



Queensland State Archives

Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms

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Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms

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Introduction

The purpose of this glossary is to explain the range of archival and recordkeeping terms used within the Queensland public sector. National and international sources have been cited within each term. For easier navigation within the document, hyperlinks have been included.

Access

The right, opportunity, means of finding, using or retrieving [information](#).

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.1

See also [Public access](#).

Accessible records

[Records](#) that can be identified, located and viewed as required.

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See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Accession

A group of [records](#) taken into [custody](#) from the same source at the same time.

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See also [Provenance](#) and [Transfer](#).

Accountability

The principle that individuals, organisations and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.2

Accrual

An addition to a [record series](#) already [registered](#) which may accumulate over time, usually at a predictable or anticipated rate and frequency. [Accruals](#) are despatched to Queensland State Archives by [agencies](#) and listed by [item](#).

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Accurate records

[Records](#) must accurately reflect what was communicated, decided or done (or not done). That is, the [record's](#) content, context and structure can be trusted as a true and accurate representation of the [transactions](#), [activities](#) or facts that they document and can be depended upon in the course of subsequent use.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Active records

[Records](#) in frequent use, regardless of their date of [creation](#), required for current business relating to the administration or [function](#) of the [agency](#). Such [records](#) are usually [maintained](#) in office space and equipment close to hand.

State Records NSW, Glossary

See also [Inactive records](#).

Activity

The major tasks performed by an organisation to accomplish each of its [functions](#). An activity should be based on a cohesive grouping of [transactions](#) producing a singular outcome.

State Records NSW, Glossary

See also [Function](#) and [Transaction](#).

Adequate records

[Records](#) should be adequate for the purposes for which they are kept. Thus, a major initiative will be extensively documented, while a routine administrative action can be documented with an identifiable minimum of [information](#). There should be adequate [evidence](#) of the conduct of activity to be able to [account](#) for that conduct.

AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Administrative records

[Records](#) that are created to document and support the operational [activities](#) of the [agency](#) which include administration of finance, human resources, equipment and other facilitative operations.

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See also [Functional records](#).

Agency

See [Public authority](#).

Analogue records

[Records](#) not captured and stored in digital or binary format. This may include books, papers, photographs and films made with light-sensitive media, video recordings, phonograph records and older magnetic sound recordings.

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Appraisal

The process of evaluating business [activities](#) and [records](#) to determine which [records](#) need to be [captured](#) and how long those [records](#) need to be kept to meet business needs, [accountability](#) requirements and community expectations.

AS4390, Part 1, Clause 4.3

See also [Sentencing](#).

Archival value

The [evidential](#), administrative, financial, legal, informational and historical values that justify the continuing [retention](#) of [records](#) as [archives](#).

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 158-159

Archives

Those [records](#) that are appraised by Queensland State Archives as having continuing [value](#) and that have been selected for permanent retention.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 1, Clause 4.5

- a) Those [records](#) that are appraised as having continuing [value](#). Traditionally the term has been used to describe [records](#) no longer required for current use which have been selected for permanent [preservation](#). Also referred to as [permanent records](#).
- b) The place (building/room/storage area) where archival material is kept.
- c) An [agency](#) (or part of an [agency](#)) responsible for [appraising](#), acquiring, [preserving](#) and making available archival material.

Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 633

Archiving

The process of [transferring](#) inactive [records](#) from current storage areas to a [repository](#) for long-term storage, [preservation](#) and [access](#).

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See also [Migration](#) and [Transfer](#).

Arrangement

The processes involved in analysing [records](#) and arranging them with respect to [provenance](#) and [original order](#) to provide physical and [intellectual control](#) in accordance with national and international archival descriptive standards.

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See also [Description](#).

Audiovisual records

[Records](#) that consist of a series of related images or sound created, stored and viewed on media. These can include motion picture film, filmstrips, sound and video recordings, posters and other graphic works, still images, microfilm, microfiche, aerial film, and X-ray films.

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Authentic records

[Records](#) that can be proven and trusted to be what it purports to be and to have been [created](#), [used](#), transmitted or held by an [agency](#) or person to whom these actions have been attributed.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Born-digital

Information created in electronic format. This term is used to differentiate materials from those that have been created as a result of converting analogue or paper originals into electronic form through the process of [digitisation](#).

Adapted by QSA from the SAA Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology and Jones & Beagrie, Definitions and Concepts

See also [Electronic records](#) and [Digitisation](#).

