# Best Practice for Naming Electronic Files

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Institutional Records and Archives

Using standardized file naming conventions for electronic documents stored on shared drives can help departments stay organized and facilitate work. Benefits include enhancing the ability to retrieve documents faster and with confidence, being able to sort documents into logical sequences, and helping staff to identify document contents without having to open files. File naming conventions also support recordkeeping activities such as retention review, file disposal, and file transfer to the Institutional Archives.

This guide provides best practices for working with electronic document file names.

## Best Practice #1: Create meaningful file names

Use terms that accurately describe file contents. Titles should allow users to recognize content without having to open the file. Ask "What is the main topic of this document?" Avoid using personal names as this makes it difficult to determine the origin or content of the file. If a name is used to represent a particular staff function, use a job title instead.

>>*Example: RecordsAnalyst_SpaceReport,* and not *Jennifer's project*

## Best Practice #2: Make file names as concise as possible

Limit the character count for file paths to 259 characters. If the number of characters in the file path (from the top of the drive path down to the file name) reaches or goes over this limit, you will have trouble working with the files. This is generally not a concern unless folders and files are nested too deeply in your directory.

To prevent problems, aim to convey meaningful information about a file's content with the minimum amount of characters. Leverage your shared drive by naming folders according to broad topic, and nesting related files inside (see the Institutional Records and Archives Reference Guide *Developing an Organized Shared Drive* for more information). The folder name alerts users to the topic of the documents and frees up extra characters in the file name that you can use to describe the file.

>>*Example: A file named* FY18_Q1 *nested inside a folder named* WorkPlan,

*instead of* FY18 Work Plan Q1

Use the best practices described in this guide to achieve high levels of description with the least character usage.

## Best Practice #3: Separate words by using camel case, underscores, or hyphens.

Leverage your character limit and save space by using camel case to separate words in the file name. The system counts blank spaces as part of the file path character limit (see Best Practice #2). Avoiding the use of spaces can also mitigate future data migration problems; a system may read and interpret a blank space as the end of the text string or some other character. You may use underscores or hyphens to separate words if character limit is not an issue.

>>*Camel Case example (with underscore for date): 2017_CollectingPolicy*
>>*Hyphen example: 2017-collecting-policy*
>>*Underscore example: 2017_collecting_policy*

## Best Practice #4: Avoid using punctuation and special characters

Underscores and hyphens are fine, but commas, colons, slashes, ampersands, quotation marks, accented letters, and other special characters in file names can hinder a file's interoperability. As with empty spaces, these characters can be misread, transformed, or rejected during data migrations or other maintenance and transfer events.

>>*Example: PST_LA_LA or PacificStandardTime_LA_LA* instead of *PST: LA/LA*

## Best Practice #5: Determine a standard date format for labeling files

Dates should be numerically stated "back-to-front" in yyyymmdd format. Using this format makes dates unambiguous and avoids having to rely on an understanding of localized date naming conventions (e.g. American vs. European ordering of month and date.) This format is used worldwide and is an ISO (International Standards Organization) standard for date representation. Using this format now will also make future interchange of data easier.

Using this format also makes documents sort in chronological order within a folder.

>>*Example: 20170323* (March 23, 2017)

>>*Example: 2017-03-23 or 2017_03_23* (March 23, 2017, with separators. Some find this easier to read.)

Dates can be appended to file names to convey the date the document was finalized, completed, reviewed, or released. The order the elements appear in is up to you but be consistent.

*Example: 20170323_CollectingPolicy*

## Best Practice #6: Use commonly understood abbreviations to indicate document status

Achieve document status by using a "d" to indicate a draft and "v" to indicate a version. Appending one of these to a title allows you to tell instantly what compositional or workflow stage a document is in. It also reduces ambiguity and allows you to quickly identify the most current draft or version without having to open files or review them. Add a number to indicate the document's iteration; this sorts the files in chronological order.

>>*Example: v01_CollectingPolicy*
*v02_CollectingPolicy*

Indicate when the version or draft was completed by adding dates:
>>*Example: d01_BudgetPolicy_20170323*

The key to developing abbreviations is to make sure they are short, concise, and commonly understood. Any abbreviation or term that is meaningful to the department can be used.

