



ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL SCHEDULING POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Approval Date: 30 October 1998
Approved By: Provincial Archivist
Effective Date: [Approval Date]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Archival Appraisal Scheduling Policy and Guidelines (AASP&G) is to rationalize and systematize final disposition in provincial government records schedules. Archival appraisal scheduling is one of the most important but least understood aspects of STOR development and implementation. The need for informed, rational and consistent archival appraisal scheduling has long been recognized. The policy and guidelines provide a comprehensive explanation of the principles on which archival appraisal scheduling must be based. They explain not only the relationship between archival appraisal scheduling and archival appraisal, but also how to identify records which must be scheduled for archival appraisal.

The policy and guidelines were developed by the Appraisal and Evaluation Working Group, an interdepartmental working group established by Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) in July 1998. The working group consisted of an archivist and two records analysts from NSARM, and two records analysts from the Departments of Education and Culture and Housing and Municipal Affairs, respectively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**
- 2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE**
- 3.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES**
- 4.0 POLICY SCOPE**
- 5.0 POLICY GUIDELINES**
- 6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**
- 7.0 AUTHORITIES**
- 8.0 REFERENCES**
- 9.0 GLOSSARY**
- 10.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL – THE SAME, SIMILAR OR COMPLETELY DIFFERENT?**
- 11.0 METADATA**
 - 11.1 Sources**
 - 11.1.1 Business function analysis**
 - 11.1.2 Secondary scope note**
- 12.0 ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL SCHEDULING**
 - 12.1 Archival functions**
 - 12.2 Archival records**
- 13.0 ARCHIVAL RETENTION PLANS**
- 14.0 ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL**
- 15.0 NON-ARCHIVAL RECORDS**
 - 15.1 Non-archival records retention**
 - 15.1.1 Operational records**
 - 15.1.1.1 Active**
 - 15.1.1.2 Semi-active**
 - 15.1.2 Administrative records**
 - 15.1.2.1 Active**
 - 15.1.2.2 Semi-active**
 - 15.1.3 Vital records**

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Archival appraisal scheduling shall determine whether records classified in a STOR secondary undergo archival appraisal.

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- 2.1 to affirm archival appraisal scheduling as a distinct process within STOR development;
- 2.2 to apply the controls necessary to ensure that only those records which qualify for some level of archival retention carry the AR disposition;
- 2.3 to establish the roles and responsibilities of records analysts and archivists in relation to archival appraisal scheduling;
- 2.4 to establish the meaning and purpose of the archival appraisal scheduling process within the context of STOR development and implementation.

3.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

Archival appraisal scheduling shall proceed from a prioritization of the functions documented by the records – not from the form, format, cost, uniqueness or information content of the records themselves.

Archival appraisal scheduling shall not be used to remedy classification or scheduling errors, or to facilitate the preservation of records which would not otherwise qualify for archival appraisal.

Archival retention plans for records scheduled for archival appraisal shall be drafted by an archivist in the Government Archives Section, Archival Holdings Management Division, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM).

4.0 POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to the development and implementation of all STORs.

5.0 POLICY GUIDELINES

NSARM will develop and make available Guidelines (**10.0** through **15.0** below) for the identification of archival functions and the description of records documenting them. These Guidelines may be modified or enhanced to meet special organizational needs or resources, provided the department fulfills its obligations under the Archival Appraisal Scheduling Policy.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Departments are responsible for ensuring that archival appraisal scheduling takes place concurrently with STOR development.

Department records analysts are responsible for ensuring that the requisite metadata is created to enable the archivist to advise whether the records should be scheduled for archival appraisal, and for scheduling final disposition.

NSARM records analysts are responsible for ensuring that archival appraisal scheduling takes place only after consultation with the archivist and that it reflects the advice received from the archivist.

NSARM archivists are responsible for drafting the archival retention plans, for ensuring that both the Department records analyst and the assigned NSARM records analyst have the opportunity to study the archival retention plans and to comment on them, and for conducting archival appraisals in accordance with the approved archival retention plans.