Business classification scheme

A mapping of the [functions](#) and [activities](#) of the [agency](#) derived from the analysis of business activity, containing terms and scope notes that represent and describe [functions](#), [activities](#), [transactions](#) or other elements and shows their relationships. The structure of the scheme is hierarchical, moving from the general to the specific.

Adapted by QSA from National Archives of Australia, DIRKS Glossary

See also [Classification](#) and [Thesaurus](#).

Business continuity planning

A process of identifying, preventing and preparing for events that may interrupt business [activities](#). Events may be natural or man-made and include natural disasters, deliberate actions, accidents and equipment failures. A Business Continuity Plan facilitates the return of key critical services occurs as quickly as possible after an organisational disruption, with its reputation and assets intact.

Adapted by QSA from AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17799, Clause 11.1

See also [Disaster plan](#) and [Vital records](#).

Business systems

Information technology systems designed to support the undertaking of a specific business process or processes. Although they may create, receive, manage and maintain business information relating to business processes, their primary function is not concerned with the management of this information as [records](#). They are therefore distinct from [electronic document and records management systems](#). Examples of business systems include e-commerce systems, client relationship management systems, finance and human resource management systems.

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See also [electronic document and records management systems](#)

Capture

A deliberate action which results in the [registration](#) of a [record](#) into a [recordkeeping system](#). For certain business activities, this action may be designed into electronic systems so that the [capture](#) of [records](#) is concurrent with the [creation](#) of [records](#).

AS 4390, Part 1, Clause 4.7

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Classification

Systematic identification and [arrangement](#) of business [activities](#) and/or [records](#) into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in a [classification system](#) to aid business use, continued access and appropriate retention and disposal.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.5

See also [Business classification scheme](#), [Functional classification](#), [Control](#) and [Thesaurus](#).

Complete records

A [record](#) must contain not only the content, but also the structural and contextual [information](#) necessary to document the [transaction](#).

AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Conservation

Conservation embraces those processes or actions necessary to ensure the continued physical survival of collections without further degradation.

Conservation activities may include [preservation](#), restoration, examination, documentation, research, advice, treatment, preventive conservation, training and education.

Adapted by QSA from AICCM Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

See also [Preservation](#).

Control

Control systems and processes associated with [records management](#) include:

- a) [registration](#), which provides [evidence](#) of the existence of [records](#) in a [recordkeeping system](#)
- b) [classification](#), which allows for appropriate grouping, naming, security protection, user permissions and retrieval
- c) indexing, which allocates attributes or codes to particular [records](#) to assist in their retrieval, and
- d) tracking, which provides [evidence](#) of where a [record](#) is located, what action is outstanding on a [record](#), who has seen a [record](#), when such [access](#) took place and the [recordkeeping transactions](#) that have been undertaken on the [record](#).

AS 4390, Part 4, Clause 1

See also [Intellectual control](#).

Conversion

The process of changing [records](#) from one [medium](#) to another or from one [format](#) to another.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.7

See also [Migration](#).

Custody

The term [custody](#) has two meanings:

- a) The responsibility for the care of [records](#), [archives](#) or other material usually based on their physical possession. [Custody](#) does not always include legal ownership, or the right to control [access](#) to [records](#).
- b) The physical location of the [records](#) or [archives](#).

Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 634

See also [Owner](#).

Date of last action

See [Last action](#).

Description

The processes involved in analysing [records](#) to provide [intellectual control](#) and context in accordance with national and international archival descriptive standards by including elements such as creating agency, title and dates.

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See also [Arrangement](#).

Destruction

The process of eliminating or deleting [records](#) that do not have continuing [value](#), beyond any possible reconstruction (such as incineration, shredding, pulping or deletion).

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.8

Digital archive

A Digital Archive fulfils the same role in a digital world as traditional archives have in the paper world.

It is broader than a digital repository storing digital items. A Digital Archive ensures that [digital records](#) are professionally created, managed and preserved with their content, structure and context intact. This supports the evidential integrity of the record, accessibility and useability over time. A Digital Archive encompasses the technical infrastructure, standards, policies and procedures and support services for managing and providing access to digital objects and their associated metadata.

Adapted by QSA from the National Archives of Australia, Glossary

See also [Digital archiving](#).

Digital archiving

The identification, [appraisal](#), [description](#), storage, [preservation](#), management and retrieval of [electronic records](#), including all of the policies, guidelines and systems associated with those processes, so that the logical and physical integrity of the records is securely maintained over time.

Adapted by QSA from the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities' Digital Archiving in the 21st century

Digital images

Images which have been transformed from analogue material to digital form for use within computer applications.

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See also [Digitisation](#).

