

**University of Toronto Archives and Records Management Services
University of Toronto File Plan**

Part A: Introduction

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PART B: FILE PLAN

1. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

100-499	Administration
500-599	Buildings and Properties
600-699	Equipment and Supplies
700-799	Finance
800-899	Human Resources

2. OPERATIONAL RECORDS

PART C: INDEX

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

If you have any questions about the University of Toronto File Plan, or would like to schedule a training session for your office, please contact the University of Toronto Archives and Records Management Services (UTARMS):

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1.0 GENERAL POLICY AND GOALS

1.1 Policy

The University of Toronto File Plan is the standard of record-keeping practices for all university records.

1.2 Goals

The File Plan has the following goals:

- to provide a systematic framework for the classification of all University records in their active, semi-active and inactive stages;
- to assist offices of the University in the orderly filing and retrieval of University records;
- to ensure that records are retained and destroyed or preserved in accordance with legal and fiscal requirements, archival value, and operational needs;
- to reduce the volume of records in University offices by providing guidelines on the retention and destruction of records;
- to distinguish between official University records and convenience copies or duplicates;
- to make it easier for administrative staff to move among offices by standardizing filing systems.

2.0 SCOPE

This edition of the File Plan provides a classification scheme and retention/disposition guidelines for administrative records only. This scheme and guidelines are provided in “PART A -- Administrative Records.”

“PART B -- Operational Records” is to be developed by individual offices. Given the varying operational functions of University offices, each office will need to develop their own file classification scheme for their own operational records. UTARMS will provide advice on the development of file plans for operational records, either through file plan training sessions, information provided on the UTARMS Web Site, or direct consultations. UTARMS also hopes to develop a generic classification model for University operational records some time in the future.

3.0 GENERAL FEATURES

3.1 Subject classification

The File Plan is a **subject classification system**.

Records are classified by **subject**. Each **main subject group** (e.g. Administration, Buildings and Properties, Equipment and Supplies, Finance, and Human Resources) divides records into primary subjects. Primary subjects are further divided into secondary subjects. Further divisions by tertiary subjects or file codes may be added if required.

3.2 Block numeric filing system

The File Plan incorporates a **block numeric filing system**.

Each main subject group has been allotted a **block of classification numbers**. Each primary, secondary, and tertiary subject is identified by a unique number.

3.3 Flexibility

The File Plan is **flexible**.

University offices can add tertiary subjects and create file codes. They can recommend changes to primary and secondaries to UTARMS. In some cases, secondaries can be combined or created. University offices may add additional cross-references to the index and body of the File Plan.

3.4 Index

The File Plan is **indexed**.

The **Index** makes it easier to locate appropriate subject headings in the File Plan.

3.5 Retention and disposition

The File Plan states **retention and disposition requirements**.

Retention periods and final disposition of records are indicated at the secondary level for most administrative records.

3.6 Designation of official record

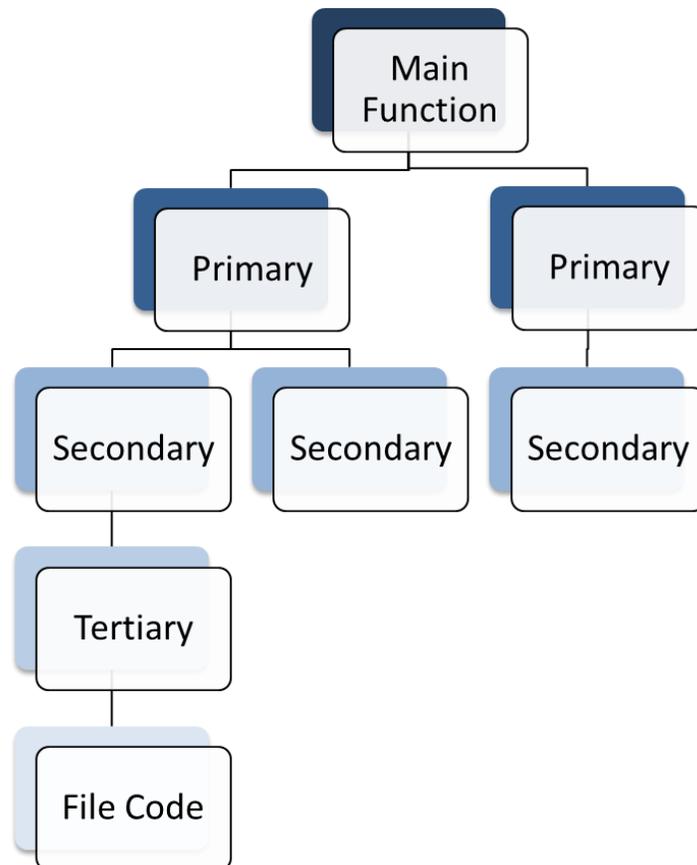
The File Plan designates the office(s) of primary responsibility for official records.