7.0 AUTHORITIES

Public Archives Act

Government Records Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

8.0 REFERENCES

NSRM *Rules for STAR and STOR* Version 2.0 (21 February 1995)

NSARM Appraisal Policy

NSARM Acquisition Policy

9.0 GLOSSARY

Archival appraisal the process of determining whether a set of records is archival.

Archival appraisal scheduling the process of determining whether records classified in a secondary will undergo archival appraisal.

Archival functions functions supported and documented by archival records.

Archival records records created for the purpose of documenting core business functions and function-based activities.

Metadata information about records and information resources, and about the functions and activities which they support.

10.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL – THE SAME, SIMILAR OR COMPLETELY DIFFERENT?

Department records analysts, NSARM records analysts and NSARM archivists share a commitment to the rational creation, management and final disposition of government records according to life cycle methodology. Sharing this commitment means that the process of the life cycle management of government records is wholly integrated and continuous. The Archival Appraisal Scheduling Guidelines clarify the role of archival appraisal in this process and also emphasize the importance of reliable metadata for accurately identifying not only records which must undergo archival appraisal, but also records which are non-archival and ineligible for archival appraisal.

Department records analysts carry out the identification and classification of records relating to the operational functions of the department. They also ensure that records are accessible and usable throughout the active and semi-active phases of the life cycle. Identifying the functions of a department and reviewing legislation and regulations relating to them enable the department records analysts to create metadata as an indispensable and exploitable information resource. Metadata creation in turn facilitates classification and retention, as well as final disposition scheduling, and ensures that personal information is properly identified so that it may be effectively protected. Metadata not only makes the task of scheduling for archival appraisal easier; it makes it possible.

The effectiveness with which records are managed at the time of their creation affects their final disposition. The unique and exclusive role of the Government Archives Section of NSARM is to

manage, during the inactive phase of the life cycle, those records which serve as the government's archival memory. The Archival Appraisal Scheduling Guidelines build on the fundamental difference and distinction between archival and non-archival records. Within that framework, the roles of records analyst and archivist are complementary.

11.0 METADATA

Metadata content emerges from analysis of the operational, legal and regulatory environment of the organization. Metadata is collected and managed as part of the organization's information resources. Analysis of the organizational environment involves the identification of core business functions, that is, the activities, programs and services provided by the organization. This functional overview is best developed from mission and mandate statements, budget estimates and business analyses, or from other specialized information resources. Metadata management provides for the collection of information during both the preliminary investigation of the high-level framework and the analysis of organizational structure and business activity undertaken when inventorying information holdings for the purpose of STOR development.

The high-level functional analysis should identify the units of an organization primarily responsible for performing certain functions and activities, and should not be based on organizational charts or organizational structure. Functions and activities are more stable and continuous than organizational structures and can be distributed among the various structural components of an organization. Business function classification systems are hierarchical; the hierarchy (1) describes the business function, (2) is based on the activities constituting the function, and (3) further defines the sub-activities or groups of transactions relating to each activity. The business function hierarchy is navigable downward, is specific to each organization, is delineated in consultation with the users, and reflects changing business needs.

Archival appraisal, like archival appraisal scheduling, is based on the analysis of information about records and the functions which they support, not information contained in the records themselves. Metadata creation proceeds from an analysis of the record-keeping requirements of the function or activity which the records document. Metadata content standards ensure that the specific information required to determine whether records should be scheduled for archival appraisal will have been created before the records were classified, and will therefore be available to assist in determining final disposition.

11.1 Sources

The two principal sources of metadata applicable to archival appraisal scheduling are the high-level functional analysis and the secondary scope note. The high-level functional analysis identifies the core functions which produce archival records. The secondary scope note provides function or activity description at the level at which both archival appraisal scheduling and archival retention planning take place, and must be detailed enough to support records description at the file or file block level.