Digital preservation

An essential and necessary component of [digital archiving](#) ensuring longevity of an electronic object. Digital preservation covers the processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of [authentic electronic records](#) over time (such as the ongoing monitoring, migration and storage of records and managing the [metadata](#) which describes the origin and successive treatment of the record).

Adapted by QSA from the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities' Digital Archiving in the 21st century

Digital records

See [Electronic records](#).

Digitisation

The process of converting any physical or [analogue record](#) into an electronic representation. This may be done by such means as scanning or digital photography.

Adapted by QSA from S Tanner, From Vision to Implementation – Strategic and management issues for digital collections

Disaster plan (also Disaster Preparedness Plan)

Policies, procedures and information that direct the actions to be taken to recover from, and mitigate the impact of, an unexpected interruption to operations. Events may be natural or man-made and include natural disasters, deliberate actions, accidents and equipment failures. Disaster planning includes anticipatory activities done to mitigate the impact of disaster and measures to recover, save and secure [vital records](#) should a disaster occur.

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 76

See also [Business continuity planning](#) and [Vital records](#).

Disposal

The action concerning the fate of the [records](#). [Disposal](#) includes:

- a) [destroying](#), deleting or [migrating](#) a [record](#) or part of a record, and
- b) abandoning, [transferring](#), giving away, donating or selling a [record](#) or part of a record.

Adapted by QSA from Public Records Act 2002, Schedule 2

Disposal action

A description of the minimum [retention period](#) for the [records](#) and the event from which the [retention period](#) starts. For example, [retain](#) for 7 years after [last action](#).
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Disposal authority

See [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#).

Disposal classes

Groups of [records](#) performing or recording similar [transactions](#) and therefore having the same [retention period](#) and [disposal action](#).

Adapted by QSA from AS 4390, Part 1, Clause 4.11

See also [Series](#).

Disposal schedule

See [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#).

Disposal trigger

The event or action, specified in a [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#), from which the disposal date is calculated.

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See also [Disposal action](#).

Documents

Recorded information or object which can be treated as a unit.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.10

Some [documents](#) are [records](#) because they have been part of a business [transaction](#), or were [created](#) to document such a [transaction](#). Conversely, some [documents](#) are not [records](#) because they do not function as [evidence](#) of a business [transaction](#).

Adapted by QSA from State Records NSW, Glossary

Electronic document and records management system (eDRMS)

An automated system designed to manage semi-structured or unstructured content including text, images, and video content. A subset of the documents managed in an eDRMS can be declared to be [records](#). The eDRMS manages these records using a rigorous set of business rules which are intended to preserve the context, [authenticity](#) and integrity of the records.

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See also [Recordkeeping systems](#) and [Business systems](#).

Electronic records

[Records created](#), communicated and [maintained](#) by means of electronic or computer equipment.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 1, Clause 4.13

Ephemeral records

[Items](#) of short-term information [value](#) that are not required to be kept as [records](#).

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Evidence

[Evidence](#) refers to the [records](#) of a business [transaction](#) which can be shown to have been [created](#) in the normal course of business [activity](#) and which are [inviolable](#) and [complete](#). They are [evidence](#) of how an [agency](#) or person conducted their business, including decisions, actions, non-decisions and inactions.

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File

(n.) An organised unit of [records](#) grouped and managed as a discrete object because they deal with the same [activity](#) or [transaction](#). A [file](#) can be physical or electronic.

(v.) The action of placing [documents](#) in a predetermined location according to an overall scheme of [control](#).

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

Format

The physical medium in which [information](#) is recorded, carried, conveyed or transmitted. For example: paper files, computer printouts, photographs, microfilm, plans, cards, floppy disks, compact disks (CDs) and magnetic computer tapes.

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p.245-247

Full and accurate records

The term “full and accurate” describes the essential characteristics of [records](#) that distinguish them from other forms of [information](#). To be regarded as full and accurate, [records](#) need to be:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) created | g) authentic |
| b) captured | h) inviolable |
| c) adequate | i) accessible |
| d) complete | j) useable |
| e) meaningful | k) retained , and |
| f) accurate | l) preserved . |

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

Function

[Functions](#) represent the major responsibilities that are managed by an [agency](#) to fulfil its goals. [Functions](#) are high-level aggregates of the [agency's activities](#).

State Records NSW, Glossary

See also [Activity](#) and [Transaction](#).

Functional analysis

1. Functional analysis is a top-down decomposition which identifies the [functions](#) that achieve an agency's high-level objectives, and then further analyses the functions to identify the [activities](#) and actions that constitute them, and in turn breaks down the activities and actions to the level of recurring [transactions](#).

