

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 6.4, Public Affairs Records

January 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the purpose of GRS 6.4?

This schedule provides disposition authority for records about activities Federal agencies perform in connection with public and media interactions. These records can be created anywhere in an agency, but are often held in locations such as the public affairs or communications office.

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.

CHANGES FROM THE OLD GRS

3. How does GRS 6.4 differ from the old General Records Schedules?

GRS 6.4 brings together items from GRS 14, 17, and 21. Of particular note, it replaces a number of items in GRS 21, Audiovisual Records, with items based on function rather than the format of the records. Moreover, GRS 6.4, item 030, combines a variety of records that were previously scheduled individually across the three above-mentioned GRS. These are all records related to developing public relations materials.

Item 020 of this schedule expands GRS 14, item 5 (Commendation/Complaint Correspondence Files), to include additional types of communications received from the public that do not require agency action, including comments received on social media platforms.

4. Why is NARA rescinding GRS 14, item 3, for Press Service Files?

The team of agency representatives that helped develop GRS 6.4 indicated that these records no longer exist as described in GRS 14. Instead, news service updates are received by email. Therefore, agencies can manage these records as part of their email management instead.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO ITEM 020

5. What are "routine complaints or commendations"?

Routine complaints and commendations come from the public on an ad-hoc basis--in other words, they are not solicited--and do not require any further action from the agency.

6. This item includes agency postings on social media accounts as well as comments received on an agency website. How can an agency dispose of these records if it does not have the ability to do so?

NARA recognizes that agencies often cannot destroy comments or posts on social media, which is why the schedule notes that it applies only if the agency captures those records. NARA does not expect agencies to destroy social media records that they do not control. However, agencies do need to manage their social media records. NARA provides guidance on managing social media records in [NARA Bulletin 2014-02](#).

7. Why does this item cover comments agencies *do not* act on, but does not cover comments that agencies *do* act on?

Comments not acted upon have limited business value and are generally quickly sidelined. Comments that spur agencies to action have both significant business value and potential historical value. As such, they cannot be universally declared either permanent or temporary, so are not included in the GRS.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 030

8. Why does Exclusion 1 omit common records such as speeches, publications, and agency histories from Item 030?

Many records created under the public affairs function are of permanent value or the value is unclear until they are individually appraised. We are currently not adding clearly permanent records to the GRS and records of unclear value would not be appropriate for the GRS anyway. Instead, we will be providing a guide for scheduling other records related to the Public Affairs function that are not covered by the GRS.