RMU Information Sheet 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Destroying records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRIM Reference</td>
<td>INT07/1073[V2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement Date</td>
<td>13 February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Modified</td>
<td>17 October 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the Archives Act, the destruction of University records must be authorised by the State Archivist and documented in a Register of Records Destroyed. The disposal process has been split into two separate forms: the Records Destruction Request form and the Register of Records Destroyed form.

Records Destruction Requests

The Records Destruction Request (RDQ) form can be found on the Records Management Unit (RMU) website and must be submitted to and approved by the RMU before destroying any non-ephemeral records. Once the RMU is satisfied that the records are eligible for destruction, they will email you with authorisation to destroy the records.

There is no need to list unscheduled records, as these will be covered by a Destruction Authority issued by the State Archivist. Nor is it necessary to make entries for ephemeral records destroyed under the authority of DA 2158, as it is expected that these low value records will be destroyed on a routine basis. Permanent records must not be destroyed and should therefore never be listed in a Records Destruction Request form.

Type your business area’s name in the space provided. Leave the RDQ ID field blank: this information will be provided by the Records Management Unit upon receipt of the form.

Fill in a row for each group of records belonging to the same disposal class. You don’t need to create a separate entry for each folder unless they relate to different projects or the description is too complex to fit on one line. Please resist the temptation to use "ditto" marks.

Folder/Box

This column is optional. If the records are stored in a folder or box that is marked with a number or barcode, enter it here. Otherwise, you can leave it blank. If you have multiple folders covering the same disposal class and you are only seeking to dispose of some of them, it can be useful to make this clear by filling out this field.

Disposal Schedule and Disposal Class

List the relevant disposal schedule, e.g. DA 2157. List the reference number of the disposal class governing the records, e.g. 05.01.01. For instructions on how to determine the appropriate disposal schedule and disposal class, please see Information Sheet 4 – Disposal Schedules.

Description

Enter an accurate description of the records that is detailed enough to be meaningful to people outside your business unit. The Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office needs to be able to determine the nature of the records from the description field and accurately assess whether they would be covered by the nominated disposal class.
With the exception of "UTAS" and unit codes, avoid acronyms and abbreviations. If you must use acronyms, the first instance should be listed in full followed by the acronym in brackets, e.g. "Australian Maritime College (AMC)".

**Inclusive Dates**

Enter the date range of the records described, from the date of the oldest record to the date of the newest record. Some people have made the mistake of assuming the End Date is the date the retention period expires – please note that this is not the case. The End Date is the date of the most recent record in the folder/collection/disposal class covered by that entry in the RDQ. The Start Date is the date of the oldest record covered by that entry.

Try to be as specific as possible, but month and year is generally sufficient, e.g. Feb 2001. If the records are undated, please provide a conservative circa date (prefixed with "c."), e.g. "these must have been created in 2005 at the latest, because that was when we stopped offering this course, so I'll list the end date as c. 2005".

Please check the end date for each entry and ensure that the retention period has expired. Different disposal classes have different retention periods and some start later than the date of the record (e.g. the retention period for contracts starts from the date the contract was terminated or completed); please see Information Sheet 4.

**Obtain Authorisation**

Please fill out and email the RDQ to RMU.Staff@utas.edu.au in Excel format, as this will make it easier for the RMU to make any minor amendments if necessary. Most of the time, no changes will be required, but for more complicated or unusual cases, you may be asked to clarify some details or resubmit an amended form. Once we are satisfied that everything is in order, we will provide written approval to destroy the records in the form of an email that can be captured as a record itself. Note there is no longer any need for either the Records Management Unit or the head of the relevant business area to sign a hardcopy form prior to destroying records.

**Do not destroy the records until the Records Management Unit has emailed you their approval.**

**Destroying the records**

Once you have received approval from the RMU, you may destroy the records using a secure and confidential destruction method such as a secure shredding bin (these can be arranged through Campus Services).

**Register of Records Destroyed**

Once the records have been destroyed (or placed in a shredding bin), complete and sign an entry in your business area’s Register of Records Destroyed (RRD). You can copy and paste the entries from the RDQ into the Register. Use a separate block of entries for each RDQ, listing the RDQ ID provided by the Records Management Unit in the field at the start of the block. You can copy and paste a block to create a new one if needed.

At the end of the year, finalise the Register of Records Destroyed for that year and have it signed off by the Head of the business area. Send a copy of the completed Register to the RMU (either email a scanned PDF or mail a photocopy) and keep the original for your business unit’s records: it is a permanent record falling under disposal class 2157/09.11.02.