The coding of each secondary level classification indicates whether a central office (ie. the Controller's office or central Human Resources) or the decentralized offices have primary responsibility for the official record.

4.0 HIERARCHY

The File Plan arranges file subjects in a logical, hierarchical manner, from the general to the specific, i.e. from main subject groups to specific file codes.

Each main subject group is comprised of a number of primary subjects. These in turn are divided into secondary, and possibly tertiary subjects. At the most specific level, file codes identify individual file. The following diagram illustrates these relationships:



Each main subject group has been assigned a block of classification numbers. Each primary subject has been given a primary classification number that falls within the range specified for the related main subject group. Specific files have an additional secondary (and sometimes tertiary) file number and are arranged by a specific file code.

4.1 Main Subject Groups

The File Plan includes the following main subject groups, which have been assigned blocks of classification numbers:

Block Numbers	Main Subject Group
100-499	ADMINISTRATION
500-599	BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES
600-699	EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
700-799	FINANCE
800-899	HUMAN RESOURCES

4.2 Primary Subjects

All primary subjects are grouped into one of five main subject groups. For example, the primary relating to "Maintenance and Repairs" belongs to the "Equipment and Supplies" main subject group and the primary "Accounts Payable" belongs to the "Finance" main subject group.

For example, within the "Finance" main subject group, the following primary subjects have been identified:

Block Number	Primary Group
700	FINANCE - GENERAL
710	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE
720	ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE
730	BANKING / CASHIER'S
735	FEES (NON-STUDENT)
740	PETTY CASH
745	PERSONAL EXPENSES
750	PURCHASING
760	RESTRICTED FUNDS
765	STUDENTS
770	TAX RETURNS

Primary subjects are arranged in **alphabetical order** within each main subject group. This does not apply to the first assigned primary number of each subject group, which is reserved for "GENERAL" materials.

The File Plan provides a **definition** of all primary subjects, explaining the types of records to be filed under each primary heading. For example:

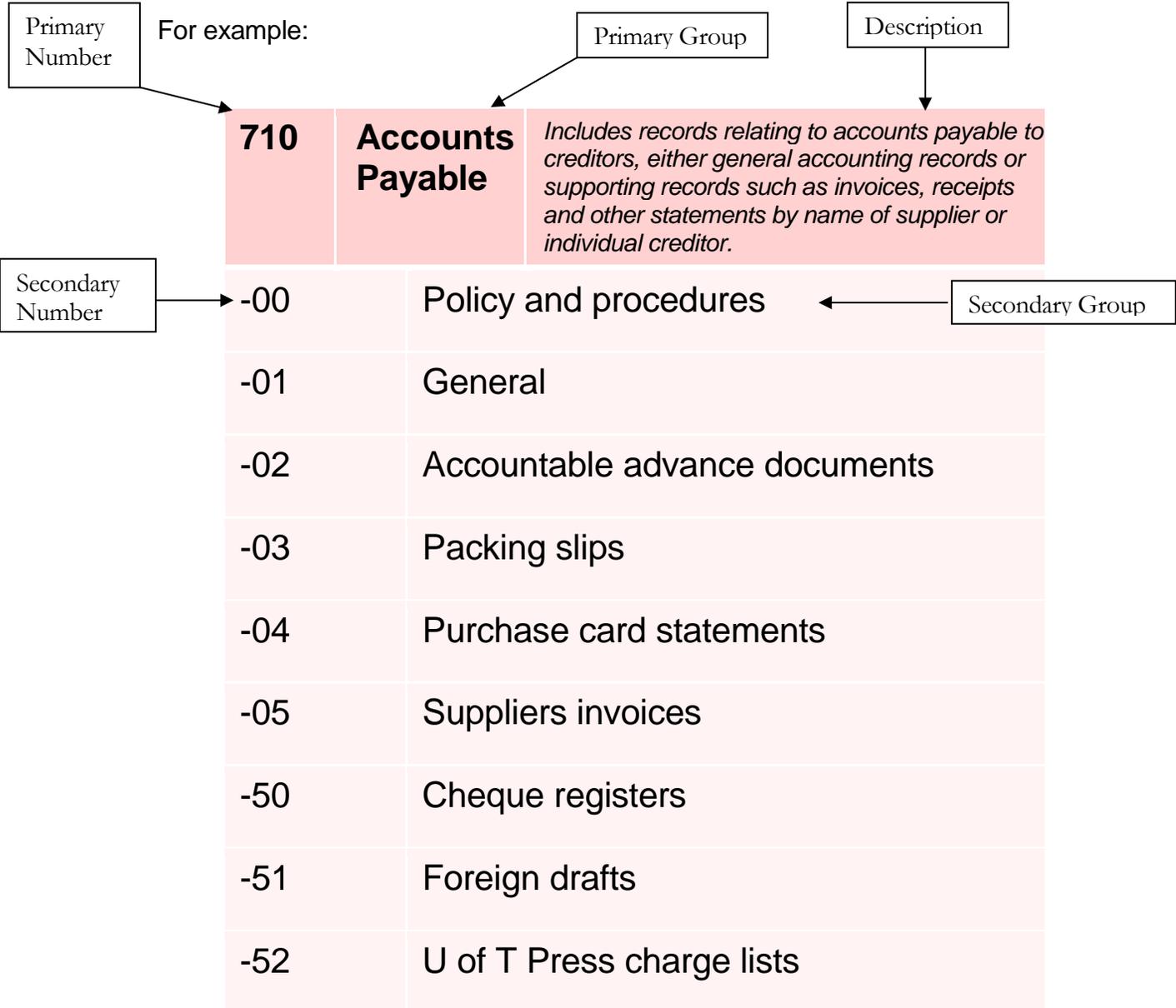
710 Accounts Payable

Includes records relating to accounts payable to creditors, either general accounting records or supporting records such as invoices, receipts and other statements by name of supplier or individual creditor.

4.3 Secondary Subjects

The primary subject constitutes only the first portion of the file classification. In order to classify a file more specifically, a secondary subject is always added.

The primary classification number is **always followed by a dash ("-") and a secondary number** which completes the file number and represents the specific file subject.



4.3.1 Designation of office of primary responsibility for the official record

For legal, fiscal or archival purposes, only one set of University records is required. This set is considered to be the official records of the University. Other University offices may choose to keep additional copies of University records for operational purposes or convenience, but these records do not need to be maintained in accordance with the File Plan. Rather, unofficial records can be destroyed once they are no longer needed by the office holding them. Distinguishing between official and unofficial university records is important because it ensures that only one set of official records is being managed and maintained as opposed to several sets.

To distinguish between official university records and duplicate copies or sets of copies, the File Plan designates which office(s) has primary responsibility for official university records at the secondary subject level.

For secondary subjects where the **official record resides with the decentralized offices** (i.e. not the central offices such as the Office of the Controller or Central Human Resources) secondary numbers starting at "-00", "-01", "02", "-03", "-04", etc. until "-49" are used. This range of secondary subject numbers is used regardless of where the records are held (ie. by central or decentralized offices). When records have secondary subject codes that falls in the -00 to -49 range, only the decentralized offices hold the official record for that secondary subject group. Consequently, the decentralized offices must maintain these records in accordance with the retention and disposition schedule. Similarly, when records have secondary subject codes in the -00 to -49 range, it is understood that the centralized offices hold only convenience copies which they can destroy when they choose.

For secondary subjects where the **official record resides with the centralized offices** secondary numbers starting at "-50", "-51", "-52", etc. until "-99" are used. This range of secondary subject numbers is used regardless of where the records are held, (ie. by central or decentralized offices). When records have secondary subject codes in the -50 to -99 range, only the centralized offices hold the official record for that secondary subject group. Consequently, the central offices must maintain these records in accordance with the retention and disposition schedule. Similarly, when records have secondary subject codes that fall into the -50 to -99 range, it is understood that the decentralized offices hold only convenience copies which they can destroy when they choose.