AS 5090, Clause 7.2

2. Functional analysis is the analysis of business activity. This analysis involves collecting information from documentary sources and interviews; identifying and documenting each business function, activity and transaction; establishing a hierarchy of business functions, activities and transactions; and identifying and documenting the flow of business processes and the transactions which comprise them.

AS 4390, Part 3, Clause 6.2.2(b)

See also [Function](#), [Activity](#) and [Transaction](#).

Functional classification

Involves grouping [records](#) into categories organised according to the [functions](#) of the organisation. Records are further classified by the [activities](#), [transactions](#) and/or subjects they document.

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Functional records

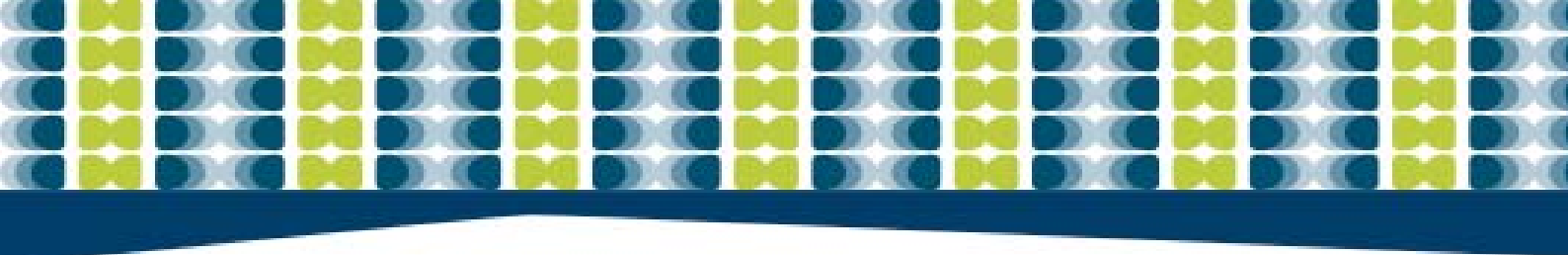
[Records created](#) by an [agency](#) to help carry out its unique business role. The [functions](#) and their associated [records](#) are specific to the [agency](#), as opposed to [administrative records](#) that document [activities](#) common to all [agencies](#).

Adapted by QSA from National Archives of Australia, DIRKS Glossary

See also [Administrative records](#).

Government Enterprise Architecture

The Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA) provides a guiding framework for individual agencies, host agencies for multi-agency projects, and



for whole-of-Government projects in the development, use, and management of ICT assets.

*Adapted by QSA from Queensland Government Chief Information Office,
Glossary of Terms*

See also [Information Standards](#).

Hybrid recordkeeping system

A [recordkeeping system](#) comprising records in a combination of paper, electronic or other formats.

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

See also [Recordkeeping systems](#).

Imaging

See [Digitisation](#).

Inactive records

Those [records](#) no longer required to be readily available for the business purposes of an agency and which may therefore be [transferred](#) to intermediate storage, archival [custody](#) or [destroyed](#).

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

See also [Active records](#).

Indexing

Process of establishing access points to facilitate retrieval of [records](#) and/or [information](#).

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.11

Information

A collection of data in any form that is maintained by an [agency](#) or person and which may be transmitted, manipulated, and stored. [Records](#) are the subset of [information](#) that constitutes the [evidence](#) of [activities](#).

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Information Standards

The Queensland Government [Information Standards](#) assist Government agencies by defining and promoting best practice in the acquisition, development, management, support and use of the information systems and technology infrastructure which support Queensland Government business processes and service delivery.

Queensland Government Chief Information Office

See also [Government Enterprise Architecture](#).

Information systems

See [Business systems](#).

Intellectual control

The control established over the informational content of [records](#) and [archives](#) resulting from ascertaining and documenting their [provenance](#), and from the processes of [arrangement](#) and [description](#).

National Archives of Australia. Glossary

See also [Physical control](#).

Inviolate records

Those [records](#) which are timebound to a specific business [transaction](#) and [complete](#). To be inviolate, a [record](#) must be securely [maintained](#) to prevent unauthorised [access](#), alteration or removal.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Item

A unit of recorded material which may form a [series](#) or with other similar units accumulate to form a series (that is, a [file](#) within a series of files, a volume within a series of volumes). An item can be a parent item (for example, a photograph album) or a subordinate (or child) item/s (for example, photograph/s in a photograph album).