**Related documents**

- [Register of Records Destroyed form](#)
- [Information Sheet 4 – Disposal Schedules](#)
- [Information Sheet 5 – Unscheduled Records](#)
- [TAHO Advice 69 – Register of Records Destroyed](#)
Appendix A: Checklist for submitting an RDQ

Please fill out and submit your draft in Excel format. This makes it much quicker and easier for us to make minor amendments on your behalf if required. It also avoids the need for the head of your business area to sign multiple times if any amendments are required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist for submitting a Records Destruction Request form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fill in your business area’s name in the space provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When filling out the Disposal Class column, ensure you haven’t listed a number ending in &quot;00&quot;, as these designate headings rather than actual disposal classes and cannot be cited as authorisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Make sure you haven’t listed any ephemeral records or permanent records; ephemeral records don’t need to be listed in an RDQ and permanent records must not be destroyed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Check your descriptions for each entry to ensure they are meaningful. Would an outsider be able to determine the nature of the records from the description? Make sure you haven’t used any internal jargon, acronyms or abbreviations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enter the date of the oldest record covered by that entry in the Start Date column and the date of the most recent record in the End Date column. Please be as specific as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Please check the end date for each entry against the retention period for its disposal class. Business areas often copy old RRDs/RDQs without checking that the retention period has expired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Submit a copy of the draft register to the Records Management Unit for checking. They will reply with an email either approving the destruction of the records or requesting clarification/amendments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do not destroy the records until you receive approval from the Records Management Unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Upon receiving approval to destroy the records, destroy them using a secure and confidential destruction method (see the Destruction of Records section of the Records Management Guidelines).</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Make sure you have destroyed all copies of the records, including any electronic copies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Copy the relevant entries into your business area’s Register of Records Destroyed for the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The head of the business area must sign a printed copy of the Register of Records Destroyed at the end of each year. Create a separate Register of Records Destroyed for each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Send a copy of the completed Register to the Records Management Unit and retain the original for your business unit’s own records. The original is a permanent record falling under 2157/09.11.02.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Disposal flowchart

1. Sort records into groups of similar records for processing.
2. Are the records covered by DA 2158 (Short-term-value records)?
   - Yes: Destroy when reference ceases. Do NOT list in a Register of Records Destroyed.
   - No: Check other schedules: DA 2398, DA 2157, DA 2159, and DA 2135.
3. Determine the most appropriate function and activity.
4. Is there a suitable disposal class there?
   - Yes: Re-read the activity and function descriptions - do they list another activity or function you could check?
   - No: Try the index and a keyword search of the PDF: did you find a suitable disposal class?
5. The records are unscheduled - submit an Application to Dispose of State Records.
6. Check the disposal action: is the status PERMANENT?
   - Yes: Contact the Records Management Unit for further advice.
   - No: Has the retention period expired?
     - Yes: Add to Register of Inactive Records and retain until retention period expires.
     - No: Add to Register of Inactive Records and retain for 25 years, then transfer them to State Archives using an Application to Dispose of State Records.
7. Do the records relate to:
   - an inquiry or investigation?
   - imminent legal action?
   - a Right to Information request?
   - a Native Title claim?
   - indigenous communities or sites?
     - Yes: List records in a Records Destruction Request form with the reference number of the disposal class and submit it to the Records Management Unit for approval.
     - No: Then
6. List records in a Records Destruction Request form with the reference number of the disposal class and submit it to the Records Management Unit for approval.

Upon approval, destroy the records and list the records destroyed in your area’s Register of Records Destroyed for the current year, along with the applicable RDQ ID and the date the records were destroyed.

At the end of the year, have the Register of Records Destroyed signed off by the head of your business area and send a copy to the Records Management Unit.
Appendix C: Changes to the disposal process

In the past, business areas seeking to dispose of records were required to submit a Register of Records Destroyed and have it signed off by both the Records Management Unit (RMU) and the head of their own business unit before destroying the records. In essence, the Register of Records Destroyed not only served its original purpose of documenting the destruction of records, but also served as a form for requesting authorisation to destroy records. However, because a Register of Records Destroyed is a permanent record that we are required to create and keep by law, this meant that linking the two purposes imposed unnecessary requirements on the authorisation process while simultaneously greatly increasing the frequency with which Registers of Records Destroyed were signed.

Therefore, in order to reduce the number of hard copies and signatures required, we are now:

- separating the process of authorisation from the process of recording the destruction of records in Registers of Records Destroyed, as only the latter needs to be signed off by the Head of School/Business Area.
- issuing Records Management Unit authorisations of destruction in the form of an email, rather than a signature.
- asking business areas to maintain a single Register of Records Destroyed for each year, adding to it each time records are destroyed, and only having it signed off by the head of the business area at the end of the year.