>>*Example: orig_contract01* to indicate that this file contains the first (original) iteration
>>*Example: red_contract01* to indicate that this file contains an edited (redlined) version
>>*Example: final_contract01* to indicate that this file contains the finalized version

## Best Practice #7: Avoid obsolescence descriptors

Avoid using terms like "old," "historical," or "archival" to title files. These terms have little meaning unless there is a context attached. It's more transparent to create a file name including the document topic, date, and status information than to rely on amorphous terms that could be interpreted in various ways. Files using obsolescence descriptors also tend to be abandoned because 1) staff assume they have no value to their everyday work, and 2) it is assumed that "someone else" is responsible for it when in reality no one is. Including information about the file in the title affords the opportunity to quickly and easily review files to determine if they really are "old," "historical," or "archival."

>>*Example:* staff can easily tell that a document with the file name *2010_Policy* is older than a file named *2015_Policy*. If the file is named *Old_Policy*, there is no context for understanding the meaning of “old”.

## Best Practice #8: Define acronyms

Acronyms can be used to shorten file titles but can be ambiguous unless their meaning is well-known and understood within the department and among outside users. If acronyms are used, it's a good idea to document meanings and confirm that they are understood by all users. This also saves time because users don't have to research acronym meanings, and it helps ensure that all staff, present and future, know what they mean.

>>*Example: SCA* can refer to: Society of California Archivists, Society for Creative Anachronism, Student Conservation Association, Student Committee for the Arts

## Best Practice #9: Follow file naming conventions consistently

A consistent file naming practice creates a predictable and stable filing system. In this system, every document has a specific storage location, is adequately described, and shows a relationship to other files that it is co-located with. This means you can be confident in knowing exactly what information you have and where it is.

Select the naming conventions most useful to you and use them every time you name a file. To help maintain consistency over time, document each naming convention, including what it means, how it should be used, and the order it should be placed in within the string (e.g. does the date come before or after the document description? Before the version number?) Refer to the document when questions arise.

The more organized your information is, the better you will be able to understand and navigate it – and so the more efficient and effective you can be in everyday work.

**Your Institutional Records and Archives liaison can help you design file naming conventions for your department. Please contact us to set up an appointment to discuss your requirements.**

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Getty departments are allocated shared drive space to file electronic documents. Over time and without any management, these spaces fill up with clutter that can include multiple versions, outdated or redundant information, haphazardly filed material, and abandoned or unidentified files.

All this clutter makes it difficult to locate essential information, dispose of unwanted or outdated files, and identify documents that need to be kept permanently.

This guide provides 7 steps you can take to develop an organized shared drive.



## Step One: Establish intent and responsibility to manage the shared drive

Success is dependent on gaining support from staff and stakeholders using the drive, including your department head.

*>>Set aside regular time blocks to work on this project and formalize your role as a shared drive manager. Do this by:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Turning it into a documented department project | Listing it as a performance goal |
| Acknowledging it as is one of your work duties | |

*>>Develop a project plan.*

## Step Two: Know your department's core functions

Designing a shared drive structure begins with research. Before handling files, name the department's core functions. Having a well-formed description of what the department does makes it easier to determine the specific activities that support it, and hence the types of information that are critical to completing those activities. Ask yourself:

| | |
|---|---|
| What does the department do? | What role does it play at the Getty? |
| What are its responsibilities and processes? | What projects does it complete, and/or what products does it produce? |

Sources of information for this may include your own knowledge, your department head, and internal documentation.

*>>Create a high-level list of major activities the department undertakes.*

*>>Use the [Getty Information Management Schedule (IMS)] functional categories and subcategories to help you develop your list.*

Although departments will have specialized functions, some common to all include:

| |
|---|
| Administration |
| Finance |
| Operations |

Note that functions are not necessarily department-specific: For example, all departments create policies (Administration) and develop budgets (Finance).

