



Records Destruction: Preparing records for Destruction

The destruction of University records is subject to the terms of the *State Records Act, 1998 (NSW)*. The University must be able to account for its records. If a record is destroyed, we need to be able to explain how, when and why this action was taken and under what authority.

If you have any doubts about whether records should be destroyed contact RAMS for advice.

Listing the Records

Records to be destroyed must be listed and the destruction approved by the head of the unit.

A records destruction form must be completed for all records to be destroyed (go to the [Forms page](#) on the RAMS website). The form requires the following details:

- Each file/folder must be listed individually
- A statutory retention period needs to be identified for each folder¹
- A date range for the contents of each file must be identified.

Example:

Box Number	File Number	File title/ Description	Date Created	Date Closed	Authority (ie GA)	Minimum Retention Period
<i>Example</i>						
D1	02/00111	Student Management - Ceremonies - Graduation - Administrative arrangements 2002	1/1/2009	31/12/2009	GA28- 02.04.02	5 years

¹ To determine the minimum retention period for records you will need a GA (General Authority) code. GA codes are listed in your unit's *records information form* (RIF) available in CM(TRIM) or from RAMS.

Note: If you are destroying a large quantity of backlog records, a different approach may be justified. For example, if you are destroying timesheet from more than 10 years ago you may list the records in a single lot as:

Box Number	File Number	File title/ Description	Date Created	Date Closed	Authority (ie GA)	Minimum Retention Period
<i>Example</i>						
<i>D1</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Staff timesheets - College of Business Dean's Unit</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>GA28-15.07.04</i>	<i>6 years</i>

Note: If you are unsure which GA code to use RAMS staff members are available to assist you.

Completed forms should be signed by the head of the unit then emailed to RAMS at rams@westernsydney.edu.au. RAMS staff will then make arrangements for the boxes to be collected.

Preparation of records for destruction

In preparing records for destruction please keep in mind the following:

- For WH&S reasons records for destruction must be placed in standard boxes (ie Type I archive boxes). Marbig and other boxes are often too heavy when full of paper and will not be collected by RAMS/Logistics staff. Standard boxes can be obtained from RAMS.
- For files to be shredded and pulped it is necessary to remove any of the following:
 - **bulldog clips and other metal clips (paperclips and staples do not need to be removed);**
 - **plastic sleeves;**
 - **plastic dividers; and**
 - **plastic folders/lever arch folders etc.**

Note: the contractor may refuse to shred records that contain these items. Any records containing these will be returned to you.

Further Information

There is no single minimum period for which records need to be kept. A common misconception is that records need to be kept for at least 7 years. The minimum period records must be kept varies depending on what activities of the University the records document. This can range from a few months to 99 years through to those records that need to be kept permanently.

Records that are due for destruction immediately can be placed in a secured destruction bin or placed in *archive boxes* and sent to RAMS.

Note: All CM (TRIM) folders must only be destroyed by RAMS. Do not place these folders in destruction bins, shred or otherwise destroy these files.

Key Principles

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

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

[See the State Records Authority publication *Destruction of Records: A Practical Guide* for more detail on these principles.]

Records Disposal Flowchart

