

Guidelines for using the General Disposal Authority (GDA) for University Records

When using this GDA, please remember the GDA is a legally binding document between Archives New Zealand and all the New Zealand universities – we cannot arbitrarily change it. If the minimum retention period seems unreasonably short or long, please contact the Records Management Programme Manager. The issue can then be discussed with the other universities, and if necessary, Archives New Zealand contacted to see if an amendment is possible.

1. The GDA is organised by 'function', i.e. the functions of the University e.g. Management of Academic Programmes, Student Administration, Research Management, Finance, Human Resources, Information management etc. Each activity centre may have records that are included in several of the 'functions'. Similarly, just because a function has the same name as one of our organisational units, e.g. Student Administration, doesn't mean that unit is responsible for all the records listed under that function.
2. To find the sort of records you are looking for you can either
 - a. Use the folders as an index – select the function, activity then record terms as needed or;
 - b. Select from the alphabet lists where the alphabet is the first letter of an entry. Click on the required entry to find out the disposal action or;
 - c. Click on "Full text search", type in the key terms, click on "Find all" then click on the title of the required entry to find out the disposal action.
3. The GDA applies to both paper-based and electronic records
4. If you have records that don't seem to be covered by any of the GDA categories, please contact the Records Management Programme Manager.

What do the headings mean?

Headings	Explanation
Function	These are the functions that the University carries out. There are currently 17 top level classes.
Activity	An activity or process that is part of the function e.g. Admissions is a sub-class of Student Administration.
Record Class	Group of documents or records with the same retention and disposal sentence.

For each term and record class, the Disposal Authority shows

Scope notes, or description of type of records in class	<p>A broad description of the type of records that are produced in carrying out an activity or process. This is located in the grey box.</p> <p>There is often a list of examples. This is just a sample of the main types – there may be more that meet the definition.</p>
Disposition Actions	<p>Provides the official disposal authority and details i.e. what the minimum retention period is and what the trigger for the retention period is.</p> <p>'Archive' refers to records that need to be retained because they have been identified as having permanent value. You must ensure these records are well protected.</p> <p>'Destroy' means dispose of in the most appropriate manner. In some cases this will mean secure destruction.</p> <p>We must not destroy records before the disposal period has expired. We may retain the records longer than the minimum retention period where we need to. "After date of last action" means after the file has been closed, the contract completed or some other trigger.</p> <p>We can keep records for longer than the minimum without any further approval. If there is a genuine continuing need for them then we should retain the records for as long as that need remains. It may be for operational reasons, legal or historical.</p>
See Also	"See also" link to another Records Class

How to use the GDA

1. Examine the file you are considering. Do not dispose of records that fall outside your area of responsibility.
2. Determine what the broad function and activity is, and what the types of records are. For example, committee minutes, copies of order forms.
3. Search the GDA for the class of records that describes the records you have.
4. Identify the 'trigger' e.g. date of last action. If the trigger is "until administratively no longer required" each Faculty, LSRI or activity centre should have a consistent and documented decision on what this means for them.
5. Calculate the year when disposal can take place. If there is a mix, keep the file for the longest period.
6. Note the disposal date and GDA reference on the front of the file.
7. If not yet approved for destruction, store them in a secure area, with all the records to be disposed of in the same year together.
8. Any records which are still needed for operational, legal, financial or historical reasons should not be disposed of even if they have met the required retention period.
9. Any records older than 25 years should not be disposed of without consulting the Records Management Programme Manager.
10. If the records may be disposed of, print off and complete a Records Destruction Authorisation if needed (if the record had a retention period of two years or longer).
11. Get the form authorised by your Head of Department and send a copy to the Records Management Programme Manager.
12. Dispose of the records appropriately.
13. "Active" records, i.e. the ones you refer to for your day-to-day operations should be stored somewhere where you can get easy access to them. "Semi-active" (occasional reference only) or inactive (closed files kept for reference) may be better stored in a secure space not in demand for office space.
14. Confidential records must be kept in a secure location.
15. Each area should have a 'register' of what records are kept where.

For any queries about the GDA or implementing it in your area, please contact the Records Management Programme Manager (extension 84586).