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For example:

710	Accounts Payable	<i>Includes records relating to accounts payable to creditors, either general accounting records or supporting records such as invoices, receipts and other statements by name of supplier or individual creditor.</i>
-00	Policy and procedures	Secondary "policy" and "general" numbers and subjects
-01	General	
-02	Accountable advance documents	Secondary numbers and subjects where the official record is held by centralized offices
-03	Packing slips	
-04	Purchase card statements	
-05	Suppliers invoices	
-50	Cheque registers	
-51	Foreign drafts	Secondary numbers and subjects where the official record is held by centralized offices
-52	U of T Press charge lists	

It is important to note that for the Administration, Buildings & Properties, and Equipment & Supplies main subject groups, **all** of the official records reside with the decentralized offices. Therefore, none of the secondaries in these three main subject groups will be coded in the -50 to -99 range.

4.3.2 Global secondary subjects

Some secondaries apply to all primaries or to all primaries within a main subject group. These secondaries are called “global secondaries” or, simply, “globals.”

Two globals have been developed which apply to all primaries in the University File Plan. They are defined as follows:

Policy and procedures: records associated with a specific primary that relate to policy and procedures;

General: records associated with a specific primary that are of a general nature or of too low a volume to justify the creation of a separate secondary.

The global secondary Policy and Procedures is always coded “-00” and the global secondary General is always coded “-01”. Even when no actual policy or general file exists within a given primary subject, the numbers “-00” or “-01” are never used for other purposes.

Other global secondaries have been defined for the Administration, Buildings & Properties, and Equipment & Supplies main subject groups. They are defined as follows:

Subject files: records associated with a specific primary that relate to particular subjects and are arranged according to general information content. Subject files are usually third-party reference materials;

Case files: records associated with a specific primary that relate to a particular action, event, person, product, unit, etc. Case files are not typically third-party reference materials but are materials generated or received by the office in the course of performing its administrative duties;

Committees: records associated with a specific primary that are generated or received by committees, councils, etc.

Reports and statistics: records associated with a specific primary that consist of reports and statistics.

The global secondary Subject files is always coded “-02”, the global secondary Case files is always coded “-03”, the global secondary Committees is always coded “-04”, and the Reports and Statistics global secondary is always coded “-05”.

These four global secondaries (Subject files, Case files, Committees, and Reports and Statistics) should **not** be applied to the Finance or Human Resources main subject groups of the File Plan.

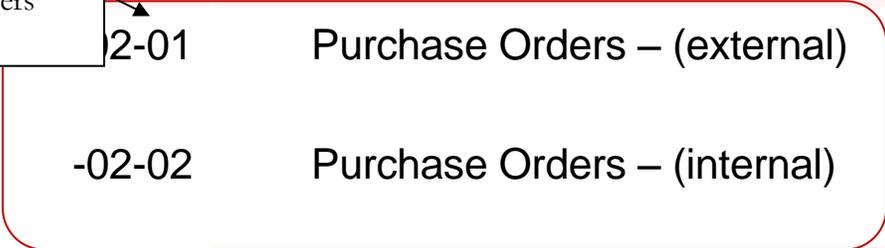
4.4 Tertiary Subjects

Tertiary file subjects and tertiary numbers can be added to provide additional detail by dividing secondary subjects into sub-subjects.

For example:

750	Purchasing	<i>Consists of records relating to the acquisition of goods and services, including general records and supporting documentation and records pertaining to duties and taxes related to the acquisition of goods and services.</i>
-00	Policy and procedures	
-01	General	
-02	Purchase Orders	
	2-01	Purchase Orders – (external)
	-02-02	Purchase Orders – (internal)
-50	Brokerage and traffic invoices	
-51	Distribution of charges	
-52	Tenders	

Tertiary numbers and subjects



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Tertiaries are most frequently used with global secondaries.