*>>Once a high-level list is in place, break down each major activity into sub-activities:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Administration | Policies, Procedures |
| | Program Planning |
| Finance | Budget Preparation |
| | Financial Reporting |
| Operations | Equipment Maintenance |
| | Inspections |



### Step Three: Understand your department's information environment

Understand the types of digital information your department creates and collects, and how it supports the department's core functions. Ask yourself:

| | |
|---|---|
| Who created it? | Why is it important? |
| What purpose does it serve? | For how long is it useful? |

Focus on information essential to the department's work, but also be aware of reference and other ephemeral materials. What comes into the department from outside sources, and why?

*>>Think about or write down workflows and the documentation produced (such as notes, drafts, and the final product) that support the department's work. Also think about what documents make up a complete file (e.g. a project file always contains documents 1, 2, and 3). Does a certain job role create and maintain responsibility for a certain type of information?*

These workflows may result in subfolders in your eventual file structure.

### Step Four: Design shared drive structure prototype

Once you have a solid understanding of the types of information created and maintained in the department and have described and categorized the information in relation to the department's mission and core functions, you're ready to design the shared drive structure.

Leave the current shared drive structure intact while designing the prototype. You can create a "working" folder on the shared drive and create your new structure inside of the "working" folder.

>>*Aim to create a "reverse funnel" of folders, starting with the root folder at the top (first) level. The root folder should be the name of the department*:

- Institutional Records and Archives

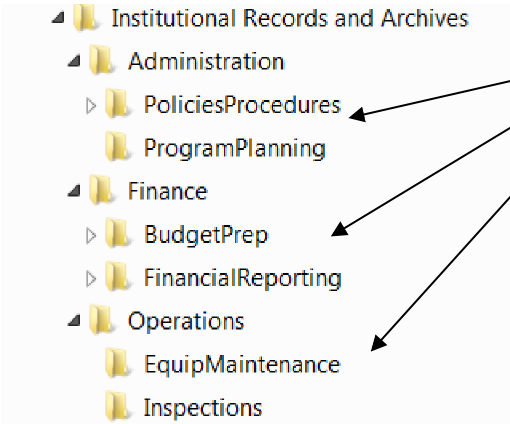
>>*Within the top (first) level folder, create and name one folder for each core function identified on the list developed in step 2. Remember, these are broad and general categories, and you want to aim for an uncluttered look that can be quickly read and understood.*

Do not place any files in these folders:

- Institutional Records and Archives
  - Administration
  - Finance
  - Operations

You are now at the second level of the hierarchy.

*>>Accommodate the more granular activities occurring under core functions by creating nesting folders within them:*




*Name the folders using the list you developed in the second part of step 2*

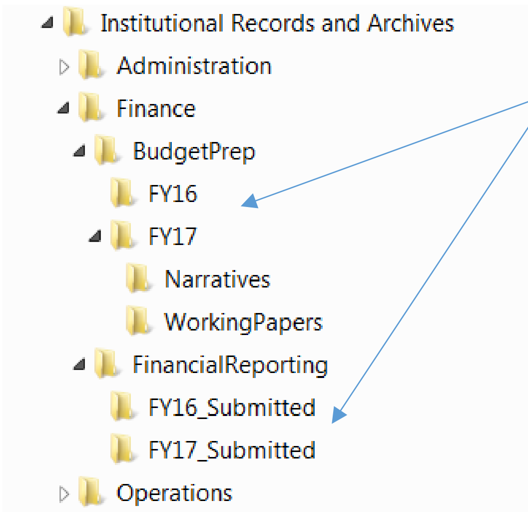
*Abbreviate as necessary, but be certain that folder titles are transparent and easily understood*

You are now at the third level of the hierarchy and can begin placing files into the folders.

*>>Continue creating folders as required at the fourth level of the hierarchy, and nest deeper as needed – but nesting should never be so deep that it becomes difficult to drill down to find content. Also be aware that file path names should not exceed 259 characters.*

Folders should be able to accommodate a number of documents sharing common features, and not simply serve as storage areas for single items – remember that "like goes with like".

