

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 1.3, Budgeting Records

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the purpose of GRS 1.3?

The purpose of this schedule is to provide disposition authority for records agencies create and receive in the process of formulating and submitting budget requests, including estimates of costs and justification for their necessity. This schedule also covers records about monitoring the expenditure of funds after they have been appropriated.

2. Whom do I contact for further information about this schedule?

Please contact NARA's General Records Schedules Team at GRS_Team@nara.gov with questions about this schedule.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

3. What other General Records Schedules relate to GRS 1.3?

GRS 1.3 concerns the process of requesting a budget and broadly monitoring its execution. GRS 1.1, Financial Management and Reporting Records, item 010, covers detailed records of how an agency spends appropriated and non-appropriated funds (expenditure accounting records) and detailed expenditure information (accountable officers' records).

4. Why do you partially supersede old GRS 5, item 2 (1-year retention period) by three different items (010, 040, and 041) in this schedule, with retention periods of 6 years and 2 years? Why the additional years?

The retention instruction of GRS 5, item 2, was "Destroy 1 year after the close of the fiscal year covered by the budget." Since the budget cycle is 5 years, these records were really retained for 6 years. GRS 1.3 divides the records covered under this superseded item into two parts: the primary input into an agency's budget submission (item 010) and feeder-type material retained for shorter time (items 040 and 041).

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 010

5. The old GRS stated that agencies must schedule these records individually. Why do you now include them in the GRS?

In response to the requirement that agencies submit individual schedules, over the past 40 years some 33 agencies have scheduled their own budget formulation, estimate, justification, and submission records as permanent. Yet not even all those agencies that identified the records as permanent have transferred them to NARA. NARA realized that these records might prove more valuable for future researchers if available for all Government agencies instead of just certain ones. NARA also realized that the most important records—those most likely to be of future value—are collected in one place: the

Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB schedule DAA-0051-2015-0001, authorizing permanent transfer to NARA of these Government-wide records from a single source, was signed by the Archivist on August 3, 2017. As a result, records at all other agencies (except those mentioned in question 9) can be scheduled as temporary under item 010 and agencies no longer need to individually schedule them starting with FY 2017 records.

6. Why does this item cover records only fiscal year 2017 and forward? Why isn't it retroactive?

As indicated in question 5, NARA determined that if budget estimates and submissions from nearly all agencies could be accessioned as permanent records from a single source—OMB—then those same records could be considered disposable at other agencies. OMB was not able to confirm that it held complete sets of prior fiscal year budget submissions for the entire Federal Government. Since OMB can guarantee its ability to transfer complete records to NARA starting only with FY 2017, this item can cover records only from FY 2017 forward, as well.

7. My agency already scheduled its budget formulation, estimate, justification, and submission records independently. Does this schedule supersede my agency's schedule?

Yes and no. This schedule supersedes your agency schedule for records FY 2017 and forward, but your schedule should still be used for records FY 2016 and prior.

8. My agency has not scheduled these records independently. Can this GRS just cover my records for prior years as well?

No. If your agency never scheduled these records, FY 2016 and prior records remain unscheduled.

9. Why do you exclude some agencies from using this item?

A very few agencies have authority to bypass OMB and submit their budget requests directly to Congress. Since NARA cannot accession these agencies' budget submissions from OMB, such agencies are excluded from using this item. Records officers should consult internally with their general counsel and chief financial officer to determine if their agency falls into this category under OMB Circular A-11 or A-19.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 020

10. Since this item has the same retention period as item 010, why didn't you merge the two items?

The items are separate because their associated work processes are separate. In particular, they do not happen concurrently, but rather one after the other. Records under item 010 are created in the process of putting a draft budget together and submitting it to OMB. Records under item 020 are created over the course of expending appropriations.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 030 AND 031

11. The retention difference between these two items is negligible. Why not merge them and keep everything for five years?

Item 031 material, retained for three years, is largely composed of quarterly reports. Not only are they voluminous, but they build on one another, compiling data year-to-date. The amount of material that accumulates in 031 is three times that found in 030, and the smaller volume in 030 incorporates the most important information found in the larger set of records. Both items' retention statements include flexibility to retain longer if records are required for business use, so agencies desiring to maintain all reports as a single unit can do so. Agencies seeking a more robust disposal of no-longer-necessary and duplicative records will find item 031 useful.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 040 AND 041

12. Why are these items separate? Their retention periods are almost identical.

All records in both items are created in local offices, divisions, or programs within an agency. They are separate items because the records' owners—formally established budget offices (040) and other offices (041)—use them for different business purposes. A budget office compiles records from all local offices to formulate the budget request for an entire agency; local offices manage only records relating to the office's own financial footprint. The items' retention period are not precisely identical. Item 040 retains records for two years after a budget is approved. Item 041 records can be destroyed when two years old, regardless of when the budget is approved.