For example:

180	External Educational Relations	Records documenting relations between the University and other educational institutions. For records relating to internal educational relations, see 260 Internal University Relations.
-00	Policies and Procedures	
-01	General	
-02	Subject files	
-03	Case files	
-03-01	McGill University	
-03-02	Ryerson University	
-03-03	University of Alberta	
-03-04	University of British Columbia	

Tertiary numbers and subjects

4.5 File Codes

File codes are symbols or numbers that represent a particular location, time period, organization, etc., and that are added to the subject numbers to facilitate the classification, filing or retrieving of records. They are **placed at the end of the complete subject classification number after a backslash ("/").**

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For example:

A)

710	Accounts Payable	<i>Includes records relating to accounts payable to creditors, either general accounting records or supporting records such as invoices, receipts and other statements by name of supplier or individual creditor.</i>
-00	Policy and procedures	
-01	General	
-02	Accountable advance documents	
-03	Packing slips	
-04	Purchase card statements	
-05	Suppliers invoices	
50	Cheque registers	
-51	Foreign drafts	
-51/2014	Foreign drafts (2014)	
-51/2015	Foreign drafts (2015)	

File codes



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B)

820	Employees	<i>Includes records relating to individuals in all employee categories, such as signed letters of offer, organizational assignment information, personal information (home address, citizenship/VISA, education, resumes, etc.), leave requests, performance appraisals, etc., not shown elsewhere in this block.</i>
-00	Policy and procedures	
-01	General	
-02	Faculty/Librarians	
-02/A-M	Faculty surnames A to M	
-02/N-Z	Faculty surnames N to Z	
-03	Administrative Staff	
-04	Unionized Employees	
-05	Teaching Assistants	
-06	Casual	

File codes

File codes

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C)

	500	Building and Properties – General	<i>Records relating to the management, operation and maintenance of University buildings and properties not shown elsewhere in this block</i>
File codes	-00	Policy and procedures	
	-01	General	
	-01/UTSG	General files - St. George Campus	
	-01/UTM	General files - Mississauga Campus	
	-01/UTSC	General files - Scarborough Campus	

The File Plan distributed by UTARMS contains no file codes. University offices are free to design file codes according to their own operational needs and requirements.

Offices are encouraged to consider carefully the impact of filing practices (e.g. the assignment of file codes) on ease of retrieval and separability for final disposition.

5.0 INDEX

Part C. of the File Plan is an alphabetical **Index** that includes all primary and some secondary subjects. It also contains cross-references to related primary subjects.

Users of the File Plan are encouraged to amend the index as needed to include terms of their own choice and additional cross-references.

6.0 RETENTION AND DISPOSITION INFORMATION

The File Plan includes retention and disposition requirements. These have been developed and approved by the University Archivist, the Chair of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Archives and Records Management (PACARM) and the appropriate Divisional authority. The File Plan indicates the active and semi-active retention periods, and the final disposition of the records identified.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Finance and Human Resources

The retention periods identified in the Finance and Human Resources sections of the File Plan are the **minimum, legally-prescribed** time periods during which records must be retained.

Records in the Finance and Human Resources sections of the File Plan are of legal and fiscal value and, consequently, the retention of these records is required by law. It is a violation of applicable laws to destroy records prior to the established date.

Equally important is the fact that it could be detrimental to the interests of the University to keep records longer than legally required.

For these reasons, University offices are encouraged to apply the retention and disposition information in the File Plan accurately and consistently.

Administration, Buildings and Properties, and Equipment and Supplies

The retention periods for the Administration, Buildings and Properties, and Equipment and Supplies sections of the File Plan are based on the operational needs of offices. These records typically are not of fiscal or legal value.

There may be cases where an office would prefer to dispose of these records earlier or retain them longer. Often these changes can be accommodated, given that the records are not of fiscal or legal value. Offices should contact UTARMS with their proposed changes so that a formal retention schedule which incorporates these changes can be developed. Failure to formalize any changes to the established retention schedule can be seen as suspicious actions in a legal proceeding.

6.1 Determining retention periods and final dispositions

Retention periods and final disposition of each file are listed in three columns on the right side of each page of the File Plan:

File Code	Record Series	Description	Active	Semi Active	Final Disposition
100	Administration – General	<i>Records relating generally to administration not shown elsewhere in this block.</i>			
-00	Policies and Procedures	records associated with general administration that relate to policy and procedures;	C	2	D
-01	General	records associated with administration that are of a general nature or of too low a volume to justify the creation of separate secondary;	C	2	D
-02	Subject files	records associated with administration that relate to particular subjects and are arranged according to general information content.	C	2	D

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The File Plan indicates the active and semi-active retention periods and final disposition of each file, i.e. for each secondary or tertiary file subject.