Remember the purpose of the folders is to file by document function so that it can be easily understood and retrieved by those having knowledge of department activities. No one should need to open documents to determine what the subject is.




*This example shows how Finance folders are arranged into a workflow representing budget preparation and final submittals by fiscal year*

*Once folders have been adequately described by function you can use other identifying details to name folders, such as by fiscal or calendar year, commonly recognized ID number, etc.*

**Be aware** that the Universal Naming Convention (UTC) path limit is 259 readable characters. The path is the folder (or file's) location on the drive and looks like this:

*G:\GRI/InstitutionalArchives/Administration/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Records/RetentionSchedule*

This path has 97 characters, leaving an additional 162 characters for naming additional folders and file (document) names.

If the number of characters in your path name reaches (or goes over) this limit, you will have trouble creating, opening, and moving folders and files.

## Step Five: Develop and document shared drive and filing rules

*>>Make a filing reference guide by creating a shared drive map and determining the types of documents to be filed in each folder.*

The filing reference guide should briefly describe the content of the documents to be filed in each folder:

| Folder | Contains |
|---|---|
| ADMINISTRATION | Audit records, meeting agendas and minutes, policies and procedures, reporting and statistics |
| FINANCE | Budget working papers, narratives, final budgets |
| OPERATIONS | Equipment manuals, maintenance records, inspections |

The filing reference guide should also document rules for creating new folders, such as:

| | |
|---|---|
| Under what circumstances can new folders be created? | Who may create them? |
| How are folder names generated? | Does the folder require approval? |

The reference guide facilitates **maintenance of the shared drive structure** and creates operational transparency. All department members should understand the tree structure and how to work with it. Set a periodic review schedule to assess performance and determine if updates are required.

>>*Develop and document naming conventions for files.* Renaming old files to conform to the new system will not be realistic, but it will help you moving forward. Naming conventions help users understand the contents of a file without having to open it, while also removing the burden from individual users of having to devise a name that all staff will understand. See the Institutional Records and Archives *Reference Guide for Electronic File Naming Rules* for more information on this topic.

## Step Six: Clean out the current shared drive structure and validate the new structure

>>*Remove outdated and expired content from the current drive before migrating files to the new structure.* You don't want to move unnecessary items into the new space.

>>*Schedule a meeting with your Institutional Records and Archives liaison to pre-review content, identify materials eligible for transfer to Institutional Archives, and to devise review strategies.*

>>*Involve the entire department when making decisions about which files to remove.* Scheduling staff meetings to review shared drive content as a group is an effective way to get feedback from everyone. Your Institutional Records and Archives liaison can attend these sessions and provide guidance.

>>*Use the Information Management Schedule to make informed decisions about content.*

>>*Review the new shared drive structure and gain staff approval.*

## Step Seven: Migrate content

Plan to move the files from the existing shared drive structure to the new one in a short, concentrated period so as to limit staff disruptions.

>>*Place a moratorium on shared drive access for a defined period, so you will be the only one working with the files.*

>>*Be sure all staff are aware of the move time and have a plan in place for retrieving files that may be urgently required during the move.*

>>*Move the new structure out of the Working folder.*

>>*Begin moving files into the new folders and delete old folders when they are empty. Continue until all files have been moved.*

>>*Review new structure with staff and adjust as required.*

**Your Institutional Records and Archives liaison can help you achieve an organized department shared drive. Please contact us to set up an appointment to discuss your requirements.**

**Guidelines for Common Administrative Records Found in All Getty Departments**

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This guide provides a list of the most common administrative records found in departments across the Getty and defines holders of original and duplicate official documentation for purposes of applying the Getty Information Management Schedule (IMS). The records are listed according to the activity being documented and correspond to their IMS classification code. The guidance applies to records and information in **hardcopy and electronic formats (i.e. files on shared and other drives)**.

If your department has copies of records and information, and the *Eligible for Institutional Archives?* column indicates "No", the material may be destroyed at any time, but should not be kept longer than the retention period listed on the IMS. Note: While we recommend that all hardcopy records and information be securely shredded, those containing financial or personal information are **REQUIRED** to be shredded. For information on secure shredding, consult your Institutional Records and Archives liaison or our Secure Shredding Service page on GO.