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See also [Series](#).

Last action

The date of the [last action](#) on the [record](#) must be taken into consideration prior to [disposal](#). Examples of the [last action](#) are the date of the last item on the [file](#), or the date of the last entry on the register/database. It is not the last time the file was accessed or referred to.

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Legacy records

Closed records series, also referred to as non-current records, created:

- a) Under a previous/defunct [recordkeeping system](#)
- b) Under a defunct [function](#) or [activity](#), or
- c) By a predecessor agency.

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Maintain

To [retain records](#) in identifiable [recordkeeping systems](#) over time in accordance with [appraisal](#) decisions. [Records](#) that are required to be [maintained](#) should remain [accessible](#), their integrity should be protected and, where necessary, they should meet the conditions or requirements identified in order to satisfy business needs, organisational [accountability](#) and community expectations. This may include [migrating records](#) across successive systems and other [preservation](#) strategies.

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

Meaningful records

[Records](#) which can be understood because they contain information and/or linkages that ensure the business context in which the [records](#) were [created](#) and [used](#) is apparent.

Adapted by QSA from AS4390, Part 3, Clause 5.3

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Medium

See [Format](#).

Metadata

Structured information that describes and/or allows users to find, manage, control, understand or preserve other information over time.

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

See also [Recordkeeping metadata](#).

Microfilming

The use of photographic processes to produce very small images of original material on a film base. [Preservation](#) microfilming is undertaken to minimise handling and use of fragile records and enhance their preservation and accessibility.

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Migration

The process of moving [records](#) from one [system](#) to another, while maintaining the [records'](#) [authenticity](#), integrity, [reliability](#) and [useability](#).

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.13

See also [Conversion](#).

Non-records

See [Ephemeral records](#).

Original order

The order in which [records](#) and [archives](#) were kept when in active use, i.e. the order of accumulation as they were [created](#), [maintained](#) and [used](#). The principle of [original order](#) requires that the [original order](#) be [preserved](#) or reconstructed unless, after detailed examination, the [original order](#) cannot be ascertained or it is determined to be a haphazard accumulation.

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 253

See also [Arrangement](#).

Owner

The ownership of public [records](#), except local government records, is vested in the State of Queensland. Public records created or accumulated by a local government are owned by that local government or its successor.

Adapted by QSA from the Public Records Act 2002

See also [Custody](#).

Permanent records

[Records](#) with high [archival value](#) which cannot be [destroyed](#) and must be [retained](#) indefinitely by either the [agency](#) or Queensland State Archives. Permanent [records](#) may be [transferred](#) from [agencies](#) to Queensland State Archives.

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See also [Temporary records](#).

Physical control

The [control](#) established over the physical aspects (such as quantity and storage location) of the [archives](#) and/or [records](#) in [custody](#).

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 287

See also [Intellectual control](#).

Preservation

Processes and operations that minimise chemical and physical deterioration over time and prevent loss of information. This includes storing, protecting and [maintaining records](#) in an optimum manner and may include reformatting if required.

Adapted by QSA from AICCM Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

See also [Conservation](#), [Full and accurate records](#) and [Reprography](#).

Provenance

- a) The [agency](#) or person of origin of [records](#), i.e. the entity which [created](#), received or accumulated and used the [records](#) in the conduct of business, personal or family life. Also referred to as records creator.
- b) The chain of [custody](#) and ownership which reflects the [agency](#) or person that [created](#), received or accumulated and [used](#) the [records](#) in the conduct of business or in the course of personal life. Identifying and documenting the [provenance](#) of [records](#) is an essential part of establishing their [authenticity](#) and integrity as [evidence](#).
- c) In archival theory, the principle of [provenance](#) requires that [archives](#) of one records creator are not mixed or combined with those of another, i.e. the [archives](#) are [retained](#) and documented in their [functional](#) and/or organisational context.

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 253

Public access

Provision of [access](#) to [records](#) in accordance with [access](#) conditions set under provisions of the *Public Records Act 2002*.

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Public authority

A “[public authority](#)” means—

- a) the Governor in his or her official capacity
- b) the Executive Council
- c) a Minister
- d) a Parliamentary Secretary
- e) the registrar or other officer of a court with responsibility for official [records](#) of the court
- f) a commission of inquiry under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950*
- g) an entity, other than the parliamentary service, that—
 - i) is established by an Act, or
 - ii) is created by the Governor in Council or a Minister
- h) a Government Owned Corporation
- i) a department
- j) an entity established by the State and a local government
- k) a local government, or
- l) an entity declared under a regulation to be a [public authority](#) for this Act.

