The University of Texas at Austin
Records and Information Management Services

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Digitized Master Records Acknowledgment

Departments may convert master records from paper to electronic format if federal, state, and university standards are followed and security requirements are implemented. This document is used for acknowledging departmental responsibilities when converting paper records to an electronic format. University retention requirements and disposition procedures apply to master records in all formats, including digitized records. For assistance, contact Records and Information Management Services at rims@austin.utexas.edu.

Master records must be individually retrievable and readable throughout their required retention periods, and a department must be able to convert or migrate records through successive technologies or retain the software and hardware required to read them.

Overview of Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Records
Departments must observe the following standards when converting paper master records to an electronic format.

Identifying Records for Retrieval
Each digitized record and the media on which it is stored must be identified, named, and organized in a way that allows the images to be retrieved and read for as long as the records are retained. Index information or metadata associated with the digitized record must also provide enough information to allow for its final disposition. If technologies are updated, changed, or become obsolete, this identifying information must be accessible for the purpose of managing the files.

- Identify the retention requirements in The University of Texas at Austin Records Retention Schedule (UTRRS) for records that will be retained as images. Associate the retention requirement with each image by naming structure, metadata, indexing in an open relational database, or other means. The department must be able to dispose of the digitized records when their retention requirements have been met and the records have no ongoing value.
- Whether using a proprietary or open source file format, the department must have or obtain the means to retrieve, read, and manage the files for as long as the records are retained.
- Plan for an annual review/assessment of technologies used to read, store, and retrieve images and if the technologies no longer have the ongoing capability to read and retrieve the images, implement one of the following strategies:
  - prepare to migrate or convert the files to new technologies
  - maintain the original software and hardware required to read, store, and retrieve the files for as long as they must be retained

Note: All requirements for retrieving records must be observed when records are maintained longer than the minimum retention period.

Quality Assurance
Quality assurance is the visual review of image and index information, and the following guidelines apply:
- **Each scanned image must be inspected visually by at least one person to ensure that the image is legible and completely and accurately captures all of the information contained in the original.**
- Verify that indexing information you create for finding the image has been entered correctly so that the image can be reliably retrieved.
- If using capture software rather than manually entering index information, the system must allow image and index information to be visually verified and approved for acceptance or release to the system.
- Do not destroy hard copy originals until you have verified that the scan is accurate and complete. This may require organizing and holding the scanned originals so that you can find any that require rescanning.

Resolution Settings
Scanning resolution must be adequate to ensure that no detail is lost. Be especially cautious of documents or pages that contain 6-point font or smaller.

File Formats

Electronic documents stored in an imaging system are to be in standard image file formats. TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) is the preferred standard. PDF (Portable Document Format), especially PDF/A, is also a preferred format for records that must be retained for 5 years or longer.

Guidelines for Documenting Digitizing Processes

Good documentation provides the means to ensure that departments have ongoing access to digitized records and continuity in management of records. If a department is legally required to produce records, documentation of digitizing procedures is part of demonstrating good faith records management practice to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the imaged records. It is best practice for departments to document the following:

- a step-by-step workflow for converting, indexing, filing, and destroying the hard copy records once the electronic images are verified as legible, complete, and accurate
- quality assurance reviews and verification workflow
- training or instructions provided for anyone authorized to perform imaging processes
- a list of the people authorized to perform departmental imaging
- periodic review of training materials
- annual or periodic review and testing of:
    - viability of storage and retrieval technologies
    - a sample of the images to ensure that they remain retrievable and readable

Retaining Digitized Records

Departments that retain master records within the department must take the following measures:

- Ensure that records containing confidential or controlled information are secured so that only authorized personnel can access them.

    Refer to the Information Security Office Securing Departmental Systems website at the following:
    - http://security.utexas.edu/admin/
    - https://security.utexas.edu/content/min-security-standards
    - https://security.utexas.edu/iso-policies/cloud-services/decision-matrix

- Departments must be able to suspend record destruction in the event of any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, public information request, administrative review, or other action involving the record. After all outstanding issues have been resolved, destruction can be reinstated for records that have met retention requirements.
- Use of a central server or university cloud service is recommended to prevent loss or destruction of master records.
- Refer to the Information Security Office Disaster Recovery guidance for support and information about developing a departmental disaster recovery plan for any vital records stored in the department.

Note: **Backup tapes cannot be used as sole storage for master records that have not met retention requirements unless the backup tapes are indexed for accessibility.**

If master records are digitized and retained by the department, the **Digitized Master Records Acknowledgment** document must be included with the departmental records management plan.

I have read and taken into consideration the above list of requirements and recommendations.

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Signature of Records Management Contact or Department Head   Date

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Printed Name

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