
**Information and documentation — Records
management —**

**Part 1:
General**

*Information et documentation — «Records management»
Partie 1: Principes directeurs*
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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this part of ISO 15489 may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 15489-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 11, *Archives/records management*.

ISO 15489 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information and documentation — Records management*:

— *Part 1: General*

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— *Part 2: Guidelines* [Technical Report]

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Introduction

The standardization of records management policies and procedures ensures that appropriate attention and protection is given to all records, and that the evidence and information they contain can be retrieved more efficiently and effectively, using standard practices and procedures.

This part of ISO 15489 was developed in response to consensus among participating ISO member countries to standardize international best practice in records management using the Australian Standards AS 4390, *Records management* as its starting point.

This International Standard is accompanied by a Technical Report (ISO/TR 15489-2) that is recommended for use with it. ISO/TR 15489-2 provides further explanation and implementation options for achieving the outcomes of this International Standard. It also includes a bibliography.

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Information and documentation — Records management —

Part 1: General

1 Scope

This part of ISO 15489 provides guidance on managing records¹⁾ of originating organizations, public or private, for internal and external clients.

All the elements outlined in this part of ISO 15489 are recommended to ensure that adequate records are created, captured and managed. Procedures that help to ensure the management of records according to the principles and elements outlined in this part of ISO 15489 are provided in ISO/TR 15489-2 (Guidelines).

This part of ISO 15489

- applies to the management of records, in all formats or media, created or received by any public or private organization in the conduct of its activities, or any individual with a duty to create and maintain records,
- provides guidance on determining the responsibilities of organizations for records and records policies, procedures, systems and processes,
- provides guidance on records management in support of a quality process framework to comply with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001,
- provides guidance on the design and implementation of a records system, but
- does not include the management of archival records within archival institutions.

This part of ISO 15489 is intended for use by

- managers of organizations,
- records, information and technology management professionals,
- all other personnel in organizations, and
- other individuals with a duty to create and maintain records.

2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO 15489. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of ISO 15489 are encouraged to investigate the

1) In some countries, the management of records also applies to archives management. Archives management is not covered in this part of ISO 15489.

possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 5127:—²⁾, *Information and documentation — Vocabulary*

ISO 9001, *Quality management systems — Requirements*

ISO 14001, *Environmental management systems — Specification with guidance for use*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 15489, the following terms and definitions apply. For terms not included here, see ISO 5127.

3.1

access

right, opportunity, means of finding, using, or retrieving information

3.2

accountability

principle that individuals, organizations, and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others

3.3

action tracking

process in which time limits for actions are monitored and imposed upon those conducting the business

3.4

archival authority

archival agency

archival institution

archival programme

agency or programme responsible for selecting, acquiring and preserving archives, making them available, and approving destruction of other records

3.5

classification

systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system

3.6

classification system

SEE **classification** (3.5)

3.7

conversion

process of changing records from one medium to another or from one format to another

SEE **migration** (3.13)

3.8

destruction

process of eliminating or deleting records, beyond any possible reconstruction

2) To be published. (Revision of all previous parts of ISO 5127)

3.9**disposition**

range of processes associated with implementing records retention, destruction or transfer decisions which are documented in disposition authorities or other instruments

3.10**document**, noun

recorded information or object which can be treated as a unit

3.11**indexing**

process of establishing access points to facilitate retrieval of records and/or information

3.12**metadata**

data describing context, content and structure of records and their management through time

3.13**migration**

act of moving records from one system to another, while maintaining the records' authenticity, integrity, reliability and useability

SEE **conversion** (3.7)

3.14**preservation**

processes and operations involved in ensuring the technical and intellectual survival of authentic records through time

3.15**records**

information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business

3.16**records management**

field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records

3.17**records system**

information system which captures, manages and provides access to records through time

3.18**registration**

act of giving a record a unique identifier on its entry into a system

3.19**tracking**

creating, capturing and maintaining information about the movement and use of records

