

Retention Schedule

The purpose of a retention schedule is to ensure that information that may be required is retained and that information that is no longer required is timely disposed of.

Routinely records should be retained and destroyed in line with this retention schedule unless

- i) there is a business reason to retain the record for a longer period.
- ii) the record has a long term interest value and therefore should be retained for future transfer to the National Archive (to become a public record) – see AGO long term interest criteria.

Records should not be destroyed earlier than the period shown on the retention schedule.

Category of file	Retain for (from date of last correspondence unless otherwise stated)
Legal	
Law Officers' advice Prerogative powers including Royal matters	15 years
Legislation Advisory and counsel files Northern Ireland files	5 years
Parliamentary	
Parliamentary, including parliamentary questions	5 years
Casework	
Consent files Sign manual files ULS files not referred or withdrawn Other ULS files	Length of sentence + 1 year, minimum 5 years. 2 years 2 years Length of sentence + 1 year or a minimum of 5 years

Vexatious litigant files where an order has been obtained	84 years from the date of the order
Vexatious litigant files where an order has been obtained and later removed or where no order has been obtained.	5 years after the removal of the order.
Other casework files	5 years
Policy	
Contribution to Government legislation and policy	5 years
Internal Policies	5 years after they have been superseded.
Correspondence	
Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests	3 years
Registered files that have been the subject of an FOI request	6 months after closure of the FOI file if this is later than the originally destruction date.
Ministerial Correspondence	3 years
Treat Official (TO) Correspondence	2 years
Complaints	10 years
Private and Press Office	
Day files	5 years
Diaries/Calenders	
Gifts and hospitality register	
Invitations	
Outgoing correspondence	
Private secretaries notebooks	
Visits and Speeches Files	
Press releases	7 years
Press reports digests	
Correspondence with the media	
Reports on media/public relations	
Correspondence, papers and reports relating to special events	
Administration	
Management of AGO including:	10 years
Projects accepted	6 years after contract end
Contracts, including tenders	1 year
Unsuccessful tenders and interview panel reports and notes	16 years after expiry of lease
Leases and associated documents, including significant correspondence with tenants	
Management boards & committees	5 years
Risk management	
Business continuity	
Security – including guest book and key register	

other place of deposit Files containing monthly destruction lists.	10 years
Information surveys, record audits and inspections Documentation relating to the retrieval and return of records from/to the National Archives	5 years 2 years

Long Term Interest Criteria

When closing files you should identify those that are likely to be of long term historic interest and complete a note explaining why the file has been kept and place it with the file.

These files may be transferred to The National Archives to eventually be made available to the public.

To identify such files file owners should use their judgement and knowledge of the file and may also like to consider files that contain any of the issues listed below.

- Novel points of law
- Unusual/novel casework
- Casework involving notable people
- Casework involving notable events
- Legal Precedents
- Information that shows the social opinions of the time
- The organisation introduces significant internal changes of structure/administration
- History of the office.