



# Section 1 - Introduction and how to use the UN Recordkeeping Toolkit

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ARMS pages on the Intranet: <http://iseek.un.org/m210.asp?dept=579>

ARMS pages on Internet: <http://www.un.org/depts/archives>

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## Introduction

Records and information are important assets of the UN, supporting its work, underpinning and documenting decision-making, and providing evidence and accountability. Without access to records the organisation would be unable to function. Effective recordkeeping meets the dual challenge of maintaining and accessing records that are necessary for operations, and disposing of records and duplicates that are not needed any more. All UN staff has a role to play in recordkeeping and this Toolkit has been developed to support you in carrying out your recordkeeping responsibilities.

This Toolkit supports recordkeeping at all levels in all areas of peacekeeping operations. It provides clear instructions and resources to manage the recordkeeping function at all stages of mission operations. It aims to make sure that the policies and principles of records management are clear to all staff and



that there is a transparent and comprehensive set of policies, procedures and guidance that staff can and should follow to achieve effective records management at a consistent standard across all peacekeeping operations.

By using this Toolkit, following the records management procedures, and meeting the standards, you and your team will be practising best practice records management. The benefits outlined above will be ensured and the risks of not having authentic and reliable records for as long as required by the UN itself and its stakeholders will be reduced to an acceptable level.



## What is a Recordkeeping Toolkit?

A recordkeeping toolkit is a set of tools to support records management. This toolkit is a manual that provides links to relevant resources, forms, checklists, documents and useful information and explanation that you can use in several ways to help you manage your records better. The main “tools” used in this toolkit are:

### The Main Things to Remember about...

Appears at the beginning of a section to give you a simple set of the most important issues to understand and master for that area of records management

### Glossary term

Words **highlighted like this** in the text are defined at the end of each section and appear in the glossary in the appendices

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Frequently asked question: explain a concept, why we do records management tasks, compares different things etc.

### Checklist

A list of actions that need to be done to complete a records management task or list of items needed to support a task

### Information Box

Gives additional information in the form of a handy reference list or text

### Document

Text **highlighted like this** points to an ARMS or UN document which should be referred to or used in conjunction with procedures for the task under discussion

### Form

Points to a form that should be used in conjunction with procedures for the task under discussion

### Table

Gives information in a tabulated format for ease of reference and understanding

### Annexes

Text **highlighted like this** points to a Toolkit annex containing, a document, form or sample.



Each Toolkit section consists of:

A front page with a:

- high-level list of contents
- “Main things to Remember” list for the topic covered

An introduction

Sub-sections as appropriate to the subject matter

At the end:

- Checklists referred to in the text
- Tables, if they are particularly complex or detailed
- A list of other Toolkit sections which are closely related to topic covered
- Documents and forms relating to the section
- The glossary for highlighted words
- FAQs relevant to the section

### Information Box

We strongly recommend that you use this Toolkit in conjunction with other records and archives management resources that you can find on the [ARMS website \(http://archives.un.org/unarms\)](http://archives.un.org/unarms). At our site you can test your knowledge with an e-learning programme in records management.

Be sure to contact ARMS if you need help in using the Toolkit or would like to give us feedback.



## Why Is Records Management Important?

The main aim of records management is to document the UN's business, to ensure that there are readily accessible, adequate records to provide evidence of activities and decisions for as long as required, and that redundant records are kept no longer than necessary. The benefits of effective records management are:

- Decision-making and operations are properly supported with appropriate and necessary records
- Records are created and managed in compliance with standards, best practice and stakeholder expectations
- The records provide evidence of policy, decision making and actions/transactions thus demonstrating the UN's accountability and transparency
- Staff time is saved because filing systems are fit for purpose and easy to use
- Staff time is saved in retrieving records efficiently when they are needed again
- Record storage and equipment is cheaper and more efficient because redundant records can be removed from filing and server space
- Duplicates and old versions are identified and destroyed as soon as possible, saving time and space
- Records which the UN formally and consistently judges to be no longer required are securely destroyed and the details documented
- Vital records are identified, protected and accessible in support of business continuity and disaster recovery efforts
- The small volume of records with value as archives are identified and managed appropriately.

## Who is the Toolkit for and How to Use it?

The Toolkit has been written primarily for staff in UN peacekeeping and political field missions. However, it has been written so that it can easily be adapted to other UN offices, such as those in the Secretariat, other duty stations or offices away from HQ.

Each UN staff member is a stakeholder in improving recordkeeping in the UN since we all create, use, and manage records. However specialized records management staff should develop in-depth knowledge of all areas of recordkeeping, whereas key partners such as ICT staff will need to focus on specialized areas. To help you identify the parts of the Toolkit you should focus on, please refer to the table below.



## Which Parts of the Toolkit Should I Focus On?

Toolkit Section	UN staff member	Head of Mission or DMS/CMS	Information Management Officer	Information Management Assistant	ICT staff
Recordkeeping in the UN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Records creation and capture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Managing sensitive information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Classification plans	✓		✓	✓	✓
Retention schedules	✓		✓	✓	✓
Managing email	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Records in special formats	✓		✓	✓	✓
Setting up a records storage facility		✓	✓	✓	

### Recordkeeping Toolkit for Peacekeeping Operations



Toolkit Section	UN staff member	Head of Mission or DMS/CMS	Information Management Officer	Information Management Assistant	ICT staff
Managing a records storage facility			✓	✓	
Emergency preparedness for a records storage facility		✓	✓	✓	
Risk and vital records		✓	✓	✓	✓
Transferring records to HQ ARMS	✓		✓	✓	
Access to and use of UN records and archives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destroying records	✓		✓	✓	✓
Reviewing recordkeeping systems		✓	✓		