

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 2.5, Employee Separation Records

Revised January 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the purpose of GRS 2.5?

This schedule provides disposition authority for records agencies create and receive in the course of processing employee departures from the Federal workforce and in the course of managing a separation program (including administrative tasks to carry out agency initiatives designed to decrease the workforce). With one exception, items in this schedule relate to records generally maintained by agency human resources offices. The exception is item 030, which covers records generally maintained outside of human resources offices

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 QUESTION

3. Why does this schedule not include an item for Official Personnel Folders (OPFs)? What happens with them when employees move to a different agency or leave Federal employment?

Although OPFs are disposed of as part of the employee separation process, OPFs are created when employees enter Federal service, and agencies place most records in them while employees are in the active workforce. For that reason, an item in GRS 2.2, Employee Management Records, covers OPFs from an employee's entry into the Federal workforce through separation. In general, OPFs follow Federal employees when they move from one agency to another; when they leave Federal service, their personnel office sends their OPF to the National Personnel Records Center within 30 days of separation.

4. Why are you removing an item that was in the old GRS?

We are changing the item rather than completely removing it, but to do so we must formally remove the old item and replace it with a new one. GRS 2, item 9a, "Record of employee leave, such as SF 1150, prepared upon transfer or separation," was a filing instruction that included a now-invalid disposal authority. By removing item 9a, we are rescinding the disposal authority portion. The filing instruction, which is still valid, is now in Item 040 of this schedule. See question 10 for more information on the difference between filing instructions and disposal authority.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 010

5. Why are Items 010 and 011 not merged into a single item?

Records in item 010 are entirely administrative — created as the agency responds to a separation request initiated by a staff member at any point in time. Agencies create records in item 011 as the result of an agency initiative -- a program specifically intended to reduce the agency's work force. These records document agency decisions, how the agency made them, and how it carried them out. Agency initiatives have clear start and end dates and therefore we can base disposition of the records on those dates.

6. Why has the disposition of SF-2807 changed from “destroy upon receipt of official OPM acceptance of annual summary” to the generic “destroy when no longer required for business use”?

Technological developments have changed the business purpose of SF-2807 since we last updated the schedule for employee separation records in 1992. OPM historically built Federal workforce statistics from annual summaries of separations, cobbled together by each agency from various SFs-2807 they prepared over the course of a year. Electronic systems that accomplish the same goals more universally and more efficiently have replaced this paper process. Therefore, an agency that created the form can destroy it when that agency no longer needs the form.

Also, please note that old GRS 2, item 28, listed only SF-2807 (register for reporting Civil Service Retirement System [CSRS] separations). It covered SF-3103 (register for reporting Federal Employment Retirement System [FERS] separations) only by inference. New items 010 and 011 explicitly cover both.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 011

7. What programs are included in “specific agency separation initiatives”?

Pages nested at OPM's website, <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/workforce-restructuring/>, discuss various types of separation initiatives.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 030

8. Why is item 030 a separate item and not just a bullet in item 020?

We created these separate items because the records in item 020 and item 030 cover different kinds of records, are created by different offices for different purposes, and have different retention periods. They thus do not lend themselves to being grouped and handled together. Each agency's human resources office creates and maintains records in item 020 for personnel and benefits purposes. The retention period reflects the length of time an agency would normally need these records for business use. Records in item 030 concern information departing staff members provide to their offices about their programs, functions, and work, for continuity purposes. Those offices maintain these records themselves. The item's open-ended retention period reflects the varying value these records may have from agency to agency, office to office, and even staff member to staff member.

9. Does item 030 mean that the records a separated employee leaves behind can be destroyed when no longer needed by that employee's office?

No. Records a separated employee leaves behind are the property of the office for which the employee worked, and should be retained under schedules applicable to the subject matter. Item 030 covers only

records newly created in the process of trying to capture knowledge a departing employee may hold just in his or her head.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 040

10. How can I file SF 1150 on the “left side of the folder” if the Official Personnel File (OPF) is electronic?

A paper OPF is a single folder with two sides: “left side” for temporary records and “right side” for permanent documents. E-folders in the eOPF—“temporary” and “permanent”—replicate the paper folder sides and are actually called “folder sides.” An item in GRS 2.2 provides disposal authority for “left side” records.

11. Why does item 040 not have a disposition authority?

Item 040 is not a disposition instruction but, rather, a filing instruction. A disposition instruction declares records either permanent or temporary and includes a disposition authority. A filing instruction does not declare records permanent or temporary and does not include authority to dispose of records; it simply instructs on where to file them.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 051

12. Does the bullet “records documenting knowledge transfer activities” include records a departing employee leaves behind?

No. The bullet covers documentation of knowledge transfer *activities*. This may be nothing more than an acknowledgment from the departing employee’s supervisor that knowledge transfer has taken place. The bullet does not mean to imply that all records containing that knowledge are retained by the agency’s human resources office. In many cases, the reason there is a need to transfer knowledge before an employee leaves is because the knowledge is in the employee’s mind only; records resulting from such knowledge transfer are covered by item 030. Exit interviews conducted for purposes of knowledge transfer with an employee in phased-retirement status are also covered by item 030. Records a separated employee leaves behind are the property of the office for which the employee worked, and should be retained under schedules applicable to the subject matter.