For example:

File Code	Record Series	Description	Active	Semi Active	Final Disposition
750	Purchasing	Consists of records relating to the acquisition of goods and services, including general records and supporting documentation and records pertaining to duties and taxes related to the acquisition of goods and services.			
-00	Policy and procedures		S		A
-01	General		S		A
-02	Purchase orders				
-01	Purchase orders – (external)	Purchases of goods and services from external vendor	C	1	D
-02	Purchase orders – (internal)	E.g. University Stores and Connaught Medical Research	C	1	D
-50	Brokerage and traffic invoices		C	6	D

The following formula assists in determining the total retention period of a file:

active + semi-active = total retention

For instance, due to the Income Tax Act, many financial source records have a retention period that is listed as follows: C, 6, D

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This means that the records must be retained for a period of "C + 6", or six years after the current year (C), after which they must be destroyed (D).

The following is a complete list of abbreviations that must be understood in order to interpret the File Plan.

List of Abbreviations:

- S = until superseded or obsolete**
- C = current year plus ... years**
- T = end of term (e.g. of contract) plus ... years**
- A = for archival selection**
- D = destroy**

Any retention periods and final dispositions not listed in the body of the File Plan are as follows:

100	Administration – General	Records relating generally to administration not shown elsewhere in this block.			
-00	Policies and Procedures		C	2	D
500	Building and Properties – General	Records relating to the management, operation and maintenance of University buildings and properties not shown elsewhere in this block.			
-00	Policies and Procedures		C	2	D
600	Equipment and Supplies – General	Records relating to the overall administration of equipment and supplies not shown elsewhere in this block.			
-00	Policies and Procedures		C	2	D

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In other words, the retention and disposition for all records in the Administration, Buildings and Properties, and Equipment and Supplies main subject groups is: active until superseded then inactive for two years, or current year plus 2 years, and then destroyed -- **unless stated otherwise in the body of the File Plan.**

6.2 Storage and disposal of semi-active and inactive records

Depending on space considerations and operational requirements, University offices can determine how long to keep records in their offices, and when/whether to send semi-active records to off-site storage.

The physical location of records does not affect the retention periods and final dispositions indicated in the File Plan. These must be respected regardless of where the records are kept.

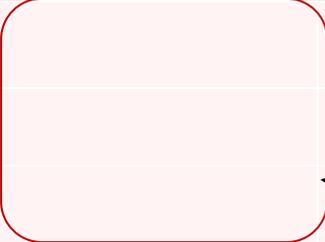
Offices wishing to use the University's preferred vendor for off-site storage (Pierce Leahy) can continue to do so in accordance with the procedures and conditions stipulated in section 5.3 and appendix 'C' of the Records Management Manual.

For information on procedures for disposal of inactive records, and the use of the University's preferred vendor for records destruction (Shred-It), see section 6 and appendix 'D' of the Records Management Manual.

7.0 ADDING CUSTOM DESCRIPTIVE ELEMENTS

7.1 Policy

The File Plan has been generated within a table-format that allows for offices to add custom elements. Space has been provided within each primary to allow for further description of secondaries.

File Code	Record Series	Description	Active	Semi Active	Final Disposition
750	Purchasing	Consists of records relating to the acquisition of goods and services, including general records and supporting documentation and records pertaining to duties and taxes related to the acquisition of goods and services.			
-00	Policy and procedures		S		A
-01	General		S		A
-02	Purchase orders				

Space for further description

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7.2 Other elements

Two other elements are provided within the table of the File Plan. “**R**” represents a space for users to indicate Responsibility –either the unit with the office who is in charge of keeping the record, or even an individual who is in charge of storing a record. “**F**” stands for format, meaning the official record should exist in either electronic or paper format. All other copies should be considered convenience copies only and can be destroyed when no longer needed. Please note, retention rules are the same whether the official copy is electronic or paper.

File Code	Record Series	Description	Active	Semi Active	Final Disposition	R	F	
100	Administration – General	<i>Records relating generally to administration not shown elsewhere in this block.</i>						
-00	Policies and Procedures		C	2	D			
-01	General		C	2	D			

Responsibility

Format

8.0 MODIFYING THE FILE PLAN

8.1 Policy

For reasons of consistency and accuracy, it is essential that revisions to the File Plan be co-ordinated and distributed centrally by UTARMS.