**If you can't find an adequate description on this list, consult your Institutional Records and Archives liaison.**



## Accounting

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accounting reports | ACC-105 | **Accounting** is the office of record for all records and information documenting monetary transactions and is responsible for their maintenance. | Accounting records kept in departments are copies used for reference only. Exception: Museum, Villa bookstore operations, Visitor Services, and departments responsible for processing outside requestor Rights & Reproductions payments.<br><br>Destroy records when no longer useful for day-to-day operations. Keep no longer than 6 years. | No |
| Accounts Payable files | ACC-105 | | | |
| Payroll records | ACC-135 | | | |
| Petty Cash records | ACC-105 | | | |

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Purchase order files | ACC-145 | **Accounting** is the office of record for all records and information documenting monetary transactions and is responsible for their maintenance. | Purchase order files kept in departments are copies used for reference, excepting Museum and Villa bookstore operations. Destroy records when no longer useful.<br>• If the purchase order is for tools, machinery, or other equipment, you may keep your copy for reference until the department disposes of the item (see O/M-100 in IMS).<br>• If the purchase order is issued pursuant to a contract and contains terms and conditions (T&C's), especially regarding rights, licensing, or ownership, it is recommended that you keep a copy for reference. | No |
| Expense reports (including Purchasing Card records and Travel Authorizations) | ACC-105 | **Procurement Contract Services (PCS)** is the office of record for all expense reporting documentation and is responsible for their maintenance. | Expense reports, PCard records, and Travel Authorizations kept in departments are copies used for reference only.<br><br>Retain copies for one year to satisfy Accounting internal audit processes, then destroy. | No |

## Engineering

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Construction project files | ENG-105 | **Capital Project Support (CPS)** maintains architect and contractor original build records and drawings for the Getty Villa and Getty Center, as well as records and drawings for remodels and renovations. | Departments may have copies of original Getty Center or Villa construction drawings of their offices, or remodel projects specific to their operations. These are informational copies provided by the department office of record to departments. Departments are not required to retain these copies, though drawings that are filed in context with related records, or contain annotations, may be transferred to the Institutional Archives. | Yes |

## Finance

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Audit records, external and internal | ADM-180 | The **Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration** and its reporting departments are responsible for maintaining external auditor reports and records for financial and non-financial activities, including formal audits pertaining to collection inventory and valuation. External audits are conducted by firms such as KPMG. | • The maintenance of internal audit records is the responsibility of departments.<br>• If records are copies of a version whose location is known to you, the copies may be kept for reference if desired, otherwise destroy.<br>• You may transfer materials to the Institutional Archives that are no | Only audit records from VP for Finance and Administration or designated program offices |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | longer in active use at any time before the 10-year period is up.<br>• Do not destroy original audit records. | |
| Bid packages (Request for Information, Quote, Proposal) | FIN-120<br>ENG-105 | **Procurement Contract Services (PCS)** is the office of record for all Requests for Information (RFIs), Requests for Quote (RFQs) and Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and is responsible for their maintenance.<br><br>Bid packages related to construction are held by Capital Project Support (CPS). | The department that sponsored the bid process may retain materials related to successful bids and file them in a vendor or contractor reference file, if desired; unsuccessful bid materials should be destroyed. | No |
| Budget files, approved | FIN-130 | Approved budgets for the organization are published by the **Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration.** | Departments keep their own approved budget files for 6 years after the fiscal year ends, at which time they may be destroyed.<br><br>If **Program** budget files include summaries or are annotated, the records may be archival.<br><br>Preliminary (working) files may be destroyed once the Approved Budget is published. | Only approved budgets of the Trust and Programs are eligible |