Public Records Act 2002, Schedule 2

See also [Agency](#).

Public records

[Public records](#) are defined as:

- a) A “[public record](#)” is any of the following [records](#) made before or after the commencement of the *Public Records Act 2002* -
 - i) a [record](#) made for use by, or a purpose of, a [public authority](#), other than a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
 - ii) a [record](#) received or kept by a [public authority](#), other than a Minister, in the exercise of its statutory, administrative or other public responsibilities or for a related purpose,
 - iii) a Ministerial [record](#)
 - iv) a Parliamentary Secretary.
- b) A [public record](#) includes -
 - i) a copy of a [public record](#), and
 - ii) a part of a [public record](#), or copy of a part of a [public record](#).

Public Records Act 2002, Section 6

See also [Records](#).

QDAN (Queensland Disposal Authority Number)

The unique number allocated to each [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) approved by Queensland State Archives.

Recordkeeping

The act of making and keeping [evidence](#) and memory of government business in the form of recorded [information](#).

Adapted by QSA from AS4390 Part 1, Clause 4.19

See also [Records management](#).

Recordkeeping metadata

Data describing the context, content and structure of [records](#) and their management through time.

AS ISO 15489, Part 2, section 4

Structured or semi-structured information that enables the creation, management and use of [records](#) through time and across domains. Recordkeeping metadata can be used to identify, authenticate and contextualise records; and the people, processes and systems that create, management, maintain and use them.

National Archives of Australia, Glossary

Recordkeeping systems

The interaction of the technology, people, principles, methods, processes and information systems which [captures](#), manages and provides [access](#) to [records](#) through time.

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.17

[Recordkeeping systems](#) may be distinguished from other types of [business systems](#) by the fact that they are organised to accomplish the specific [functions](#) of [creating](#), storing and [accessing records](#) for [evidential](#) purposes.

National Archives of Australia, DIRKS Glossary

See also [Business systems](#).

Records

Recorded information created or received by an entity in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs that provides [evidence](#) of the business or affairs and includes:

- a) anything on which there is writing
- b) anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols or perforations having a meaning for persons, including persons qualified to interpret them
- c) anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else, or
- d) a map, plan, drawing or photograph.

Public Records Act 2002

[Information created](#), received and [maintained](#) as [evidence](#) and [information](#) by an [agency](#) or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the [transaction](#) of business.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.15

[Records](#) are [information](#) objects that document business [activities](#) and [transactions](#). To be regarded as [evidence](#) a [record](#) must be [complete](#). [Complete records](#) comprise contextual and structural data as well as content data.

- a) Contextual data is [information](#) about the [creation](#) and use of the data. The context refers to the business [function](#) and [activity](#) in the course of which the [record](#) is [created](#). Contextual data is concerned with the who, what, where, when and how of the [creation](#) and management of the [information](#) object. Contextual data may be intrinsic or extrinsic to the [information](#) object.

- b) Structural data includes formal internal structures of the [information](#) object and the structural relations between [records](#) in an electronic record that are used by the interaction of software and hardware to constitute the equivalent of the physical [record](#) in the paper environment. Structural data may be intrinsic or extrinsic to the [information](#) object.
- c) Content data is the [information](#) contained within the [information](#) object. The content is intrinsic to the [information](#) object and is what the [record](#) is about.

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See also [Recordkeeping metadata](#), [Full and accurate records](#) and [Public records](#).

Records continuum

The [records continuum](#) is the whole extent of a [record's](#) existence. Refers to a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the [creation](#) of [records](#) (and before [creation](#), in the design of [recordkeeping systems](#)), through to the [preservation](#) and use of [records](#) as [archives](#).

AS4390, Part 1, Clause 4.22

See also [Records lifecycle](#).

Records creation

The act of making a [record](#) and incorporating it into a [recordkeeping system](#).

National Archives of Australia Glossary

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Records lifecycle

The [records lifecycle](#) is the model of [records management](#) and archival management which describes the stages through which a [record](#) is said to pass during its 'life', often using 'birth to death' analogies. [Records](#) do not necessarily experience all stages of the lifecycle. For example, a [record](#) may be [created](#) but it may not necessarily be [used](#). Typically, [records](#) pass through a series of stages such as:

- a) [Creation](#)
- b) [Distribution](#)
- c) [Use](#)
- d) [Maintenance](#)
- e) [Storage](#), and
- f) [Disposal](#).

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See also [Records continuum](#).