11.1.1 High-level functional analysis

- **Preliminary investigation** includes metadata gathering from documentary sources and interviews; and identifying and documenting the role and purpose of the organization, the organizational structure, the organization's legal, regulatory, business and political environment; critical factors affecting record-keeping; and critical weaknesses associated with record-keeping. Sources include:
 - statutes
 - budget estimates
 - annual reports
 - mandate and mission statements
 - business function analyses
 - long-range systems plans
 - strategic plans
 - published materials
 - Internet / Intranet web documents

- **Analysis of business activity** includes metadata gathering from information resources and interviews; identifying and documenting each business function, activity and transaction; establishing a hierarchy of business functions, activities and transactions in a classification scheme (STAR/STOR); and identifying and documenting business processes and the transactions which comprise them. Sources include:
 - records schedules
 - records surveys and inventories
 - administrative histories and analyses of organizational change
 - file and document lists
 - electronic information systems and databases
 - indexes and directories
 - government-wide and department-wide policy and planning records

11.1.2 Secondary scope note

Records description in the STAR/STOR system is presented in the form of scope notes at both the primary and the secondary level. The secondary scope note is a structured description of the secondary in which the records are classified. It specifies both the activity to which the secondary relates and the records that are classified in it. The secondary scope note may also provide details of the business process and describe the relationship between the secondary and other secondaries in the same primary. Though the title of a secondary should describe the types of records classified in it and be useful as a retrieval tool, the scope note is required for the purposes of archival appraisal scheduling and archival retention planning because the title in itself does not necessarily provide a sufficient explanation of the use of the secondary.

The mandatory elements of the secondary scope note are:

- (1) function and purpose statement clearly explaining the sub-function or activity which the records support;
- (2) information content statement clearly explaining the records which support and document the sub-function or activity;
- (3) form of records statement enumerating the major types, formats and forms of records and giving specific examples.

12.0 ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL SCHEDULING

Archival appraisal scheduling is a means of testing for the presence of archival records among those records classified at the secondary level. AR in the DIS column means that the final disposition of records classified in the secondary will be managed according to an archival retention plan which explains why the records should, and how they will be appraised, and prescribes the level of archival retention. The purpose of archival appraisal scheduling is to identify those secondaries for which archival retention plans need to be drafted. The archivist can thus concentrate on preserving the smallest but mightiest part of the corporate memory, namely, that which is archival. It is important to keep in mind that either mis-classification or mis-scheduling can result in the inappropriate retention of non-archival records or the untimely destruction of archival records.

12.1 Archival functions

In order to be able to identify functions, sub-functions and activities which produce archival records, one must keep in mind that ‘archival-ness’ is relative, not absolute, and that it is hierarchical. For example, records documenting the program planning function within an agency, one of whose core functions is government-wide planning, are more archival than records documenting the program-planning function within a line department; records documenting the program-planning function within a line department are more archival than records documenting the structure of the branch or division of the department responsible for program planning; records documenting the activity of the program branch are more archival than records documenting individual programs developed by the branch; records documenting program development are more archival than records documenting program delivery; and records documenting program delivery are more archival than records documenting the delivery of an individual program in a particular instance. The higher the level of responsibility, the greater the likelihood that archival records will be present; a core business function is more archival than a subordinate one, and a senior-management function more archival than a line-operational one.

12.2 Archival records

Archival records management is ideally limited to records documenting core business functions and function-based activities at the highest level of responsibility and accountability. Records

document functions; archival records document archival functions. The key to identifying archival records is the high-level functional analysis carried out in connection with STOR development. First the core business functions and activities must be identified, secondly those records which document them. The context of creation and use, not information content, is the true measure of the ‘archival-ness’ of archival records; it is the function or activity which the records document – and the level at which they document it – which matters. The genre, medium, form, format or content of records is neither a criterion nor a reflection of archival quality; it is purely incidental to it.

