

Inventorying Your Department's Records

The first step in developing records schedules is to inventory the records. Records inventories don't describe each document. The goal of the records inventory is to identify all record series (also known as record categories). A record series is a group of similar documents that are related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity or the same function. Examples include staff employment, department meetings, etc.

You should inventory *any documents* produced by or received by your department in carrying out its activities. This includes digital files, paper files, drawings, microfilm, photographs, e-mail, etc.

Avoid informal names, acronyms, or organizational slang when describing departmental information and record series information. For example, do not use SOM for the School of Management – some people use that abbreviation for the School of Medicine.

Try to work from area to area in all office and storage areas used by your department. Be sure to include documents on desktop computers and servers; on CD's, floppy disks, and tapes; on shelves; in file cabinets; in desks; behind doors, etc. If you have off-site storage of paper files or of servers, elsewhere, be sure to include them in your inventory.

The Archives has created a Records Inventory Worksheet. You can return the completed forms as paper or PDF versions. Return paper to University Archives, 20 University West, 7229. Send PDFs as email attachments to Archives@case.edu. The Submit Form button at the bottom of the form will simplify the email process. Click the Submit Form button. In the Send Data File dialog box, click Send Data File. Acrobat will open your email client and insert the form in a message addressed to Archives@case.edu.

The Reset Form button at the bottom of the form will delete any information you have entered in the Inventory Worksheet. After we have received your inventories, we will begin research to identify retention requirements.

If you have any questions, phone the University Archives at 368-3320 or email Archives@case.edu.

Do Not Inventory

- Outside publications you keep for reference purposes (e.g., dictionaries, software manuals, foundation annual reports)
- Artifacts (e.g., mugs, t-shirts)
- Blank forms or templates
- Commercial software

Inventory Worksheet Instructions

Department Information

Field Name	Instruction
Department	Record your department's name, building, location code. For example, University Archives, University West, 7229)
Inventory Date	Record the date you completed the inventory form.
People	<p>The person in charge of the department or office is the "Head of the Office." Record this person's contact information.</p> <p>The person with day-to-day responsibilities for the records is the "Person Responsible for Records." Record this person's contact information.</p> <p>The person who is inventorying the records and filling out the inventory form is the "Person Completing Inventory." Record this person's contact information.</p> <p>For some offices, there will only be one person in all 3 roles; in that case, record the name and contact information once and indicate "same" on the other lines.</p>

Record Series Information

Field Name	Instruction
Title	Record the word or phrase your department uses to identify the series. See existing schedules for examples.
Description	Describe the forms of the documents in the series (e.g., contracts, correspondence, reports, drawings) and their contents, (e.g., building renovation projects, disaster planning)
Purpose	Describe how the record series is used. What is its function? (e.g., monitor project status, develop and update website)
Location	Record the building and room number where the record series is stored. List all locations (e.g., University West, Rooms 23 & 24).
Media	Check all media that apply.
Inclusive Dates	Record the beginning and end dates of the record series as a whole. These can be approximate dates (e.g., From 5/1995 To 3/2001 or From 1995 To 2001).
Sensitive information	Check all categories that apply Many a record do not have sensitive information.
Created/received	Indicate if additions to the record series continue to be made.

Record Storage

Field Name	Instruction
Containers	<p>Check all containers used to store this record series.</p> <p>Vertical file cabinets are the standard 4-5 drawer file Folders are typically filed from front to back with folder labels on tabs on top of folders.</p> <p>Lateral file cabinets have covers that pull out and down to cover the folders. Folders are typically filed from side to side with folder labels on tabs on the side of the folders.</p> <p>Flat file cabinets have 5-7 drawers which are each 3"-5" high. They are typically used to store large items such as maps or architectural drawings.</p> <p>A file server is a dedicated storage device that hosts files to be used by more than one person.</p> <p>A hard drive is a storage device on an individual's computer.</p>
Volume	<p>For each type of storage container record the volume.</p> <p>File cabinets - record the number of full or partially full drawers. (e.g., 3 ½ drawers)</p> <p>Digital files - if less than 1 GB, record as MB; if less than 1 MB, record as KB.</p>

Operational and Administrative Use

Field Name	Instruction
Use - how often	Estimate how often the record series is consulted.
Use - how long	Estimate how many years the record series is consulted.
Disposition	Indicate what happens to the record series once it is no longer needed or used. Check all applicable categories. For example, paper files might be moved to off-site storage and digital documents destroyed.
Notes	This section is to record any other information about the series that might be helpful in developing a disposition schedule.