Under the Archives Act 1983, the University may not dispose of records without the written approval of the State Archivist. Disposal schedules are legal documents approved by the State Archivist that authorise the disposal of records that fall into one of the disposal classes listed in the schedule. Disposal classes are groups of records derived from business functions and activities. These classes have both an associated reference number (taking the form “xx.yy.zz”) and an authorised disposal action.

Disposal actions range from permanent retention as an archive, to stipulating a minimum period of time records must be retained prior to destruction. Disposal actions are primarily determined by the status of the records in the disposal class, which is listed along with the disposal action in the right-hand column of the schedule. All disposal classes have either ‘PERMANENT’ or ‘TEMPORARY’ status. Records identified as ‘PERMANENT’ are those that will be transferred to the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO) to be retained as State archives. ‘TEMPORARY’ records are those that can be destroyed under the authority of the schedule.

Disposal Schedules applicable to the University

The University uses the four generic disposal schedules (known as disposal authorities) published by the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office along with its own approved functional disposal schedule (DA 2398) based on the specific business functions of the University. DA 2398 replaces the old functional disposal schedule DS 32, which is no longer valid.

The disposal schedules currently applicable to the University are as follows:

- DA 2135 – Training and Assessment Records of Registered Training Organisations
- DA 2157 – Common Administrative Functions
- DA 2158 – Short-Term-Value Records
- DA 2159 – Source Records
- DA 2398 – Functional Records of the University of Tasmania

Note that schedules DS 1 and DS 32 have been rescinded and may no longer be used.

Using Disposal Schedules

The first thing you have to do when using disposal schedules to determine whether you can dispose of records is to separate the records into groups of similar records (i.e. separate invoices from financial statements). This is why the Records Management Unit advises business units to organise their records in a folder structure based on the UTAS Business Classification Scheme, as doing so will make it much easier to match records to the disposal classes listed in the schedules.
The next step is to determine the relevant schedule to use. If you are not familiar with it, it is probably advisable to check DA 2158 (Short-Term-Value Records) first, as it is fairly short and may allow you to dispose of a lot of unimportant records straight away. After that, most business units will generally find DA 2398 (the University's functional disposal schedule) and DA 2157 (Common Administrative Functions) to be of most value. The remaining two schedules are only used in specific circumstances and many business units will not use them at all. Make sure you read carefully through the introductory information before using a disposal schedule, as there are some special cases and exceptions that must be observed.

Function

Once you have determined the appropriate disposal schedule to use, it is time to determine which disposal class each group of records falls under. Start by identifying the appropriate business function, which are listed in capital letters on a dark grey background and have a reference number ending with four zeroes. See Appendix A for a visual example.

These are the broadest headings and are listed in alphabetical order. Carefully read the description and notes provided for each function, as these may help you determine whether the records belong under that function or provide suggestions of alternatives to consider. Avoid the temptation to rush this step, as there are some common pitfalls to avoid, e.g. quotations and orders for equipment belong under EQUIPMENT & STORES, not FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

Note that the functions are headings, not disposal classes, and their reference numbers cannot be used in a Register of Records Destroyed.

Activity

Each function will usually have one or more activities as sub-headings, but if it doesn’t (as is the case in DA 2158), then you can jump straight to the disposal class level. Activities may appear under multiple functions, but will usually have the current function listed in parentheses. They are listed in bold on a light grey background, and have a reference number ending with two zeroes. Carefully read the description and notes provided for each activity, as this may help you determine whether the records belong under that activity or suggest alternatives to consider. It may be worth checking the classes listed for the same activity under a different function.

Note that the activities are headings, not disposal classes, and their reference numbers cannot be used in a Register of Records Destroyed.

Disposal Class

Once you think you have identified the correct function and activity, look at the disposal classes listed underneath. Disposal classes have a white background and can be distinguished from functions and activities by the presence of a disposal action entry in the third column and the fact that they have a reference number that doesn’t end with two zeroes.

Carefully read through each disposal class to check whether it would apply to the records in question, and be sure to check each disposal class listed under that activity as a lower entry might be more applicable than the first one you see. If you find a disposal class that clearly covers the records, then check the associated disposal action to determine how long you are required to retain the records.

If you have followed the steps above and still can’t find a suitable disposal class, try the index or search the PDF for key words using Ctrl-F. If the records still don’t quite fit any of the disposal classes, please do not try and ‘squeeze’ them in. Use the Unscheduled Records procedure.
Disposal Action

If the disposal action identifies the records belonging to that class as PERMANENT, the records must be kept in good condition for 25 years after the creation date, after which they must usually be transferred to the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office using an Application to Dispose of State Records. If the business unit wishes to retain them after 25 years, they must note this in the application and receive approval from the TAHO.

If the disposal action identifies the records belonging to that class as TEMPORARY, then they may be destroyed once the listed retention period has expired. Make sure you read the retention period information carefully, as there are several slightly different triggers for the commencement of the retention period. Note that you do not have to destroy the records unless required to do so by another law or policy: business units may retain the records for longer than the listed retention period for ease of reference or business requirements if they wish, but the provisions of the Archives Act 1983 regarding their proper care and custody will still apply.

You should list all scheduled items due for destruction in a Records Destruction Request (RDQ), with the exception of those scheduled under DA 2158 (Short-Term-Value Records) and email it to RMU.Staff@utas.edu.au for checking prior to destruction. Please ensure that you fill in all the columns and fields, with the exception of the RDQ ID, which will be provided by the RMU once they have approved the RDQ. They may ask for clarification or amendment of some entries before approving the request. Once you have received approval, you may destroy the records, but their destruction must be documented in a Register of Records Destroyed. For more information, see RMU Information Sheet 3 - Destroying Records.

Note that there are special restrictions on the destruction of records that are relevant to a Right to Information request, an investigation or inquiry, or a native title claim. The destruction of records documenting links between indigenous peoples, families, communities and localities is also prohibited. Business units wishing to dispose of these records should contact the RMU.

Further information

For more information, please visit our website at http://www.utas.edu.au/it/records. If you need help, please contact the Records Management Unit at RMU.Staff@utas.edu.au.

Related Documents

- RMU Information Sheet 3 – Destroying Records
- RMU Information Sheet 5 – Unscheduled Records
The above is an excerpt from DA 2157, showing what a typical disposal schedule page looks like. We can see the first three disposal classes (01.01.01, 01.01.02 and 01.01.03) falling under the “Addresses” activity, with Community Relations as the overarching function.

The disposal actions for each disposal class are listed in the right-hand column, showing that records from disposal class 01.01.01 are of permanent value, meaning that they will have to be transferred to the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office after 25 years. The records from the other two disposal classes are temporary records, and may be destroyed two years after the action is completed, meaning two years after the completion of the transaction to which they relate.
Appendix B: 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: Check the disposal action: is the status PERMANENT?
     - Yes: Try the index and a keyword search of the PDF: did you find a suitable disposal class?
     - No: The records are unscheduled - submit an Application to Dispose of State Records.
5. Has the retention period expired?
   - Yes: Contact the Records Management Unit for further advice.
   - No: Add to Register of Inactive Records and retain until retention period expires.
6. 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
   - No: 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.