# Human Resources

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel files | HR-145 | **Human Resources** is the office of record for personnel files and is responsible for their maintenance. | Any type of personnel files kept in departments are copies used for reference only and should be kept in locked file cabinets or on restricted shared drive spaces.<br><br>Departments must keep personnel files only as long as the staff is working in the department; files of terminated staff should be destroyed or forwarded to Human Resources for review as soon as possible after separation (Institutional Records and Archives can assist with facilitating the transfer). | No |
| Intern, Docent and Volunteer records | HR-130 | The **Volunteer Program** and **Museum Education** (docents) maintain records for these official programs. Other departments may maintain intern/volunteer records for individuals not associated with these programs.<br><br>When volunteers/docents terminate, rights and permissions agreements in the files must be separated out and sent to Institutional Archives. | N/A | No (exception: Rights and permissions agreements must be separated out and transferred to IA.) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Records of interns or scholars receiving a Getty Grant are managed by the **Foundation**. | | |
| Recruitment records | HR-155 | **Human Resources** is the office of record for recruitment records and is responsible for their maintenance. | Recruitment records kept in departments are copies used for reference only.<br>• Departments holding resumes and job applications of unsuccessful applicants (including any interview notes and/or scoring apparatus) should be destroyed no later than 3 years after the recruitment effort has closed. | No |
| Training records | HR-175 | **If training originated from your department, keep records** (sign-in sheets, etc.) for 3 years.<br><br>Life, Health, Safety Training Records (CPR, Evacuation, etc.) are maintained by **Risk Management** and **Security** and fall under a different classification (HR-180). | Contact Institutional Records and Archives if you believe you have Life, Health, Safety Training records, but are not either of these departments.<br><br>Life, Health, Safety Training records have a longer, and legally mandated, retention period. | No |

# Legal

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contracts and Agreements, Goods and Services | LEG-105 | **Procurement Contract Services (PCS)** is the office of record for all Goods and Services contracts and is responsible for their maintenance.<br><br>***Note:*** *There are many different types of contracts generated at the Getty, not all of which fall under the LEG-105 code. These contracts may have different retention periods and preservation requirements. Examples include contracts for conservation services, equipment purchase, and intellectual property rights. Please review the Information Management Schedule Appendix 2: Contracts to determine if your contract is for Goods and Services.* | Goods and Services contracts kept in departments are copies used for reference only and should be destroyed no longer than 6 years after the contract expires.<br><br>Original contracts referenced in amendments may be kept for reference until the amendment expires and is not renewed. | No |

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Licenses, rights, and reproductions records (Permissions provided to others outside Getty) | LEG-115 | **Procurement Contract Services** (PCS) is the office of record for **some** licenses and permissions provided to others; in these cases, PCS is the office of record and responsible for their maintenance.<br><br>Some departments administer their own licensing and permissions program independently of PCS. See the IMS Appendix 2: Contracts, section II. Exceptions for Licenses and Permissions Provided, LEG-115 for a list of these departments. These departments are responsible for maintaining the records.<br><br>Licenses and permissions given are retained for 10 years and then destroyed; after that, it is the responsibility of the outside party to prove that permissions were given. | N/A | No |

# Operations and Maintenance

| Record/Information type | Classification Code (on IMS) | Department Holding Original Official Documentation | Departments Holding Duplicate Official Documentation | Eligible for Institutional Archives? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service and Work order requests | O/M-140 | **Logistics** and **GettyDigital** (for HelpDesk operations) are the offices of record for all work order requests and associated records and are responsible for their maintenance. | Service and work order requests kept in departments are copies used for reference only. Destroy, and keep no longer than 3 years. | No |

**Information Management Strategies for Curatorial Records on Paper**



The chart below lists common records created and accumulated by Getty curatorial departments and recommends strategies to manage records existing on paper. Within each category, records are grouped by primary functions or activities undertaken to conduct work. Recommended strategies are:

**Department** – maintain in department office space
**Records Center** – transfer records to off-site storage for duration of retention period.
**Archives** – transfer to Getty Institutional Archives for permanent preservation.

Departments may also choose to work with an Institutional Archivist to determine the best course of action.