3.20**transfer**

(custody) change of custody, ownership and/or responsibility for records

3.21**transfer**

(movement) moving records from one location to another

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4 Benefits of records management

Records management governs the practice both of records managers and of any person who creates or uses records in the course of their business activities. Records management in an organization includes

- a) setting policies and standards,
- b) assigning responsibilities and authorities,
- c) establishing and promulgating procedures and guidelines,
- d) providing a range of services relating to the management and use of records,
- e) designing, implementing and administering specialized systems for managing records, and
- f) integrating records management into business systems and processes.

Records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset. A systematic approach to the management of records is essential for organizations and society to protect and preserve records as evidence of actions. A records management system results in a source of information about business activities that can support subsequent activities and business decisions, as well as ensuring accountability to present and future stakeholders. Records enable organizations to

- conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner,
- deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner,
- support and document policy formation and managerial decision making,
- provide consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration,
- facilitate the effective performance of activities throughout an organization,
- provide continuity in the event of a disaster,
- meet legislative and regulatory requirements including archival, audit and oversight activities,
- provide protection and support in litigation including the management of risks associated with the existence of, or lack of, evidence of organizational activity,
- protect the interests of the organization and the rights of employees, clients and present and future stakeholders,
- support and document current and future research and development activities, developments and achievements, as well as historical research,
- provide evidence of business, personal and cultural activity,
- establish business, personal and cultural identity, and
- maintain corporate, personal or collective memory.

5 Regulatory environment

All organizations need to identify the regulatory environment that affects their activities and requirements to document their activities. The policies and procedures of organizations should reflect the application of the regulatory environment to their business processes. An organization should provide adequate evidence of its compliance with the regulatory environment in the records of its activities.

The regulatory environment consists of

- a) statute and case laws, and regulations governing the sector-specific and general business environment, including laws and regulations relating specifically to records, archives, access, privacy, evidence, electronic commerce, data protection and information,
- b) mandatory standards of practice,
- c) voluntary codes of best practice,
- d) voluntary codes of conduct and ethics, and
- e) identifiable expectations of the community about what is acceptable behaviour for the specific sector or organization.

The nature of the organization and the sector to which it belongs will determine which of these regulatory elements (individually or in combination) are most applicable to that organization's records management requirements.

6 Policy and responsibilities

6.1 General

An organization seeking to conform to this part of ISO 15489 should establish, document, maintain and promulgate policies, procedures and practices for records management to ensure that its business need for evidence, accountability and information about its activities is met.

6.2 Policy

Organizations should define and document a policy for records management. The objective of the policy should be the creation and management of authentic, reliable and useable records, capable of supporting business functions and activities for as long as they are required. Organizations should ensure that the policy is communicated and implemented at all levels in the organization.

The policy should be adopted and endorsed at the highest decision-making level and promulgated throughout the organization. Responsibility for compliance should be assigned.

The policy should be derived from an analysis of business activities. It should define the areas where legislation, regulations, other standards and best practices have the greatest application in the creation of records connected to business activities. In doing so, organizations should take into account their organizational environment and economic considerations. Policies should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect current business needs.

6.3 Responsibilities

Records management responsibilities and authorities should be defined and assigned, and promulgated throughout the organization so that, where a specific need to create and capture records is identified, it should be clear who is responsible for taking the necessary action. These responsibilities should be assigned to all employees of the organization, including records managers, allied information professionals, executives, business unit managers, systems administrators and others who create records as part of their work, and should be reflected in job descriptions and similar statements. Specific leadership responsibility and accountability for records management should be assigned to a person with appropriate authority within the organization. Designations of the responsible individuals may be assigned by law.

Such responsibilities should include statements such as the following.

- a) Records management professionals are responsible for all aspects of records management, including the design, implementation and maintenance of records systems and their operations, and for training users on records management and records systems operations as they affect individual practices.