

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 2.1, Employee Acquisition Records

July 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the purpose of GRS 2.1?

This schedule provides disposition authority for records agencies create and receive in the course of bringing employees into the Federal workforce.

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

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

GENERAL QUESTIONS

3. Does GRS 2.1 supersede the disposition instructions in the "Delegated Examining Operations Handbook: A Guide for Federal Agency Examining Offices (May 2007), Appendix C," published by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)?

Yes. "Delegated Examining Operations Handbook: A Guide for Federal Agency Examining Offices" covers in detail how agencies with authority to hire employees, as delegated from the Office of Personnel Management, are to carry out this function. Appendix C is the schedule for records created in that process. Appendix C derives from GRS 1, items 33a through 33t. All but two items in GRS 1 are superseded (and the other two are rescinded) by new GRS 2.1. As these GRS 1 items are now superseded by GRS 2.1, GRS 2.1 supersedes Appendix C. See crosswalk for details.

4. Why did you rescind old GRS 1, item 7a1?

GRS 1, item 7a1, Position Classification Standards Files, are maintained *as records* by one agency only: the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Records held by a single agency are not appropriately included in the GRS. In every other agency, these standards are non-record technical reference material and need no schedule to authorize disposition.

5. Why did you rescind old GRS 1, item 7a2b?

GRS 1, item 7a2b, "Review file" for position classification standards, no longer exists in the electronic milieu. Even in a paper world, it is highly unlikely that anyone separates out a file of papers for "review" that are not duplicates of the record copies in the case file.

6. Why did you rescind old GRS 1, items 7c1 and 7c2?

Agencies no longer create GRS 1, items 7c1 and 7c2, Position Classification Survey Files.

7. Why did you rescind old GRS 1, item 11?

GRS 1, item 11, covered “position identification strip” forms, which no longer exist. The form was made obsolete in 1994.

8. Why did you rescind old GRS 1, items 33d and 33h?

GRS 1, item 33d, Test Material Stock Control, covered material only at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This item is therefore inappropriate for the GRS. GRS 1, item 33h, Letters to Applicants Denying Transfer of Eligibility, covered OPM Form 4896, which is no longer in use. In fact, the entire work process it concerned is defunct because the Government no longer transfers eligibility from one register to another.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 010

9. Why doesn't this item cover OPM records?

OPM, as part of its mission, prepares the majority of classification standards applicable to positions in individual agencies, multiple agencies, and the entire Federal Government. These case files are permanent (NC1-146-84-1, item 1a). Item 010 covers the corresponding case file at an agency seeking to create a new classification standard specific to itself, a few agencies, or in rare cases, the entire Government. These are administrative files at all agencies other than OPM and it is therefore appropriate to include them in the GRS. The corresponding OPM files are, however, unique to OPM's mission. OPM must therefore must schedule them on an agency-specific schedule.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 021

10. Why doesn't this item have a disposition authority?

This item is not an independent disposition authority because the records are filed in places already covered by other disposition authorities, such as that covering the employee's official personnel file. Users must go to those other authorities to learn when to destroy records.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 022

11. This item includes “other copies” of records described in item 020. Why is it necessary to include such an item for “other copies”?

Various offices in an agency might develop case files for position descriptions (PDs), most notably the program office where the position will exist. Once the PD is final, its official record resides with the agency Human Resources function and is covered by item 020. Item 022 covers background material created by any office in the course of building a PD, and also convenience copies of final PDs held by offices to document their own positions.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 030

12. What is a classification appeal?

An employee who believes his or her position description is inappropriately graded or no longer reflects its actual responsibilities may file a classification appeal seeking to alter the grade or description. Only an employee can originate an appeal; an agency cannot appeal a classification to OPM. The appeal may be made either to an agency's HR function or directly to OPM. In either event, the agency creates a case file to track the appeal's progress and OPM's final decision.