Records management

Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic [control](#) of the [creation](#), receipt, [maintenance](#), [use](#) and [disposal](#) of [records](#), including processes for [capturing](#) and [maintaining evidence](#) of and [information](#) about business [activities](#) and [transactions](#) in the form of [records](#).

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.16

See also [Recordkeeping](#).

Registration

The act of giving a [record](#) a unique identity in a [recordkeeping system](#).

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.18

The primary purpose of [registration](#) is to provide [evidence](#) that a [record](#) has been [created](#) or [captured](#) in a [records system](#), and an additional benefit is that it facilitates retrieval. It involves recording brief descriptive [information](#) or [metadata](#) about the [record](#) and assigning the [record](#) an identifier, unique within the system.

AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 9.4

The process used by [archives](#) in [capturing](#) data on [agencies](#), [series](#) and [items](#).

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See also [Control](#).

Reliable records

Those [records](#) that are trusted as credible [evidence](#) of the [transactions](#) they document.

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Repository

A place where archives and/or [records](#) can be stored and maintained. Archival repositories are often constructed to meet specific environmental standards to protect the [records](#) over time.

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See also [Secondary storage](#).

Reprography

It embraces the processes of [microfilming](#), digital imaging and photography to produce copies of an original [record](#) necessary to ensure its continued physical survival by providing [access](#) to the copy. It may be a component of [preservation](#).

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See also [Preservation](#).

Retain until reference ceases

[Records](#) which are no longer required for the day-to-day operations of the [agency](#) and where there is no further business need for the [records](#). The length of time these [records](#) are required to be [retained](#) will need to be determined by the [agency](#) based on its business needs, policies and procedures and will vary from [agency](#) to [agency](#).

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Retention and Disposal Schedule

A document issued by the State Archivist authorising the [disposal](#) of [public records](#). It defines the temporary or permanent status, [retention periods](#), [disposal triggers](#), and consequent [disposal actions](#) authorised for [classes](#) of [records](#) described in it.

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There are three main types of schedules:

- a) [Public authority](#)-specific retention and disposal schedule, which is based on the [functions](#) of a public authority, and authorises the retention and [disposal](#) of [records](#) unique to that authority.
- b) General retention and disposal schedule, which is based on [functions](#) common to many [public authorities](#) and authorises the retention and disposal of administrative [records](#) common to more than one authority.
- c) Sector retention and disposal schedule, which is based on functions common to like public authorities and authorises the retention and disposal of records of similar public authorities (for example, local government, universities).

Adapted by QSA from State Records NSW, Glossary

Retention period

The minimum period of time that [records](#) need to be [retained](#) before their final [disposal](#).

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See also [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#).

Scanning

See [Digitisation](#).

Secondary storage

A [records](#) storage area where [inactive](#) records are housed and referenced pending their disposal through [destruction](#) or [transfer](#) to [archives](#).

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See also [Repository](#).

Sentencing

The process of identifying the [disposal class](#) a [record](#) belongs to and applying the [disposal action](#) specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) to the [record](#). [Sentencing](#) is the implementation of decisions made during [appraisal](#).

National Archives of Australia, DIRKS Glossary

See also [Appraisal](#).

Series

Those [records](#) or [archives](#) having the same [provenance](#) and which belong together because:

- a) they are part of a discernible filing system (alphabetical, numerical, chronological or a combination of these)
- b) they have been kept together because they result from the same [activity](#), or
- c) they are of similar [formats](#) and relate to a particular [function](#).

A [series](#) may consist of only one item. Also referred to as record series.

Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p.254

See also [Disposal classes](#).

Temporary records

[Records](#) with limited [archival value](#) that can be [sentenced](#) for [destruction](#) on the expiration of the authorised minimum [retention period](#).

Adapted by QSA from Bettington, Eberhard, Loo and Smith (ed), Keeping Archives, p. 480

See also [Permanent records](#).

Thesaurus

A [thesaurus](#) is a controlled list of terms linked together by semantic, hierarchical, associative or equivalence relationships. Such tools act as a guide to allocating [classification](#) terms to individual [records](#). In a [thesaurus](#), the meaning of the term is specified and hierarchical relationships to other terms shown. A [thesaurus](#) provides sufficient entry points to allow users to navigate from terms which are not to be used to the preferred terminology adopted by the [agency](#).

AS ISO 15489, Part 2, Clause 4.2.3.2

See also [Business classification scheme](#) and [Functional classification](#).

Tracking

Creating, capturing and maintaining information ([recordkeeping metadata](#)) about the movement and use of records.

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.19

See [Control](#).