## ACQUISITIONS

| | | Where can I store... | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Research, background information (e.g. provenance, appraisal), acquisition proposals, consultation with experts, in-house correspondence, negotiations with owner and other parties, etc. Includes all documentation pertaining to potential acquisitions, acquired works (bequest, donation, purchase, non-purchase acquisition), deaccessioned works, and unacquired objects. | Permanent | Department<br>Records Center | Department<br>Records Center<br>Archives | Consider the physical space needs of the department and how paper information may be taking up valuable space.<br><br>If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center. Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH PEERS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

| | | Where can I store... | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Includes Getty advice on acquisitions, attribution, sharing of scholarly research and opinions, initial discussion of projects, photographs, articles etc. Where the correspondence relates to a major or specific activity (e.g. exhibitions, acquisitions) the correspondence should be filed with related records. | 10 years | Department | Records Center<br>Archives | If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center. Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, or are over 10 years old, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

| | | Where can I store... | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Applies to records of Senior Curators holding department head positions. Includes records on departmental policy and procedure development, strategic planning and goals, program initiatives, committee participation on behalf of department, circulated minutes, memoranda, reports, etc. | 10 years | Department | Records Center<br>Archives | If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center. Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, or are over 10 years old, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

Information Management Strategies for Curatorial Records on Paper

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## EXHIBITIONS

| | | Where can I store… | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Correspondence with exhibition partners (e.g. co-curators, lenders, etc.), copies of incoming loan files, meeting notes, proposals, layouts, object labels and checklists, gallery and catalog text, and annotated source notes and research materials for exhibition-related content. | 10 years | Department | Records Center<br>Archives | If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center. Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, or are over 10 years old, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

## OUTGOING LOAN FILES

| | | Where can I store… | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Original files are in the Registrar's Office, though requests may initiate in curatorial department. Includes subsequent correspondence with borrowers and Getty colleagues. | Permanent | Department<br>Records Center | Department<br>Records Center<br>Archives | Consider the physical space needs of the department and how paper information may be taking up valuable space.<br><br>If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center. Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, transfer it to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

## SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

| | | Where can I store… | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| This refers to work **not related** to a specific exhibition, but in support of permanent collection interpretation and publication. May include notes for lectures, publication-related correspondence and notes, professional association presentations, unpublished analysis of primary source materials, annotated source notes and research materials, etc. | 10 years | Department | Records Center<br>Archives | If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center.<br>Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, or are over 10 years old, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

| | | Where can I store… | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope** | **Retention Period** | **Information Actively Used (10+ times a year)** | **Information Not Actively Used** | **How to choose a strategy?** |
| Projects at the Getty for which the curator has specific responsibility or is a team participant. Other curators and Getty staff may also have files relating to these projects. | 10 years | Department | Records Center<br>Archives | If information does not need to be immediately accessible but will be referenced occasionally, store it in the Records Center.<br>Records may be checked out and sent to the department for temporary use.<br><br>If the records do not need to be checked out to the department, or are over 10 years old, transfer them to Institutional Archives. Staff may make an appointment to view the records when needed. |

Records and information that are relevant to a person's job are Getty property and are subject to Getty Information Governance Policy. Records and information may be in paper or electronic format and stored in a variety of locations.

When an employee leaves a position, all records under the control of that employee should be forwarded to the current supervisor. The supervisor will determine how to handle them. Some records and information may be disposed of immediately, but much will need to be retained to ensure continued smooth operations. Records and information may need to be transferred to another employee, moved into the office filing system, or to another location. Some may be eligible for inclusion in the Institutional Archives.

Supervisors should establish procedures to ensure that important Getty information is not inadvertently destroyed, removed from Getty custody, or made public.



