

Inventory Worksheet Guide

For Record Series & Systems

Records management is an ongoing process in every office, department, organization, and institute at WIU. A records inventory ensures your records are compliant with State and Federal agencies.

The first step in creating a records management program is to do a records inventory. A records inventory is vital to an effective records management program because it identifies the scope and quantity of an organization’s records. The information that comes from the records inventory serves as the basis for all decisions concerning the direction a records program will follow. The Inventory Worksheet is used to collect essential information for a complete records inventory

The Inventory Worksheet requires the following information:

Field Rep – Name of the Illinois State Archives representative that assists in preparing/processing the worksheet.

Application Number – Assigned by the Illinois State Archives. The numbers before the dash represent the year in which the request was received; the numbers after the dash represent the next available sequential number within that year. (Add-on Application Example: 15-55A. The original application number followed by a letter suffix for internal purposes.)

Date – When the worksheet was completed, not the date on the records.

Item Number – Necessary when completing more than one worksheet.

Record Series Title – The title group of related records used/filed/evaluated as a unit for disposition purposes. Example: Administrative Correspondence – This record series title may be and many different record files such as correspondence with the State, Department Heads, City Official, Deans, President, etc.

Dates – The first date for a record in the series. NOTE: When a specific date cannot be determined, an estimated date should be given for those records that are no longer created or required.

Volume – The total number of cubic feet of the records series in existence at the time of the inventory.

Record Series & Systems

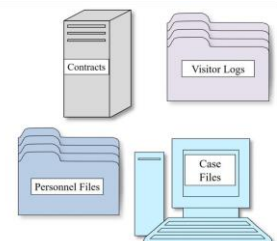
Records inventories focus on series of records. A records inventory is focused on different type, or families, of records. We call those record series. A series is a group of records that we keep together because they come from the same business process, they relate to the same topic, or they’re in some way related to one another.

For example, we might have a series of records called “procurement files” or “contracts”. All records in that series document the purchasing process.

As we’re doing an inventory, we identify these collections of information, and that includes information kept in electronic systems, database, data warehouses, and other information systems.

Record series and systems

- Document the same business process
- Relate to the same topic
- Records are related



Annual Accumulation – The volume of records accumulated to date in total for the record series and identifies the volume of records accumulated annually. When the records are on paper, the volume is in cubic feet; when the records are digital, the volume is in bytes of data.

Number & Size of Files/Documents; Index or Finding Aids – Use this space to indicate the types of documents in the file. Either the physical measurements of the documents (length and width) or a description of the documents (IBM cards, 16mm microfilm, ledger sheets with size, ledger/minutes/journal bound in books, etc.). Index or Finding Aids – Should be described briefly. Indicate the index media format, such as 3" x 5" index cards or microfilm. Arrangement – Most records are arranged chronologically, alphabetically, numerically or by status (active/inactive/closed). Secondary or tertiary arrangements should be listed as follows: “chronological and alphabetical by license thereunder.”

Agency – The official designation of the State agency – Western Illinois University

Division and Subdivision – Divisions: i.e. Provost and VP of Academic, VP of Student Success, VP Quad Cities. Subdivisions: i.e. College of Fine Art, Department of Chemistry, Financial Aid, Human Resources, etc. The administrative subdivisions of the agency, when known, such as division, bureau, office or section.

Office Location – The location of the office of the person having responsibility for the records.

Representative – Provide the contact information for the person responsible for the record series (name/title/phone).

Records Officer – Provide the contact information for the agency’s designated Records Officer (name/phone).

Description – The detailed and accurate description of each record series. The description should contain enough detail to allow the State Records Commission to effectively appraise the value of the records series proposed for disposal and approve it for your retention schedule. Records Coordinators and the University Records officer should be able explain in detail the function of the record, and identify it so that there are no misunderstandings about the record’s identity, use and information on the worksheet. The description is usually finalized in coordination with a representative from the State Records Commission.

Retention – Dispositions should be specified in terms of years or months. When a specified retention depends upon the occurrence of an event or the completion of a transaction, the nature of the event or transaction should be indicated in the retention. It is at this point that the appraisal process begins. This process is a joint analysis of the records series by the agency personnel and the Unit field representative. An example of a completed Inventory Worksheet is on the Records Management webpage.

Appraising Records

Creating a records inventory tells department managers and staff what records it has. The next step of the process is to appraise these records to help determine the minimum amount of time they must be kept (retained). An effective records management program requires a realistic appraisal of existing records. The appraisal process includes reviewing an agency’s functional process to define the records used in support of those functional processes.

The appraisal process:

- Establishes reasonable retention periods;
- Identifies records to request immediate disposal;
- Identifies records of lasting value for transfer to Archives at WIU

The appraisal process assigns a value to the records - Terms related to this process are explained below.

Administrative Value – The primary administrative use for most records is exhausted when all the transactions related to them are completed. From that point they begin to lose their value quickly; however, records that contain the basic facts of an agency’s origin, policies, functions, organization and significant administrative decisions are preserved long-term to provide a historical perspective to understand the agency’s operations.

Legal Value – Records have a legal value when they contain evidence of enforceable rights or obligations of the State. These records can include legal decisions and opinions; fiscal documents, such as leases, titles and contracts; and records of actions, such as claim papers and legal dockets.

Fiscal Value – (Financial Transactions) Records that have served their basic administrative function may still have sufficient fiscal value to justify their retention in storage for a defined lifecycle for litigation or audit purposes.

Research, Historical or Archival Value – Records have enduring value when they reflect significant historical events or document the history and development of an department or policy.

Establishing Retention Periods - Establishing a retention period is done after completing the appraisal process. An important factor impacting the retention period and record storage location is how often the records are used. For example: A record that has a retention period of six years and is frequently referenced during the first two years, then infrequently after that time, will likely have a retention period that states:

“Retain two (2) years in office, then transfer to Archives for four (4) years, then destroy in a secure manner ...”

A record that has a retention period of 10 years and has a high reference rate for those 10 years will likely have a retention period that states:

“Retain for ten (10) years after date of generation, then destroy in a secure manner or delete from the system...”

A record that has an administrative reference value of three years, but also has an archival or historical value, will likely have a retention period that states:

“Retain three (3) years in office, and then transfer to the Illinois State Archives for permanent retention.”

NOTE: The term “permanent,” when used for archival and retention purposes, means forever. Using the term permanent to define a record’s retention means that it has lasting value. The term permanent should not be confused with the term “indefinite.” It should not be used when an agency actually means a very long period of time. Retention periods of 20 or 40 years for a record are not uncommon, but such retention periods are not referred to as permanent.