

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



Organisational Change: Moving Offices

Moving offices provides you with the opportunity/incentive to finally do something with those old files. However, you will need to keep in mind your statutory obligations under relevant legislation such as the State Records Act. In fact you can be liable to personal fines of up to \$5,500 for improper or premature destruction of records.

What do you need to do?

The records in your office can be broken down into a number of broad categories. There are those you use regularly, those you use infrequently (semi-active), those you use rarely or not at all (inactive) and, in many cases, those you didn't even know you had because you haven't looked at them since you moved in.

Below is a table outlining some guidelines on what to do with these records?

Records	Action
actively used	Take the records with you to keep near your office or work area.
used reasonably regularly but not day-to-day (semi-active)	Place in storage close by – eg storage areas or file rooms in your building (where available). If you don't have a storage area you will need to decide whether to keep them near your work areas or send to RAMS.
used infrequently (semi-active)	Transfer to storage with RAMS. Keeping these records in office accommodation can be wasteful of space. Note: Records must be appropriately boxed, listed and 'sentenced' when transferring to storage. This ensures that the records can be retrieved when required and that they are not kept longer than necessary. Use the 'records storage transfer form' on the RAMS forms web page.
inactive and have heritage/archival value	Contact the University Archivist, archives@westernsydney.edu.au
inactive but NOT eligible for destruction	Transfer to storage with RAMS (see above).
inactive AND eligible for destruction	Destroy securely and ensure destruction is documented. Use the 'destruction form' on the RAMS forms web page to document records destruction. Please forward the form to RAMS prior to destroying the records. RAMS staff can help you to identify appropriate disposal authorities from the State Records Authority.

Check List

- Have you **nominated a person to coordinate** your relocation?
- Have you **contacted RAMS** as soon as practical after learning of the relocation?
 - *Allowing enough time for records to be boxed, listed and collected.*
- Has all staff been instructed to **remove all records from furniture** including filing cabinets, cupboards and other furniture?
(Note: This includes removal of electronic media such as USB flash drives, CDs, etc)
- Have all relevant records been:
 - captured to TRIM;**
 - boxed for RAMS; or**
 - disposed of appropriately**(keep in mind minimum retention requirements under the State Records Act)
- Have you **notified IT Services of all IT equipment** that is being disposed of?
- Has someone completed a **final check of furniture prior** to the move?

Note: While RAMS staff cannot manage your records for you, we can provide advice on how to deal with record backlogs.

Principles

Some fundamental principles to keep in mind are that records destruction should be:

- **authorised** (both internally and by the State Records Authority);
- **appropriate** (eg irreversible, environmentally friendly etc);
- **secure/confidential;**
- **timely;** and
- **documented.**

[Ref. *Guideline No.3 – Destruction of Records*, 2010, State Records Authority of NSW]

Note: RAMS can provide confidential destruction services for non-paper records such as USB flash drives, CDs and DVDs, etc at no cost to your unit.

Archives

Do you have any records you think have particular historical interest or are otherwise worth keeping permanently? If so please contact the University Archivist archives@westernsydney.edu.au The University has an extensive archives collection dating back more than 100 years. But remember, records do not need to be old to be in the Archives.

Remember!

- *Never leave records behind.*
All records must be dealt with appropriately. Penalties under the *State Records Act* also cover abandoning records. Don't leave your records for someone else to deal with.
- *Ensure you have sufficient space for your current records in your new area.*
You generally won't have time on the day to make snap decisions if you don't have space for all your records in your new home. Those that won't fit will need to be listed and sent to RAMS for storage *prior* to the moving day.

Some records can be destroyed any time without authorisation

The State Records Act allows for the destruction of some records as soon as they are no longer needed for business or administrative purposes. There is no minimum retention period for these records and there is no need to document their destruction.

Note: care needs to be taken to ensure that records containing sensitive or confidential information are destroyed securely and appropriately (i.e. use either locked bins or send them to RAMS for secure destruction).

The following table provides a quick checklist to help you determine those records that can be destroyed at any time without listing or further authorisation and similar records that should be placed on an appropriate file.

Can destroy without listing or authorisation	Place on relevant file
<p>DRAFTS that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget documents; • charts; • correspondence; • file notes; • minutes; • reports; • spreadsheets; or • tabulations <p>NOTE: the final version of such documents should be placed on an appropriate file.</p>	<p>DRAFTS that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • document significant decisions; • contain significant or substantial changes; • contain significant or substantial annotations; • contain significant information that is not contained in the final version; • were circulated for comment; • were an authorised draft (eg approval may be a multi-stage process where a draft is authorised and signed-off at each stage); or • relate to the formulation of policy and procedures, where the draft provides evidence of the processes involved or contains significantly more information than the final version of the record.
<p>COPIES/DUPPLICATES that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are external reference material not acted upon (for example, external annual reports, price lists, trade journals and catalogues); • are committee members' copies of meeting papers; • are copies of documents captured elsewhere in the University; or • are internal publications (eg annual reports, brochures, calendars, handbooks, etc)? 	<p>COPIES/DUPPLICATES that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to a decision made or action taken within the University; • are copies of outgoing correspondence; • contain significant annotations; or • are sourced from outside the University and form the basis for or contribute towards a decision made or action taken by the University.

Can destroy without listing or authorisation	Place on relevant file
<p>WORKING PAPERS that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primarily facilitative and where the retention of the final version of a document is sufficient to meet the recordkeeping requirements of the University, so long as they are not required to be retained in order to account for policies, decisions, reasons and actions or not required to function as evidence • audio recordings of dictated correspondence, conferences and meetings used to prepare correspondence, papers, minutes and transcripts; • calculations; • rough notes (including rough notes of meetings and telephone conversations where a formal record has been made); or • statistics/figures. 	<p>WORKING PAPERS that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • document significant decisions, reasons and actions or contain significant information that is not contained in the final form of the record • are of a project officer or investigative officer where they are the substantive record of the project or investigation (that is, they contain substantial and valuable information not found elsewhere); or • are in an unofficial filing system where a registered file has not been created or kept.
<p>FACILITATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND MESSAGES that relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correcting typing errors; • file creation or retrieval; • filing a letter; • formatting documents; • arranging dates, times, locations etc of meetings; • internal distribution lists for informational purposes; and • running off duplicates. 	<p>FACILITATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND MESSAGES that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are identified as having continuing value (for example, are part of an actual business transaction itself); • have policy/procedural implications; • are identified as important to the University or business unit.

Further information

Further information on recordkeeping can be found on the RAMS website at:

<http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/rams>