



PRINCIPLES OF ARCHIVES & RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Archives and records management is based upon the records series concept and two primary principles, the "records life cycle" and "records appraisal." The basic unit used in all discussions of records management and all records retention and disposition schedules is the record series. A record series is a group of records or documents which may be filed and maintained together as a unit throughout the life cycle. Records in a series are related because they result from the same function, the same activity, have the same or a similar form, have similar or related contents, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. Because of this, records series are filed together

LIFE CYCLES OF RECORDS

Records have life cycles. They are created or received. At this stage their physical form (paper, electronic, magnetic, photographic) and informational content are established. Records are then used and maintained. They are referred to, revised, refiled, and occasionally reorganized. For the most part, the need to refer to files declines sharply as their age increases. As records reach the end of their active lives, they are disposed of in some manner: they are destroyed, reformatted, transferred to inactive storage, or transferred to the University Archives.

During the use/maintenance life cycle phase, filing system design is critical in controlling records. Questions about the use and control of records should be posed and answered before a single file cabinet or folder is purchased. Will the filing system be

centralized or decentralized? Will the filing arrangement be numeric, alphabetical, or a combination of both?

The disposition phase of the life cycle is critically important to the legal and economical maintenance of office records. Many records can be legally destroyed at the end of their active lives. Others become semi-active and should be retired to a records storage area for more convenient storage. Records with continuing long-term value are sent to the University Archives for permanent storage.

RECORDS APPRAISAL

Determining the value of a record series is known as "appraisal," the second basic principle of records management. Appraisal is the process by which archivists determine the administrative, legal, and fiscal value as well as the historical and long-term research value of records. Once the value of a record series has been determined, a realistic retention period can be assigned to it. Appraisal can take place at any point during a record series' life cycle, but is most frequently done when the records become inactive.

APPRAISAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the considerations taken into account during the appraisal process include:

- physical volume (expressed in terms of cubic or linear feet);
- frequency of use (daily, monthly, yearly);
- administrative and operational need served by the record;
- legal and fiscal regulations governing retention;
- historical significance;
- economic advantage of moving the records from high cost office storage to low cost records storage space or direct disposal;
- whether it is the record copy or a duplicate.

TRANSFERRING OR DONATING MATERIALS

Transferring or Donating Materials to the Archives

All UNM offices and departments generate or have permanent records that at some point may be eligible for transfer to the University Archives. The Archives encourages transfer of inactive permanent records. These are records for which your office is the holder of the record copy and which have a permanent retention according to the General Records Retention Schedule. The most common permanent records include (but are not limited to):

- Administrative Reports (especially annual and biennial reports).
- Biographical Records.
- Committee Records.
- Correspondence, Executive.
- Grant Projects Research Records (final research reports).
- Photographs.
- Policies and Procedures Records.
- Publications.
- Special Event Records.

In most cases, records should be transferred to the Archives when they are no longer used in the everyday operation of the office and are referred to less than once a year. Specific instructions for transferring certain records to the University Archives after a certain number of years are given in the General Records Retention Schedule.

Inactive permanent records should be transferred to the University Archives for the following reasons:

- The Archives can provide reference service and access to the records. Most permanent records are open to public inspection. If these materials are maintained in your office, you are required to make them available to those who request to see them. If they are transferred to the Archives, the Archives staff can provide reference service and access to the materials.

University Archives Guidelines

- Inactive permanent records can be moved from expensive office space to semi-active storage to less expensive storage provided by the Archives.
- The Archives provides environmentally stable and secure storage and reference areas, uses archival supplies to house materials, and monitors reference use of materials in order that they may be preserved for use by future generations.

When you have records to transfer to the University Archives, please contact the University Archivist, Terry Gugliotta, at (505) 277-5707 or tgug@unm.edu. Terry will discuss with you the type and amount of records to be transferred, arrange for physically moving the records from your office to the Archives, and complete an Archives Transmittal Form. The Transmittal Form is used to list the records series being transferred and to transfer legal custody from the originating office to the Archives.

It may be appropriate for the Archives staff to visit your office to look at the records or arrangements for transfer may be made by telephone. Upon request, the Archives will provide boxes for the records to be transferred.

When boxing records, place the records and their original file folders in the boxes in the same order in which they were maintained in your filing system. Transfer the file folders to the Archives with the records.

After records are received in the University Archives, they will be processed following professional archival standards and procedures. Every effort is made during processing to maintain the integrity of the records as a group, while at the same time making them useable to researchers and preserving them from long- and short-term deterioration. The processing steps will include:

- Re-folding and re-boxing the materials into acid-free archival folders and boxes.
- Placing photographs and other special format materials in proper archival enclosures.
- Removing non-permanent or duplicate materials.
- Arranging the materials.
- Describing the materials with a folder-level inventory and summary description which will be available in the Archives and on the Rocky Mountain Online Archive website.