Records which were created as evidence are more likely to be archival than records created as information, but not all ‘evidential’ records are archival, for that depends on the significance of the function or activity which they document. Only by analysing the function or activity which the records document can one make an informed judgement as to whether the records need be scheduled for archival appraisal. ‘Archival-ness’ is function- or activity-dependent while independent of every other consideration, especially the information content of the records. In the purest sense archival records are records which document the function or activity as such, not its performance or delivery in particular instances. ***Only records which were demonstrably created in order to document mandated functions or function-based activities can possibly be archival.***

The only way to determine whether a secondary ought to be scheduled for archival appraisal is to identify and prioritize the function or activity underlying it. For example, a subject file secondary, which may contain information about a function but which will not contain the records documenting it, is not to be scheduled for archival appraisal. A case file secondary is not to be scheduled for archival appraisal unless it can be shown to provide functional, not merely transactional documentation. Indexes and registers are not to be scheduled for archival appraisal unless they relate directly to the retrieval or representation of archival records. Electronic information systems are not to be scheduled for archival appraisal unless they create or preserve records which document functions identified as archival. In the end it will be up to the archivist to decide whether the function makes the archival ‘cut’ and, if so, whether the records classified in the secondary provide the best possible documentation of the function or activity concerned.

13.0 ARCHIVAL RETENTION PLANS

Archival retention plans are disposition plans for records scheduled for archival appraisal. They are appended to each STOR and form an essential part of it. The archival retention plan, which accompanies each secondary with AR disposition, enables archival records management to carry forward to appraisal and ultimately to retention in whole or in part. It is the framework within which archival appraisal takes place. It describes the function or activity documented and the records created to support it, recommends the level of retention, provides the rationale for retention and indicates how and by whom the appraisal will be conducted. If the level is Full Retention, appraisal is unnecessary. If the level is Selective Retention, the archival retention plan will indicate the sampling method and, if necessary, the criteria for special selection.

14.0 ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL

Archival appraisal is triggered when the semi-active retention period on secondaries with AR disposition has expired. It is conducted by an archivist in the Government Archives Section, NSARM – and preferably by the same archivist who drafted the archival retention plans for the department’s STOR. The archivist creates an appraisal record which is reviewed by the Senior Archivist, Government Archives before being submitted for approval by the Manager, Archival Holdings Management Division, and then by the Provincial Archivist. A copy of the approved archival appraisal record will be made available to the department on request.

15.0 NON-ARCHIVAL RECORDS

The following classes of material are not archival and shall not be scheduled for archival appraisal:

- (a) Subject files
- (b) Routine facilitative operational records (e.g., licences)
- (c) Transitory records (e.g., appointment books, meeting notices)
- (d) Non-record material (e.g., printed ephemera)
- (e) Non-master records (e.g., “Other Offices” classification)
- (f) Non-written or non-verbal documents (e.g., graphic materials, cartographic materials, architectural and technical drawings, moving images) [NB Does not exclude sound recordings or written records in microform or electronic format.]
- (g) Administrative records classified in STAR (**exception:** 5670-30 archival records lists)
- (h) Three-dimensional artifacts.

15.1 Non-archival records retention

Retention and final disposition of non-archival records are determined by evaluating the records for whatever continuing values they possess – administrative, fiscal, legal, audit, reference.

15.1.1 Operational records

Some operational records have ongoing legal, audit or reference value which may necessitate lengthy active or semi-active retention.

15.1.1.1 Active

Active records are required, and referred to constantly for current use and need to be retained and maintained in office space and equipment close to users. Active records are normally housed and accessed in the offices of the creating agency and are used or retrieved on a regular basis. Long-term operational records which are in the active phase of the life cycle will require preservation to ensure their protection, care, repair and restoration. Usually these records would be active until a retention trigger (SO) identifies an action or event that begins the ageing (deactivation) process.

Example: boiler and pressure vessel fitting design case files (SO + 2 / 8 / DP – SO Definition: boiler or pressure vessel destroyed, permanently decommissioned or relocated out of the province) – these case files contain records documenting installation of steam boilers, pressure vessels and refrigeration plants. Includes registration, fitting design calculations, drawings, codes and standards linked to the Canadian Registration Number (CRN).

An example of operational records which are permanently active is vital records (see **15.1.3** below).

