Business areas often wish to know whether they can scan records and then destroy the original hard copies in order to save space. While it is theoretically possible to destroy the originals under the authority of DA 2159, this disposal schedule and the associated State Records Guideline 8 impose strict requirements on the process that most University business areas will find very difficult to meet.

Business units wishing to pursue this course of action should be aware that meeting these requirements will involve the development and approval of a formal digitisation program, and will require a considerable investment of time and resources in drawing up the necessary procedures and training personnel in the use of these procedures. The Records Management Unit can provide advice and guidance in how to develop a compliant digitisation program, but the responsibility ultimately lies with the head of the business unit.

Setting up a records digitisation program

An approved digitisation program will allow a business unit to destroy the original hard copies of records they have digitised under the authority of Disposal Authorisation No. 2159 (DA 2159). These records can be destroyed without specific authorisation and do not need to be recorded in a Register of Records Destroyed.

However, even if the digitisation program meets all the requirements of the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO) and the Records Management Unit (RMU), the following limitations will still apply:

- DA 2159 only applies to records that are covered under an existing disposal schedule. Unscheduled records may not be destroyed unless you have submitted an Application to Dispose of State Records and received a Destruction Authority from the TAHO. This applies even if you have a digital copy of the record.
- DA 2159 only covers records created after 1960. You will not be able to destroy any records created prior to 1960 without specific authorisation from the State Archivist, even if you have a digital copy of the record. Pre-1960 records must be disposed of as unscheduled records.
- The original hard copies may not be destroyed if they are required or likely to be required for judicial proceedings, government inquiries or investigations, or Right to Information applications. This applies even if they could otherwise be destroyed under the terms of DA 2159.
- The original hard copies may not be destroyed if they are historical artefacts, e.g. original artworks, proclamations, charters, testimonials etc.

Reproduction standards

The scanned records must be functionally equivalent to the source records, being complete and accurate reproductions that have the degree of accessibility and useability necessary to substitute for the source records as defined in State Records Guideline No. 1.
In practical terms, you need to ensure that:

- no pages are inadvertently omitted (especially when scanning two-sided documents);
- the pages are in the correct order;
- all the information on a page is accurately copied;
- handwritten comments and signatures are legible;
- text isn’t cut off by the edge of the page, or made indistinct by the curvature of a bound page;
- text in shaded or highlighted areas is readable;
- diagrams, graphs, tables and photos are clear and distinct;
- colours important to understanding the information are accurately reproduced (consider using a target sheet to check colour reproduction);
- records are scanned at a resolution of at least 300 dpi (600 dpi for photos);
- records are encoded using a lossless format (e.g. PDF/A or PNG) to avoid distortion and loss of information;
- copies are accompanied by sufficient metadata to provide context and meaning, and to demonstrate the authenticity of the record.

Management of the reproductions

Remember that in replacing the original source records, the reproductions will become the official records. You must ensure that the reproductions are managed in accordance with the Records Management Guidelines and are kept for the authorised retention period that applied to the original records. If destroyed, they must be listed in a Register of Records Destroyed. If the original records were permanent records, then the reproductions are also permanent records and must be protected and managed as such and retained for 25 years from the creation date of the original records, after which they must be transferred to the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.

Quality Assurance

A compliant digitisation program must have comprehensive quality assurance and verification procedures in place to ensure that no information is lost. Responsibility for each step of the digitisation and verification process must be clearly assigned, and those responsible trained in the necessary procedures. The verification process should be undertaken by someone other than the scanner operator.

The source records will need to be retained long enough for the verification to take place (we recommend at least six months), and there will need to be procedures to ensure that the source record is not damaged or altered by the copying process in order to ensure it can be used for verification. If any defects or errors are detected, the document will need to be rescanned.

There should also be monthly tests and audits of the equipment and processes, and the results recorded in a recordkeeping system. An annual review of the program should be conducted to identify issues of concern.

The procedures should cover at least the following:

- Allocation of responsibilities and authorisations for different processes/aspects of the program
- How to prepare documents for scanning and what to do with documents that may cause scanning difficulties, such as photocopied documents, stapled documents, and spiral or glue bound documents
- Document batching
- Calibration, use and checking of the scanning equipment and software
- Which metadata must be captured through OCR or manual data entry
- Checking accuracy of data from OCR and manual entry
- Scanning processes to ensure all documents and all pages are scanned.
- Creation and use of a sample set and criteria
Capturing electronic reproductions

The main stumbling block for many business units will be the requirement in State Records Guideline No. 8 to capture the scanned reproductions into an electronic recordkeeping system before the original records can be destroyed. As detailed in the Australian Standard on Records Management (AS ISO 15489.1-2002), a recordkeeping system must:

- “routinely capture all records within the scope of the business activities it covers,
- organize the records in a way that reflects the business processes of the records’ creator,
- protect the records from unauthorized alteration or disposition,
- routinely function as the primary source of information about actions that are documented in the records, and
- provide ready access to all relevant records and related metadata.” (p. 8)

Some business units have access to HP Records Manager (HPRM), the University's preferred recordkeeping system. As a fully featured Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS), HPRM is designed to meet these requirements and business units with HPRM access can comply with this aspect of Guideline No. 8 by capturing all scanned records into HPRM.

Unfortunately, not all business units have access to HPRM and these business units will find it more difficult to comply with Guideline No. 8. Many currently store their electronic records on shared drives and do not utilise shared email folders or the University's Business Classification Scheme. These practices do not meet the requirements of a formal recordkeeping system, and business units lacking HPRM access who wish to run a digitisation program will need to save scanned records into a business information system that can meet all the requirements of a recordkeeping system.

There are a wide variety of business information systems in use at the University, but the recordkeeping functionalities vary considerably and the systems are often only used for a subset of the records created or received by business units. There are some systems that meet the requirements, such as TechOne Financials, and these can be used to capture electronic reproductions, but most systems currently available do not.

Destruction of the source records

The source records must be retained for verification purposes until the quality assurance process has been completed and the reproduction lodged in a recordkeeping system, after which they may be destroyed using a secure and confidential destruction method such as cross-cut shredding or the use of secure disposal bins. As the reproduction is now the official record, source records are not listed in a Register of Records Destroyed. However, the destruction date of the source record should still be recorded in the metadata attached to the reproduction and/or a register of digitised records, as this information may be required in the event of a legal discovery request.
Documentation

Finally, business units will need to document the digitisation process to record:

- Who was responsible for the scanning and verification of a record
- Which source records have been converted
- If and when the source records were destroyed
- When the reproduction process occurred
- What equipment and processes were used
- What policies and procedures were in place and whether they were followed
- The results of tests and audits

This documentation is a record itself and should also be stored in a recordkeeping system.

Related documents

Although this Information Sheet attempts to address the key requirements of a compliant digitisation program, staff members tasked with developing a digitisation program should familiarise themselves with the following documents, which cover the topic in more detail.

University of Tasmania

- RMU Information Sheet 10 – Scanning Specifications

Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO)

- Disposal Authorisation No. 2159 – Source Records
- State Records Guideline No. 1 – Records Management Principles
- State Records Guideline No. 8 – Digitisation and Disposal of Source Records
- Recordkeeping Advice No. 18 – Managing Records in Business Systems
- Recordkeeping Advice No. 21 – Plan Before You Scan
- Recordkeeping Advice No. 30 – Digitisation Dilemmas

Standards

- Australian Standard on Electronic Imaging (AS ISO 15801: 2006)
- Australian Standard on Records Management (AS ISO 15489.1: 2002)