



RECORD CLASSIFICATION AND TAXONOMY

DEFINITIONS

Classification:

The organization of materials into categories according to a scheme that identifies, distinguishes, and relates the categories.

Taxonomy:

A taxonomy is a hierarchical structure of concepts that is used to organize information. It is a controlled vocabulary of preferred terms that helps standardize the language that we use to describe content. (AIIM)

Metadata:

Is commonly defined as "data about data." Metadata is used to locate or manage information resources by abstracting or classifying resources or by capturing information not inherent in the resource. (SAA)

Content Management:

Techniques to set policies and supervise the creation, organization, access, and use of large quantities of information, especially in different formats and applications throughout an organization. (SAA)

*The 8 Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles®

1. **Accountability**
2. **Transparency**
3. **Integrity**
4. **Protection**
5. **Compliance**
6. **Availability**
7. **Retention**
8. **Disposition**

Best Practices for Management of University Records

OVERVIEW: This guide is to assist in the review and further development of your department’s organization and classification of both paper and electronic records. Applying classification and taxonomy assists in maintaining records accessibility and integrity. By implementing a department/unit wide classification and taxonomy system improves the overall business culture. Record classification and taxonomy should be included in a departments [File Plan](#).

GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Improve productivity making it quicker to access and retrieve records.
- ✓ Prevent mistakes and wrong filing.
- ✓ Provide context and consistency.
- ✓ Eliminate similar naming.
- ✓ Strategies between multiple repositories.
- ✓ Assist in the disposition process.

METHODS:

- Take into account your office structure and content management platform. Are you using a content or records management system?
 - This includes; SharePoint, UW-Box, a homegrown or outside vendor database.
- Where are records being stored, in a shared drive or file cabinets or other collaborative space?
- You may already have an established hierarchy for your paper records. This could include:
 - By subject
 - Record type
 - By Name or alphabetical
 - Numerically
 - Chronologically
 - By records series

Electronic and paper records should have similar naming conventions, however further classification or addition of metadata to electronic records will be needed. This will depend on your content management system.

Naming does not need to be familiar, but they should be simple, consistently applied and reinforced, and makes sense in the context of the problem you are trying to solve. Avoid using terms such as “Miscellaneous”, “General”, “Historical” or “Other”.

Job Aid

STEPS:

- 1) Gather Users
 - Having user input will better help the implementation and continued use of the system.
- 2) Complete and assessment
 - Identify how your department uses records and information. What is created, how it's used, based on the functions and processes of your office? A file plan will have all this information.
- 3) Develop or expand an existing schema
 - Using the information gathered begin to lay out how you will classify and name records or record types.
- 4) Develop guidelines
 - Write your strategy out. These will highlight the organization, format, and naming specifications for files. This document can assist in training new users or staff.
- 5) Implement
 - Begin renaming files according to the schema you developed.
- 6) User Satisfaction and training.
 - Be sure all users understand and are following naming conventions.

Important Reminders:

- Use underscore (_) or dashes (--) to separate words in place of a space.
- BE CONSISTENT when naming files.
- Do not use special characters, \<>"^': *?



SOURCES: AIIM, *Taxonomy & Search* (2013)

Click [here](#) for more assistance in creating a file plan and cleaning up shared drives.