13. Why are OPM records not covered by this item?

Position classification, as discussed in the answer to question 9, is part of OPM's mission. Therefore, records of OPM's involvement in appeal and review case files are also not appropriate for the GRS and are instead scheduled on an OPM-specific records schedule.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 040

14. Why is the classification certificate not combined with the classification appeal file (item 030) in a single item?

A classification certificate is the document closing an appeal of a position classification. While it is arguably the conclusion of the appeal file, it takes on new life as integral documentation of a position's classification. As such, it must be retained as long as the PD is active, which may be for many years. The rest of the appeal file (item 030) is material documenting how the final decision was reached. These background records do not need to be retained as long as the certificate itself.

15. Why are OPM records not covered by this item?

Position classification, as discussed in the answer to question 9, is part of OPM's mission. Certificates received by agencies regarding their own positions document classification activities that take place in all agencies across Government; as such, it is appropriate to include them in the GRS. The certificates retained by OPM are OPM-specific records documenting the agency carrying out its mission, and must be covered by an OPM-specific schedule.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEMS 050 AND 051

16. Why do these items supersede so many items in the previous GRS?

The previous GRS, particularly the 21 sub-items in GRS 1/33 (records created as part of posting Federal jobs and hiring new staff), divided these records into very small units with relatively small differences in retention periods. These small units of records were linked to a paper-based process which has largely been replaced by electronic systems. It is more efficient for electronic systems to dispose of an entire case file all at once, when possible, rather than piecemeal. This GRS revision reflects that and other current business practice and efficiencies.

17. Why do these items not authorize longer retention if required for business use?

The regulation governing these records (5 CFR 335.103), requires agencies to retain them for 2 years or until after formal program evaluation by OPM, whichever occurs first. We chose a blanket 2-year retention—the outside limit required by the regulation—for ease of implementation. There is no

express provision in the regulation for longer retention, and agencies may find that longer retention opens them to liability.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 060

18. Why does this item supersede so many items in the previous GRS?

The answer to question 16 for items 050 and 051 applies here as well. This item supersedes a number of old GRS items ranging in retention from “destroy immediately” to 2 years. The fact that the process of submitting an application for Federal employment has become entirely electronic necessitates a unified item with a single retention period.

19. Why does this item not authorize longer retention if required for business use?

Item 060 does not authorize longer retention because the online site USAJobs enforces a strict policy of applications self-destructing one year from the day of submission. Also, risk is increased if job vacancy case files (items 050 and 051) are destroyed as required by law but duplicates of records are retained longer by other offices under item 060.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 090

20. How can I know when the clock starts ticking on destruction of these records? When does right to appeal a non-selection expire?

According to 5 CFR 300.104, each agency can set its own time limit for filing appeals. Check with your agency General Counsel. It is important to retain these records until the time specified in the disposition instruction to protect both the right of a non-selectee to appeal the decision and to protect your agency in justifying its selection.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 100, 101, AND 102

21. Why do these items exclude Presidential appointment records?

Records documenting Presidential appointments are often high-profile and a subject of great interest to the research community. Since we cannot state that these records are always temporary or always permanent across the entire Government, we cannot include them in the GRS. Each agency must schedule its records on Presidential appointments on an agency-specific records schedule.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 120 AND 130

22. What specific programs are covered under special hiring authority?

Exact names of special programs may vary from year to year. The current list is available at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/hiring-authorities/>, the section at the bottom of the page entitled “Special Employment Programs.” In general, these are temporary hiring authorities and often seasonal. A good example is student summer-hire programs.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 140 AND 141

23. Why don't these items have a disposition authority?

The disposition instruction for both these items directs the user to forward the records elsewhere. The user is not responsible for disposal. These records are ultimately incorporated into other records series scheduled under other authorities.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEMS 150 AND 160

24. Why don't these items cover OPM's records?

OPM has authority for hiring Federal employees. It may delegate this authority under 5 U.S.C. § 1104 to heads of other agencies; this delegation makes it possible for other agencies to post job openings and interview and hire employees. These activities are administrative at all agencies other than OPM. Since hiring Federal employees is an OPM mission function, it must schedule its copies of these records separately.