

Fact Sheet - 5

How to Sentence Records

What is sentencing?

Sentencing is the process of identifying and classifying records according to a Disposal Authority and applying the disposal action specified in it.

General rules for sentencing records

- ◆ Sentencing requirements apply to paper and electronic records
- ◆ Sentencing is generally done at the file/folder level
- ◆ Sentence records that have been inactive for at least two years. This time limit is set to ensure that records are not prematurely sent to storage
- ◆ File titles will give you a clue as to what to expect on the file; however, it is necessary to examine the contents of the file
- ◆ Only use the approved Disposal Authorities to sentence records
- ◆ Arrange and sentence similar files together
- ◆ Start with a group of records you know will be easier
- ◆ Files containing only ephemeral records can be destroyed once reference ceases. Ensure that all records are in fact ephemeral before you destroy them

How do I sentence records?

- ◆ Examine the file you are going to sentence
- ◆ Determine what business activity the file documents and what types of records are contained within the file. For example:
 - ◇ Examination papers
 - ◇ Meeting records
 - ◇ Correspondence/liaison with organisations
- ◆ Search the relevant Disposal Authority for a class of records that describes the records you have on the file
- ◆ Identify the reference (ie UDA 100.1)

- ◆ Identify the retention requirements for the records class (eg UDA 100.1 Destroy 10 years after date of last action)
- ◆ Identify the trigger event as determined by the Disposal Authority. For example:
 - ◇ last action date of the file
 - ◇ date of licence expiry
 - ◇ successful completion of the audit for the financial year to which the records apply
- ◆ Calculate the year in which the disposal action can take place
- ◆ Record the information on the file cover:
 - ◇ Trigger event eg 16/08/1995
 - ◇ Disposal Authority Reference eg UDA 100.1
 - ◇ Disposal action and date eg D 16/08/2005
- ◆ Record the information on the electronic file title:
 - ◇ Folder name
 - ◇ Disposal Authority Reference
 - ◇ Disposal Action and Date
 - ◇ 'CLOSED' reference
 - ◇ If the folder is moved to offline storage you will need to add the contextual information (eg folder hierarchy)
- ◆ Record details on any control records you are using
- ◆ Repeat the process with the remaining files
- ◆ Once you have finished sentencing the records, refer to the relevant section below to complete the remainder of the process

Note: If there is more than one business activity documented on the file:

- ◆ Sometimes files document more than one business activity, and in fact, may contain several different activities all on the one file. If this is the case, you need to refer to each records class for each activity on the file. You may at times also need to refer to more than one Disposal Authority

- ◆ If the file is separated into different sections you may generally sentence each part as a separate item and dispose of each part as described in the Disposal Authorities
- ◆ Once you have identified all the records classes/groups for each activity on file, you need to use the disposal class that has the LONGEST retention period requirements. This will ensure that the records are kept for as long as they are legally required

After the sentencing process

- ◆ The records you have sentenced may fit into some of the following categories. These categories will determine how you are going to manage your sentenced records.
 - ◇ Records that are due or overdue for destruction
 - ◇ Records that are not yet due for destruction
 - Temporary records to be stored in the work area
 - Temporary records to be stored by the Records and Archives Office
 - Archival records to be stored by the Records and Archives Office

What do I do with records that are due or overdue for destruction?

- ◆ Print off and complete a University Records Destruction Request List form available at: records.curtin.edu.au/includes/docs/forms/records_destruction_request.pdf
- ◆ The lists may also be created using either a word processor or spreadsheet
- ◆ Complete the *Records for Destruction* column by entering the record type with the longest retention period on the file. If the file has been separated into parts and sentenced separately, this information should be entered separately onto the Destruction Request List
- ◆ Enter the *Date of Last Action* (or required trigger event) in the second column
- ◆ Enter the *Disposal Authority Reference* in the third column
- ◆ Leave the last column blank (ie the Y/N column)

Please note that records must not be destroyed until official notification has been provided by the Manager, Records and Archives.

How is authorisation for the destruction of records obtained?

