Good Practice Guidance

Managing, naming, and saving files on a shared electronic drive

The benefits of an agreed approach to electronic records management

1. To create understandable, consistent and predictable names for documents.
2. To improve ease of location for information, even you did not create it.
3. To enhance confidence that your information search has produced everything you need.
4. To distinguish documents from one another more easily – you shouldn't have to open every single document to get an idea of what it's about.
5. To enable the sorting of documents in a predetermined logical sequence.
6. To ensure the appropriate deletion of documents when no longer required for use, or when the agreed retention period has ended.

Use logical file names and structures

- Be concise with the document name, but ensure that relevant info is included
- Include the subject, name, date, and, if necessary, version
- Devise a naming standard that all staff will follow:
    - Specify arrangement of dates (e.g. YYYYDDMM or DDMMYYYY)
        - YYYY is advisable for years, as it keeps them distinct from months or days
    - Dates should be included at the start of the document name, so that documents can be arranged in chronological order
    - Establish rules for naming correspondence, to distinguish between sender and recipient
    - Specify whether spaces, underscores, or capital letters will delimit new words e.g.

        20140911_records_management_guidance

        11092014RecManGuidance

        Records Management Guidance 20141109

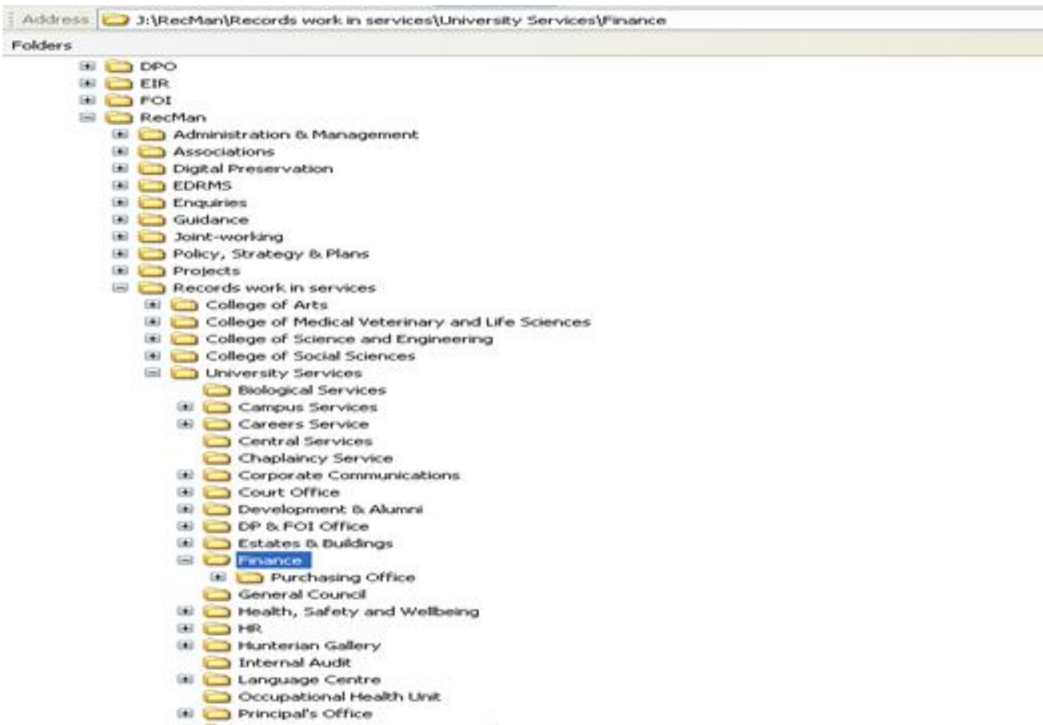
        20140909 Email from GT to SH re DP training session

Use of folders and subfolders

- Store all documents in a designated folder or subfolder – no loose folders or files
- Top level folders should be arranged by subject or function
- Subfolders should be arranged by the type of record that comprises the higher-level subject/function, and then categories within that record type e.g.
    - Finance > Invoices > 2013-14

- Legislative records > Asbestos > Clearance reports > 2010
- There should be a limit in place for the number of subfolders within subfolders
  - This limit should be determined based on business need, but clearly communicated to all staff
- To keep the file structure clear and manageable, permissions to create folders in the top levels should be limited to specific staff members with administrative authority.
  - The exact number of restricted levels should be determined based on business need

Below is an example of a clear, structured filing system on a shared drive. The folder names are clear, and they are relevant to a team and not to a particular individual. Sub folders are arranged alphabetically for ease of reference.



Version control

- Version numbers should be included in the name of a document if various members of staff are working on it at the same time
- Ensure that all staff working on a file are using the same method of version control
- An example of this is 0.1 for the first draft of a document, then 0.2, 0.3 for each change of the draft, and then 1.0 for the final version.
- *Drafts:* drafts may be circulated while they are in progress. The draft will start off as version 0.1. Following any changes it should be renames 0.2, 0.3 and so on. Anything with a 0. Is in draft format
- *Issued document:* once you have made all necessary changes to the draft, the agreed and issued document is version 1.0

- *Minor change:* any minor changes you make to the issued document would be reflected in the numbers that appear after the v1. For example, subsequent minor changes to version 1.0 becomes version 1.1 then version 1.2 etc.…
- *Major change:* Any major change to this document after this would then become version 2.0. You would increase the document version number with each new version. The version number should be at the end of a document name.

More information can be found in RIMS' Good Practice Guide: Version Control.

Manage document life cycles

- Electronic files should be included on records retention schedules, and are subject to the same retention periods as their paper counterparts
- Staff should be in charge of maintaining their own files on their H drive or personal drive
- Folders should be cleared out at a regular, established intervals
    - All clear-outs must be reviewed against any established records retention schedule
    - Designate a staff member to take control of deleting electronic files on shared drives preferably on a set, regular time e.g. each month, quarterly, bi-annually
- A separate folder may be created for files that are no longer in use, but need to be kept for data protection reasons.

Ensure confidentiality and security of files

- Folders should only be accessed by authorised members of staff
- Folders and documents containing personal or sensitive personal data should be password protected, and access restricted to authorised staff.

Further advice

For further advice on managing records and information in the office, please contact the:

Records & Information Management Service
tel: +44 (0)141 330 6494 or 5146
email: recman@glasgow.ac.uk