#### National Archives and Records Administration

Job Aid:

Apply the General Records Schedules (GRS) in Your Agency Records Schedule

# Apply the GRS – Process Overview

1. Review schedules and identify affected records schedule items.
2. Review and take action on the new disposition instructions.
3. Update the agency schedule, then communicate and implement the changes.
4. Monitor the implementation.

# Step 1: Review schedules and identify affected items

When NARA issues a new or updated General Records Schedules (GRS), it notifies Agency Records Officers and publishes an update to its GRS page.

You’ll find the latest updates to the GRS at <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/grs> and copies of NARA’s communications to Agency Records Officers at <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/policy/memos-to-agency-records-officers.html>

## 1.1 Look for superseded GRS items in the agency schedule

* Look for any existing GRS items you have already incorporated into your agency’s records manuals and comprehensive records schedules.
* Look for any changes to those items.
* NARA’s GRS team has made this easy to do by providing an index to the new GRS and crosswalks from old GRS items to new and updated GRS items. You’ll find both at <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/grs.html>.

## 1.2 Look for agency-specific items that are covered by the new GRS

* Review your agency manual or comprehensive records schedule against the new GRS to identify any previously-scheduled items that are now covered by the General Records Schedules.

## 1.3 Look for any unscheduled records that are now covered by the GRS

* You may have unscheduled records that can now be scheduled under the GRS. Identify those items and compare them to the new GRS to see if it can be used to schedule the records.

# Step 2: Review and take action on the new disposition instructions

After you have identified unscheduled records and any schedule items to revise, you’ll collect the information you will need to draft the schedule.

## 2.1 Update superseded GRS items

* Review the new description and disposition instructions for each item.
* When needed, consult with agency staff who create, store, and work with the records to ensure that the new disposition will meet the agency’s business needs.
* Note which agency records manual items and file plans need to be updated to reflect the changes.

## 2.2 Update agency-specific items

* Look at any existing agency-specific items that are affected by the new GRS.
* If the agency-specific disposition instructions fall within the parameters of the new GRS instructions, update your agency’s records manual and/or comprehensive schedule with the new GRS disposition authority.
* Define cutoff instructions and set retention periods within the parameters of the new GRS instructions.

## 2.3 Add items for previously-unscheduled records

* Using the GRS to schedule previously-unscheduled records saves you time and brings your agency’s records retention into line with the rest of the government.
* Add the new GRS item(s) to your agency’s records manual and/or comprehensive schedule, and you’re done. There’s no need to request permission from NARA to use approved GRS items.

## 2.4 Handle any needed requests to deviate from the GRS

The new GRS is very flexible, and you will probably find that it meets most, if not all, of your business needs.

However, if you do find that a disposition in the GRS simply won’t meet your business needs, you can request to use an existing, approved agency-specific schedule for the records or submit an agency-specific schedule to request to deviate from the new GRS.

### Continuing to use an existing agency-specific schedule.

* If your agency was already using an existing approved, agency-specific schedule for the records, you may continue to use that disposition instead of the new GRS disposition in many cases. You must notify NARA of your intent to continue use of an existing agency-specific schedule within 120 days of the publication of that new GRS.
* You will need to send notification to [GRS\_Team@nara.gov](mailto:GRS_Team@nara.gov) with your agency’s name and the phrase “GRS Notification” in the subject line of the email.
* You will need to complete a Supersession Notification Citation spreadsheet (available at <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/grs/grs-faqs-and-tools.html>) and send it with your notification email.
* NARA reserves the right, in some instances, to deny the use of an agency-specific schedule if it is no longer appropriate due to the passage of time, change in the value of records, or other reasons.
* You’ll find more information about GRS notifications on NARA’s website at https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/grs/notifications-faqs.pdf

### Requesting to deviate from the new GRS

* If your agency has been using the GRS, but the retention and disposition specified in the new GRS will not meet your agency’s business needs, you can submit a request for a deviation from the GRS.
* You will find more information about GRS deviations on NARA’s website at <https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/grs/grs-deviations.pdf>.

# Step 3: Update, communicate, and implement

* Update agency records manuals and/or comprehensive schedules.
* Update office file plans.
* Issue the updated materials through your agency’s policy process.
* Ensure the updated materials are shared and posted.
* Communicate the changes to affected offices and staff, and provide training as needed.
* Coordinate with system administrators to implement retention changes for electronic records series.
* Communicate changes to the agency records center and any external records centers your agency uses.
* Ensure new dispositions are being applied to records.

# Step 4: Monitor the implementation

After you have updated your records manual or comprehensive schedule and communicated the changes, you will need to monitor the implementation to ensure the records are being retained and dispositioned properly.

* Review records transfer requests
* Review records disposition requests
* Monitor communications from storage centers
* Work with departments to ensure file plans are up-to-date
* Work with record holders and records management staff to provide updates and training if needed