15.1.1.2 Semi-active

Semi-active operational records are referred to infrequently and do not undergo constant use. Semi-active records still retain primary values but should be removed from expensive office space to a lower-cost offsite storage facility, when there is no immediate operational need for access and retrieval. Long-term operational records remain in the semi-active phase of the life cycle for a long time, during which they will be stored offsite. Generally speaking, these records will be semi-active for five to ten years after the active phase of the life cycle has expired. In some cases the semi-active retention will be longer; example: Fire safety inspection case files (FY + 4 / 50 / DP). These case files contain records documenting fire safety expert advice and assistance to local government to carry out fire investigations. Used for enforcement functions and fire safety activities under the *Fire Prevention Act*. Includes inspection reports, reinspection reports, plan examinations, plan approvals, correspondence pertaining to fire investigations and technical drawings. Similarly to long-term active operational records, long-term semi-active operational records may, from considerations of preservation and cost/benefit, require reformatting in order to ensure access and retrieval over a long period of time.

15.1.2 Administrative records

Administrative records are common to all departments of the Nova Scotia Government and support housekeeping functions such as general administration, facilities management, financial management, human resources management, information management and materiel management. Some administrative records with continuing legal, audit or reference value to the organization will require retention for a long period of time. Some administrative records such as accounts receivable and payroll will also be vital.

15.1.2.1 Active

Example:

STAR 2120-42, Construction, Construction by Agency Case Files (SO + 2 / 5 / DP, SO Definition: all warranties expired). These case files document the history of construction of new buildings and alterations, upgrades, renovations and additions to existing facilities. Includes development and construction of parking areas and other external features. Secondary covers the planning, design, pre-award of tender, award

of tender and actual construction. Most case files will be destroyed after a suitable retention period so as to protect legal risks and interests. Those files with continuing active retention requirements may be necessary to document phases or aspects of construction. When a construction disaster occurs, copies of response plans in place at the time will be incorporated in the construction-by- agency case file.

15.1.2.2 Semi-active

Example:

STAR 4120-32, Employee History - Separated, Employee by Agency Summary Record (SO + 6 / 60 / DP, SO Definition: date employee separated and creation of employee summary record). These case files document the employment history of a former employee in a summary manner, and have ongoing administrative and legal value.

15.1.3 Vital records

Vital records are records which would ensure the continuation of business in the event of a disaster. They are necessary to the continuing existence or reconstitution of an organization. Vital records are essential to (a) resume and /or continue operations, (b) re-create the legal and financial status of the organization, and (c) preserve the rights and duties of the organization, its employees and clients, enabling it to fulfill contractual and other legal obligations.

A good vital records program protects and maintains in the active phase only information absolutely necessary to resume business – approximately 3 to 5 per cent of all records and information created, used or managed by most organizations. In identifying vital records consideration should be given to those records which are needed to:

- operate the organization during an emergency or disaster
- re-establish the organization’s functions after an emergency or disaster and continue business
- establish and protect the rights and interests of the organization and its clients.

The vital records selection process begins with defining the organization’s operational, legal and financial requirements and posing the question: “What records are absolutely necessary to resume business tomorrow?”

Too often, vital records are confused with archival records and vice versa. Vital records are those records without which the organization could not function. Archival records are those records without which the organization’s core functions could not be properly documented. Archival memory protection is not an element of a vital records plan. It is unlikely that archival records would ever be vital, though records documenting the organization’s vital records planning process would be archival. Vital records are always active and continually updatable, whereas

archival records, by definition, are always inactive – ‘frozen in time’. Vital records encompass both administrative and operational records, whereas archival records are exclusively operational.

Appraisal and Evaluation Working Group (AEWG)

Steve Allen (NSARM)

Gillian Barlow (Education & Culture)

Kathleen Bugbee (Housing & Municipal Affairs)

Barry Cahill (NSARM) *Chair*

Christina Corkett (NSARM)

NB The AEWG acknowledge with most grateful thanks the services of Ellen Sherlock (Economic Development & Tourism) as External Editor.