- ◆ Complete the first page of the University Record

Destruction Request form . The following information must be included on the form:

- Your name
- School/Area Name
- Contact Details
- Signature and date
- ◆ The Head of School/Area is to then sign the form to verify that there is no outstanding action required on any of the records listed
- ◆ The signed form is to be submitted in hard copy to the Manager, Records and Archives
- ◆ Once the lists have been approved by the Manager, Records and Archives, the Manager, Internal Audit and the FOI Coordinator, you will receive notification from the Manager, Records and Archives that destruction can occur

Appropriate destruction of records

- ◆ Paper records containing confidential or sensitive information must be destroyed using secured paper recycling bins available from Site Services
- ◆ Non-confidential records can be placed in recycling bins
- ◆ Delete electronic records
- ◆ Physically destroy other media, for example, CDs, videos, etc

What do I do with records not yet due for destruction that are stored in the work area?

- ◆ Work areas that have suitable storage areas for their inactive temporary records may choose to store these records
- ◆ Identify the different years that files have been sentenced as being due for destruction. For example, you may have files that are due for destruction in 2007, 2008, 2009, etc
- ◆ You may choose to create a new University Records Destruction Request List for each year to record the results of sentencing. Indicate the year due for destruction on top of each sheet. Do not submit these to the Records and Archives Office until the year they are due for destruction. It is important that no further documents are placed on the file, as this will change the last action date and therefore the year that they are due for destruction
- ◆ If you would rather use your own master spreadsheet to record details for all of the above files, ensure that you include the same headings as on the Destruction List. It is recommended that you include location markers for the files on the sheet. This may be a shelf marker (eg A4 to rep-

resent a specific shelf location) or a box number if you are storing them in boxes. Also include the year that they are due for destruction

- ◆ Ensure that accompanying documentation (eg Destruction Lists/spreadsheet) is accessible and retrievable by authorised staff members
- ◆ Staff will need to ensure that the information is still accurate prior to submitting the Destruction Lists each year

What are the storage area requirements for inactive records?

- ◆ Access should be restricted to staff with appropriate authority
- ◆ Adequate security is required to protect confidential or restricted information
- ◆ Control records should exist to identify what is kept in inactive storage and what actions have taken place
- ◆ The area should be clean and free from dust, insects and rodents
- ◆ It should be compliant with Occupational Safety and Health policies
- ◆ There should be minimal risk of damage

For more information about storage area requirements have a look at the University Recordkeeping Manual at:

records.curtin.edu.au/recordkeeping_manual/archives.html#storing

What do I do with temporary records that are to be stored by the Records and Archives Office?

- ◆ Records must have been inactive for at least two years
- ◆ Remove ephemeral material from the file
- ◆ Remove records from lever arch files and A4 plastic files as these take up space inside the boxes. Use manilla folders to store the records. Make sure that the relevant details are recorded on the manilla folder cover—this will make your job much easier when it comes to using the Online Archives Submission System
- ◆ Use only authorised boxes available from the Records and Archives Office
- ◆ Pack files in the boxes on their spines and not on top of each other
- ◆ Allow enough space for your hand to fit into the box without damaging the records or your hand
- ◆ The lid must be able to be closed properly
- ◆ The required documentation will need to be entered into the Online Archives Submission System which you must receive training for prior to use

What do I do with archival records that are to be stored by the Records and Archives Office?

- ◆ Follow the same process as described above
- ◆ Note that archive records are to be placed in separate boxes to temporary records

Using the Online Archives Submission System?

- ◆ The Online Archives Submission System is used for submitting inactive temporary records and archival records to secondary storage areas arranged by the Records and Archives Office
- ◆ Staff members are required to receive training (10 - 15 min) before receiving access to the system
- ◆ File details are to be entered into the system by the user
- ◆ Once the submission has been approved, arrangements will be made for collection and transfer of the boxes to the storage areas

Boxing records for transfer to the Records and Archives Office

- ◆ Use authorised boxes available for purchase from the Records and Archives Office
- ◆ Access the Archive Box Order Form from the website at:
records.curtin.edu.au/includes/docs/forms/archive_box_order_form.pdf
- ◆ Select the Half Size Government Archive Box type (VB601)
- ◆ Complete the form and fax it to the Records and Archives Office (2255)

Further Assistance

For more information contact the Records and Archives Office:

Phone: 9266 7050

Email: records@curtin.edu.au

Or visit our website:

records.curtin.edu.au