

SENTENCING INFORMATION

When information is no longer used regularly (e.g. becomes inactive), decisions need to be made as to whether it can be destroyed or if it has continuing value to the University. We use a disposal authority to issue inactive information with a 'sentence' that specifies the minimum amount of time that it needs to be kept before it can be approved for destruction.

How do I prepare to sentence information?

If you have never sentenced information before you will need to attend the [Sentencing, Retention and Disposal of Information](#) workshop and receive training on how to use the [Curtin Records & Information System \(CRIS\)](#) before you can start.

Once you have done this, you can then begin to prepare by:

- Grouping similar types of records together (e.g. examination papers, policies, student files, forms etc.) - correspondence and case files need more thought as these can sometimes be a little harder to sentence.
- Separate any folders that contain only low value information (ephemeral), such as copies or duplicates, as these can be disposed of once reference ceases, just make sure that all of the information on the folder is low value before you securely dispose of it.
- Any folders that have not been used or referred to in the past 2 years or more should be part of your sentencing project, as they have become "inactive" and can take up valuable space.
- Ensure you have access to the [Disposal Authorities](#).
- Only use authorised boxes to store inactive information before, during and after sentencing, these can be ordered through Records & Information Management (RIM) using the [online order form](#)
- You may wish to use a [Sentencing Register](#) to record what action you have taken?

How do I sentence information?

If you have completed the required sentencing training, the following steps will guide you through the process:

- Always check the contents of a file to determine what the information is related to
- Search the disposal authorities, based on the subject matter of the file, and obtain the relevant disposal authority information
- Record the file and disposal authority details in your [Sentencing Register](#), if you have chosen to use one, completing each column of the register:

For example:

- File description
- Date range of records on the file
- Disposal trigger date: 10/8/2012
- Disposal authority reference: GS65.2
- Retention period: D7 (D indicates destroy & 7 indicates the retention period in years)
- Destruction date:10/8/2019)

Example of a Sentencing Register:

Description of File / Folder Contents	Date Range	Box Number	Disposal Authority Reference	Retention Period	Disposal Trigger date	Destruction Date	Location
Staff Visa Reconciliations - Appleton – Keen - Original monthly corporate credit card usage statements detailing individual purchases with receipts and totals for the month in 2003	01/01/2001 - 18/12/2001	DJ14	SG24.2	D6	31/03/2002	31/03/2008	2 nd shelf, filing cabinet, Room 115, B100
Staff Visa Reconciliations - Lang – Vale - Original monthly corporate credit card usage statements detailing individual purchases with receipts and totals for the month in 2003	01/01/2001 - 18/12/2001	DJ14	SG24.2	D6	31/03/2002	31/03/2008	2 nd shelf, filing cabinet, Room 115, B100
Assessments UNIT 123456 - Psychology Concepts and Practice Semester 2 2011 - File contains working papers and lists students with grades for assessments in Psychology Concepts and Practice - Dr Joe Blogs lecturer	12/07/2011 - 23/11/2011	25112	WAUSDA 17.5.18	D5	23/11/2011	23/11/2016	Room 121, B100

How do I pack the boxes?

To ensure that boxes are packed correctly:

- Group folders that are already past their destruction date together
- For folders yet to reach their destruction date: try and box those that are due for destruction at about the same time - the range of destruction dates should not be more than 2-3 years in any one box. (i.e. due for destruction between 2020—2023)
- Box up folders that are to be kept forever (i.e. Archival / Permanent records) separately from those that have a destruction date
- If you can't locate a code in the Disposal Authorities, for a particular folder, box it up separately and contact RIM for assistance
- Records that are in lever arch or box files must be placed in manila folders or taken out of the files and tied up with string, as they are very bulky and take up space – if this is done ensure you record the folder title either on the manila folder or on a sheet of paper with the papers tied up
- Make sure boxes are folded with the striped side of the box facing in
- Pack folders in the box on their spines vertically rather than on top of each other
- Make sure the boxes are not over packed, you should be able to fit your hand into the box without damaging the records and tape the lid down.

What do I do now?

After you have sentenced and boxed your records you will find that they fit into three categories:

- Records due for destruction
- Records not yet due for destruction (also known as inactive temporary records)
- Records that are archival or permanent

Refer to [Destruction of Information](#) for advice on how to dispose of &/or store these records.

Quick tips

- If a folder has contents that cover multiple activities you will need to apply the longest retention period to the entire contents of the folder.
- Once folders are closed do not add or remove any documents from the folder.

- We recommend using the Disposal Authority Online Search tool, which searches across the various disposal authorities, to find the right disposal code

What about electronic information?

- The legislation that applies to hard copy information also applies to electronic information
- Electronic records must only be destroyed in accordance with approved Disposal Authorities
- Ephemeral information with no ongoing administrative, legal, evidential or historical value to the University can be destroyed once reference ceases (refer to our advice sheet: [Keeping the Right Information](#), for additional information)
- However, all University business information in electronic form must be preserved for as long as it is required for legislative and business reasons
- Contact RIM if you wish to discuss sentencing electronic information

Need further assistance?

We also recommend that you read the following related procedures:

- [What are Disposal Authorities?](#)
- [Destruction of Information](#)
- [Care and Preservation of Records](#)

RIM also provides practical training sessions, for more information regarding these sessions go to our [training](#) page.

Please do not hesitate to contact us 9266 7050, or rim@curtin.edu.au, should you require support or assistance with sentencing information.

For general information management advice visit our website at: rim.curtin.edu.au.