Transaction

The processes resulting from undertaking a piece of business. A transaction is the smallest unit of business activity.

Adapted by QSA from AS 4390, Part 1, Clause 4.27

See also [Activity](#) and [Function](#).

Transfer

The process of changing the physical [custody](#), ownership and/or responsibility for [records](#). This may occur without changing the legal ownership of the [records](#).

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 3.20

Unique number

The practice of allocating a unique number to each record [item](#) so that items are easily identifiable from each other.

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Useable records

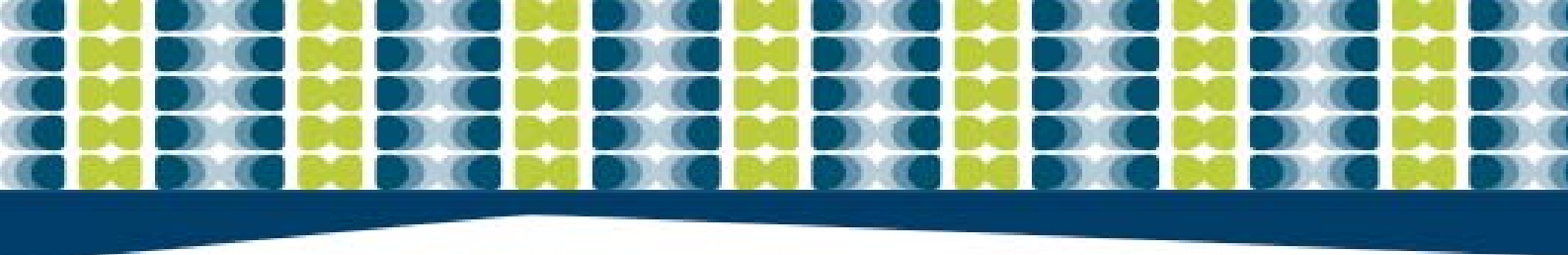
A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted. It must be kept in a form that allows its continued use.

Adapted by QSA from AS ISO 15489, Part 1, Clause 7.2.5

See also [Full and accurate records](#).

Vital records

Those [records](#) without which an agency could not continue to operate. They contain information needed to re-establish the agency in the event of a disaster



and satisfy ongoing core business responsibilities. Vital records are those which protect the assets and interests of the agency as well as those of its clients and shareholders and are usually associated with legal and fiscal matters.

Adapted by QSA from J Kennedy and C Schauder, Records Management, p. 302

See also [Business continuity planning](#) and [Disaster plan](#).

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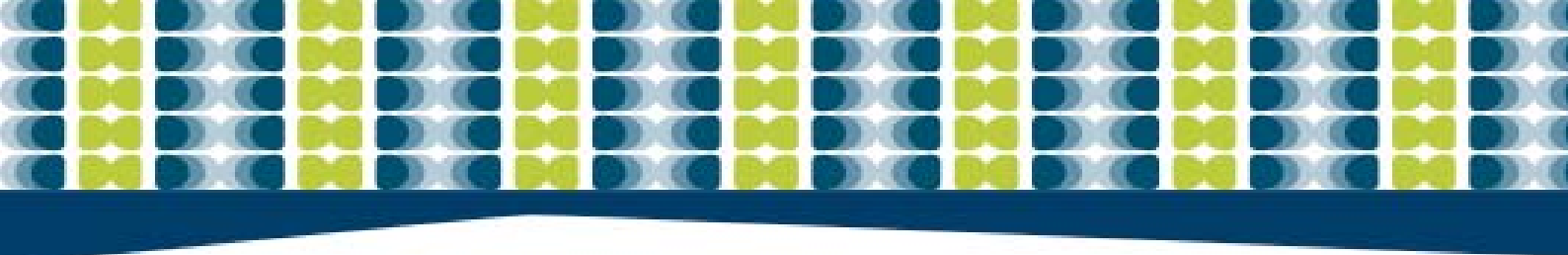
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Note: Reference to the Australian Standard AS 4390-1996, Records Management

In 2002, Standards Australia, the official body that issues Australian standards, endorsed AS ISO 15489 as the Australian standard on recordkeeping. In doing so, the former records management standard AS 4390 was superseded. In this Glossary, reference is made to both standards.

Queensland State Archives believes both these standards provide excellent advice concerning records management. Reference to AS 4390 has been retained in some instances as it contains some definitions and practical guidance that were not incorporated into AS ISO 15489 (for example, because they were Australian specific advice and terminology). Both AS4390 and AS ISO 15489 are available from Standards Australia.