

PART III

MISCELLANEOUS

13.—(1) No person shall publish or reproduce the whole or any part of the contents of any public archive which is in the custody of any department of Government or statutory body without permission of such department or body. Reproduction of public archives and public records.

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

(2) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment to a term of six months or to both.

Prohibition on removal out of Saint Lucia of public archives or public records.

14.—(1) No person shall remove out of Saint Lucia any public archive unless such public archive is required for any purpose connected with the performance of any function in the service of Saint Lucia.

(2) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for one year or to both.

Declaration of protected historical records.

15.—(1) Where the Minister considers that any record by reason of its enduring or historical value deserves to be preserved and that it is in the national interest to do so, he may, by notice in the *Gazette*, declare such record to be a protected historical record.

(2) Any person who is aggrieved by any notice published under subsection (1) may, within 21 days of the publication of the notice, make representations in writing to the Minister who, after consultation with the Archivist, may take such action as he deems necessary to secure compliance with this Act including revoking or confirming the notice.

Protection and preservation of protected historical records.

16.—(1) No person shall, without the consent of the Authority in writing, remove any protected historical record out of Saint Lucia.

(2) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of two thousand dollars or to imprisonment for one year or to both.

(3) Where a person is convicted of an offence under subsection (1) the Court may in addition to any penalty provided in subsection (2), make an Order commanding the convicted person to return or cause to be returned, as the case may be, the historical record to Saint Lucia within such period as the Court thinks fit.

(4) Any person who fails without reasonable excuse, the proof whereof shall lie on him, to comply with an Order made under subsection (3) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars together with imprisonment for one year.

17.—(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2), no person shall sell a protected historical record unless he has first made an offer to sell the protected historical record to the Authority and the Authority has been unable to purchase it or has not responded to the offer within the 30 days of the making thereof.

Control of
sale of
protected
historical
records.

(2) The provisions of subsection (1) shall not apply to the sale of any protected historical record —

- (a) in execution of an Order of Court ; or
- (b) by a trustee in insolvency or a liquidator.

(3) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for six months or to both:

18. The Minister may make Regulations generally for the proper carrying out of the provisions and purposes of this Act, and in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, may make Regulations prescribing —

Regulations.

- (a) fees to be charged for the inspection of and the making and certifying of copies of any public archive or public record in the custody of the Authority ;
- (b) for the storage and preservation of public archives or public records ;
- (c) the storage, preservation or destruction of public records or public archives ;
- (d) the preservation of protected historical records ;
- (e) prescribing rules for the protection of historical records ;

No. 16.] *National Archives Authority of Saint Lucia Act* [1993.

(f) prescribing any other matter or anything which may be or is required by this Act to be prescribed.

Repeal and
Savings.
No. 38 of 1996.
Cap. 17.

19.—(1) The Public Records Ordinance, 1965 and the Destruction of Court Records Ordinance, 1936 are repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1) any Regulations, Orders, Rules, made under the Act mentioned in that subsection shall be deemed to have been made under this Act and shall be so construed until they are revoked or varied by Regulations made under this Act.

Passed in the House of Assembly this 24th day of August, 1993.

W. ST. CLAIR-DANIEL,
Speaker.

Passed in the Senate this 6th day of October, 1993.

E. NEVILLE CENAC,
President.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: The Commonwealth Portfolio, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of Canada, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 1, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of the United Kingdom, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 2, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of Malaysia, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 3, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 4, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of New Zealand, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 5, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of Malta, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 6, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management: A Profile of the Public Service of Zimbabwe, The Public Service Country Profile Series No. 7, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997

From Problem to Solution: Commonwealth Strategies for Reform, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No. 1, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996

Redrawing the Lines: Service Commissions and the Delegation of Personnel Management, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No. 2, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996

Working Towards Results: Managing Individual Performance in the Public Service, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No. 3, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996

Better Policy Support: Improving Policy Management in the Public Service, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No. 4, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997

Introducing New Approaches: Improving Service Delivery, Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement Series No. 5, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1998

Fourth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada, Jocelyne Bourgon, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, Canada, 1997

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia, Ahmad Sarji, Malaysia, August 1996

Ministerial Symposium on the Future of Public Services, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Public Management Service, Paris, March, 1996

The Australian Public Service: The View from the Top, Coopers & Lybrand and University of Canberra, Australia, 1996

Canadian Public Administration, Volume 39, No. 4, Toronto, 1996

The Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (MTSD)

Managing for success

For managers in developing Commonwealth countries facing challenges ranging from public sector to enterprise turnaround, MTSD provides practical advice and rapid assistance through tailored packages of consultancy and strategic training. It assists with public service modernisation, organisational reform and restructuring, commercialisation, business planning, management development and the introduction of appropriate management and financial information systems.

Training for excellence

MTSD can assist in identifying training needs at sectoral, organisational or business unit levels. It provides top level training for senior staff and helps develop national and regional centres of excellence in priority areas. MTSD draws on the expertise of specialists within the Commonwealth Secretariat and can call on an extensive network of international experts to develop leading edge training programmes in strategic management, information systems, environmental management and enterprise development.

Building on strengths

All MTSD assistance programmes are sensitive to local needs and build on the strengths of existing staff and institutions. MTSD provides particular opportunities for women in the public and private sectors to develop their management skills.

Initial enquiries and requests for assistance can be made to:

The Director
The Management and Training Services Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Telephone: (+44) 171 839 3411
Facsimile: (+44) 171 747 6335

Cover design by Ashlyn Amichan

ISBN: 0 85092 582 7