8.2 General Procedures

Central offices may:

1. Revise retention and disposition information relating to records as detailed in Finance 700-799 and Human Resources 800-899 in consultation with UTARMS
2. Revise primary and secondary subjects relating to records as detailed in Finance 700-799 and Human Resources 800-899 in consultation with the UTARMS.

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Decentralized offices may:

1. Add tertiary subjects (without changing existing ones), create all file codes, add terms to the index, and add additional cross-references;
2. Combine secondaries within a primary where retention and disposition for the secondaries is the same;
3. Develop file plans for **operational records** (Part B, Section 2 of File Plan)

8.3 Summary of Decentralized Offices' Responsibilities

Decentralized offices:

1. May develop classification schemes for their **operational records** (Part B, Section 2 of File Plan) including the establishment of primary, secondary and tertiary subjects, and file codes to reflect their unique filing requirements.
2. May recommend revisions to the University File Plan by contacting UTARMS
3. Will contact UTARMS to arrange for training.

8.4 Summary of UTARMS' Responsibilities

UTARMS:

1. Maintains, edits and revises the File Plan in consultation with University offices.
2. Presents all recommended revisions to the File Plan's retention and disposition periods to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Archives and Records Management for approval.
3. Produces and distributes copies of all revisions to File Plan subscribers.
4. Conducts training sessions on the adoption and use of the File Plan by university offices.

8.5 Summary of Central Offices' Responsibilities

The Office of the Controller:

1. Informs UTARMS of any changes to financial record-keeping that will affect the File Plan. This includes the creation or deletion of primary or secondary subjects relating to financial records, changes to retention or disposition, and record holder status
2. Arranges for training

The Human Resources Office

1. Informs UTARMS of any changes to the **Human Resources Information System** including the addition or deletion of documents and changes to retention, disposal or record holder status that will affect the Human Resources section of the File Plan.
2. Arranges for training

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

9.1 Deciding Whether to Implement the File Plan

Adoption of the University File Plan is not mandatory. However, the retention periods and final dispositions of the records in the Finance and Human Resources main subject groups **are mandatory**. Offices can choose to develop their own file plans but UTARMS will not be able to provide support to individual office file plans for administrative records.

9.2 Implementation of the File Plan

Before implementing the University File Plan, it is essential to have the support of senior management and other staff. The successful implementation and maintenance of a file plan requires the support and co-operation of everyone in the office.

Once an office agrees as a group to implement the File Plan, an implementation date must be selected. From this "day-forward" date the University File Plan will be utilized. Records managed by the old file classification system (where one exists) should not be converted to the University File Plan. Rather, the old system should be maintained concurrently with the new File Plan until the records in the old system can be either destroyed, sent to offsite storage or to the University Archives.

Procedures should also be developed to ensure that there is centralized control of the File Plan. Only designated people should be authorized to create new files, create new tertiaries, amend the index, etc.

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Some resources and time will need to be dedicated to implementing the University File Plan. Labels will need to be printed and new folders will need to be set-up. The File Plan itself should be downloaded from the Internet and saved as a word-processing document. This word-processing document can then be annotated as needed and amended where appropriate. Records in the old filing system should also be examined to determine what can be weeded, stored elsewhere, forwarded to the University Archives or destroyed. This should create enough physical space to accommodate the new files. Time and resources dedicated to these tasks now will save greater amounts of time and resources in the future.

Each office should also consider how they will manage their operational records once the File Plan is in place. Offices may need to develop a file plan that will apply to records generated via their primary functions. UTARMS will provide guidance to offices contemplating this task.

9.3 File Names

One of the many benefits of the University File Plan is that it provides a uniform structure for naming files and documents. When files and documents (paper or electronic) are shared, uniform naming makes it easier to identify and retrieve required information.

The University File Plan uses block numeric numbers to compose file and document names. The primary, secondary and, when applicable, tertiary numbers are combined to describe a particular file or document. For example, a file containing 1998 correspondence with the University of British Columbia could be named:

180-03-02/1998

180 is the code for External Educational Relations, -03 is the code for Case files, -02 may be the code for the University of British Columbia and the date of the file is 1998.

This structure for naming files can be applied to both paper and electronic records.