## Places to look for records

| **Paper/Analog** | **Electronic** |
| --- | --- |
| Desktops and drawers | Removable media, such as USB sticks |
| Filing cabinets, shared and in individual workspaces | The employee's hard drive |
| Shelves, closets, and boxes | Network, personal and shared drives |
| Temporarily in the possession of a colleague or another department | File sharing and collaboration services, such as Google Docs |
| | email |

## What to do with records

| | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| Active records needed for current operations, regardless of format | Transfer to the custody of other employees as appropriate. |
| Paper drafts and duplicates<br>*For more information on duplicates, consult Guidelines for Common Administrative Records Found in all Departments* | Destroy |

| | |
|---|---|
| Paper records not needed for ongoing activities | Less than 10 years old: Box and send to Records Center<br><br>Older than 10 years: contact your Institutional Records and Archives liaison. |
| Electronic records | Move to a shared network drive |
| Email | Identify emails needed for continuation of department business and forward to staff who will be taking over that function. Includes project-related ongoing correspondence, vendor/order details, specifications, etc.<br><br>Focus on information that, if it were inaccessible, would cause disruption and delays in the department's daily work.<br><br>Contact your Institutional Records and Archives liaison for guidance on preserving historical email. |
| Personal files unrelated to Getty activities | If not claimed by employee, destroy as soon as possible |

For assistance with determining the proper retention or disposition of records, contact your Institutional Records and Archives department liaison.

**Project Closeout Checklist**

Getty
Institutional Records and Archives

Getty staff frequently engage in projects and initiatives of varying size, scope, and duration, both across the organization and with external partners. There is often great momentum and attention during project planning and launch stages, but less so immediately after the project has concluded and staff have moved on to other things. It's important to properly close out a project and transfer key records to the Institutional Archives while memory is fresh, and it is still easy to contact project staff members with questions.

Examples of projects and initiatives include:

| | |
|---|---|
| Exhibitions, both physical and digital | Pacific Standard Time initiatives |
| Anniversary events | Conservation field projects |
| Workshops, Symposia, and Conferences | Publications |

This guide provides four Getty best practices for closing out projects.

## Best Practice #1: Establish intent and responsibility to close out a project

Designate a project staff member to complete project closeout tasks and manage the overall process. Consider drafting a project evaluation describing what did and didn't work and what could be improved.

## Best Practice #2: Create or verify core project files

Gather all the records created, collected, received, and maintained during the project. Touch base with project participants to ensure that all needed documentation, particularly records having to do with rights received by Getty, is accounted for. Remember, records exist in digital and physical form.

If core project files already exist, evaluate the files to ensure that no records are missing.

Review this list of record categories to know what to look for.

## Best Practice #3: Store core project files in designated spaces

Store all project information and documentation in a centrally located and accessible location such as shared network folders, Google drive and/or 364 folders, and email folders. Do not store project files on a desktop or a distributed environment. Paper documents that have no electronic equivalent may be stored in the department's Central Files cabinets.

## Best Practice #4: Transfer files to Institutional Archives

Contact your Institutional Archives program liaison to discuss the timing and process for transferring files and to discuss ongoing access needs.

Provide your program liaison with a box or folder list and summary of the project that includes project objectives and results (including deliverables), a list of team members, and project start and end dates.

## Common project record categories

Institutional Archives actively collects records documenting the various stages of Getty projects and initiatives. The following lists are broad and intended to provide a conceptual overview. Please contact your Institutional Archives program liaison with questions about any records of significance to your project that are not mentioned here.

Initiation and Planning:

- Project proposals and selection of external partners
- Formal requests for staffing and resources (includes final budget submissions; can discard drafts, FIS reports, and receipts)
- Project plans and timelines
- Significant meeting minutes and agendas
- Significant internal and external communications (can discard communication of low-level logistics)
- External grant proposals, successful and otherwise (final version only, can discard drafts)
- Development of digital assets (accompanying websites, media elements)

Intellectual property, rights, and obligations:

- Contracts with consultants, speakers, performers, and outside participants
- Contracts for work-for-hire
- Image releases

- Other documentation governing use, reuse, and distribution of intellectual/physical assets

Core project elements:
- Special websites developed to accompany an exhibition
- Media assets used to create websites and audiovisual installations
- Gallery graphics, labels, and text
- Marketing campaigns
- Educational curricula
- Training materials

Goals and Objectives
- Resulting data sets
- Final reports of accomplishments and impact, internal and external (can discard drafts, raw survey data, and working files)
- Photographs, recordings, and transcripts of events and/or presentations
- Copies of publications
- Promotional and marketing materials: press kits, flyers, advertisements, products, etc.