Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)

ERMS Naming Conventions

Version 2

Contents

1. Introduction

The Australian National University has developed an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) to facilitate effective records management and improve efficiencies in administrative work practices.

ERMS is designed to electronically store and manage University records through a series of folder structures that mirror the Business Classification Scheme (BCS).

BCS provides a process for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. These records can take many forms, including word processing documents, spreadsheets, emails and images.

The ERMS Naming Conventions apply to the naming of all records in the ERMS, providing guidelines for use across the organisation to ensure that records are appropriately titled, managed and easily retrieved. For folder creation and titling conventions refer to the ERMS Folder Creation and Titling Conventions document. This is available from the ERMS pages on the University Records website.

2. What is a naming convention?

To ensure that the records within ERMS are easily identified a naming convention is used to provide a systematic approach to titling electronic records and folders.

A naming convention is a set of guidelines or rules provided for naming documents and any information considered to be a record to be managed through ERMS. The convention recommends ways to effectively structure record and folder titles providing examples of how to use these naming elements.

Records within ERMS begin as a document in formats such as PDF, MS Word, GIF, JPEG, Excel and email. When a document is saved within ERMS as a record it is allocated a record title which can be the same as the document name in the original application or expanded to include more information.

Using a naming convention allows the creation of understandable, consistent and predictable record and folder titles. Naming records using an agreed convention assists all ERMS users in searching and retrieving records more effectively and efficiently.

Principles

The following naming convention principles guide the development of ERMS record and folder titles:

1. The creation of understandable, consistent and predictable folder and record titles
2. Similar records are easily distinguished from one another
3. Consistency between CRS records and ERMS records is maintained
4. Efficient storage and retrieval of records
5. Simplification of the process of ERMS folder and record titling.

3. Naming conventions

1. Develop record and folder names that are meaningful and easy to understand

It is important that the record title provides appropriate information as to its contents. The structure of a title can include many terms however it should always include the subject, i.e. the what or who, and can include other information such as when.

- Avoid using general, imprecise or meaningless terms such as miscellaneous.

- Dashes or spaces can be used to separate key points, e.g. Student residence – 9 Walker Street Reid – development application

- Avoid using common words such as 'draft', 'letter' or 'memo' at the start of a record title.

- Where possible avoid using jargon as it may preclude others from finding the record.

- Some physical documents may need to be scanned to be converted to an electronic record. It is important that the scanner generated information is not used as a record title.

- Avoid using redundant information such as file type, e.g. PDF. Also the creator of the record and date of creation is captured as part of the record metadata and there is no need to repeat it.

- Avoid using unnecessary terms such as 'a', 'the' and 'and'.

2. Utilise terms (key words) that uniquely identify records and folders

It is important to use key words that uniquely identify a record or folder to avoid duplication and limit the number of search results provided.

For example, a record of a sponsorship would include the name of the sponsoring organisation or individual, the type of sponsorship and date. Key words allow the record to be searched using either the sponsoring organisation or individual name or the type of sponsorship.

3. Use consistent language in naming similar records

File names relating to recurring events should include a date and consistent description of the content. For example a series of steering committee meeting minutes are saved as records for Project XYZ:

Example of the *correct* approach using consistent titling:

2015-04-02 Project XYZ steering committee meeting minutes
2015-03-02 Project XYZ steering committee meeting minutes
2015-02-02 Project XYZ steering committee meeting minutes

Example of the *incorrect* approach using inconsistent titling:

2015-04-02 Project XYZ steering committee meeting minutes
Project XYZ steering committee meeting minutes 2015-03-02
Steering committee meeting notes Project XYZ 2015-02-02

4. Where possible incorporate identification numbers into the record name

Some records already provide their own identification number by having specific credentials, e.g. records relating to a University staff member or student use the UID and ANU buildings have both a building number and name.

- The use of identification numbers is mandatory in the case of staff and student records and building numbers while others are optional. For example, a reference number for a letter may be included in a record title.

- The staff and student folders are identified by the University ID number followed by the staff member or student name. This is automatically applied to staff and student folders by ERMS.

  For example, U1234567 Surname, First name

- Using identification numbers is critical for ANU staff and student records. In contributing a record to a staff or student folder the UID number should be included, followed by other information about the record.

- Recruitment actions are taken regarding position number. Any records contributed to a recruitment folder would contain the position number.
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- Building numbers are required to distinguish between heritage-listed and non-heritage-listed buildings (affecting how long records need to be kept) as building names can change over time.

  For example, Building 124 Anthony Low – refurbishment costing 2015

5. Distinguish between similar records, e.g. include date or version information

Dates and version control allow similar events to be recorded in a chronological manner. Version control distinguishes records by current state. ERMS provides a versioning process by maintaining a record of each revision with appropriate metadata (i.e. author, date created, date modified etc.). However if formal revision information is required in a record title version control language can be applied.

- To reflect changes to a record that is still being developed the word 'draft' is added at the end of the record title followed by the draft version number, e.g. draft version 1.

- If the record is a final document and new versions are anticipated, add the version number at the end of the record title, e.g. version 1.

6. An email record name should include the name of the subject matter, with the name of the correspondent and date being optional

Emails can be contributed to ERMS as a record and the email subject line is automatically included as the record title. To make the record tile more meaningful the email subject information may need to be changed.

  For example for an email: **From**: Person ABC, **Subject**: Some thoughts about the audit,
  the record title should be changed, e.g. Annual Electricity Audit comments - Person ABC.

ERMS automatically captures the date an email was created, i.e. sent, and the name of the person sending the email in the record metadata. ERMS metadata elements can be used to search for records so including the correspondent and date in an email record name is optional.

7. Spell out abbreviations and acronyms

Use acronyms only after spelling out the full name before the acronym. This ensures that there is no confusion surrounding an abbreviated name and meaning of an acronym and allows clear identification should there be any future changes to the acronym.

- Do not solely use acronyms for organisational units as the name or acronym may change over time.

  For example, College of Asia and the Pacific CAP

- Keep the use of capital letters to a minimum since using all capital letters makes titles more difficult to read. For example, ANU Annual Report 2015 (appropriate, note: ANU is an accepted acronym) versus ANU ANNUAL REPORT 2015 (inappropriate).

- Both folders and records have a maximum of 255 characters allowed for title length. Note that acronyms can be included in metadata fields such as Comments or Keywords.

- Do not use characters such as: ! # $ % & ' @ ^ ` ~ + . ; = \ /

8. Using dates in record titles

The date a record is created or modified is contained within the metadata of the record and does not need to be included in the record title. Metadata is additional information about the properties of a record for example, title, subject, author, date created, date contributed and date modified.

It is important to use dates that are significant to the record e.g. committee meeting dates and contract dates. Each business should determine when dates are required in a record title.

The international format defined by ISO (ISO 8601:2004) provides a standard numerical date system with date values ordered from the largest to smallest unit of time. Using the international date format ensures consistency and allows for easy searching for records with date driven naming conventions. Dashes are the preferred method for separating the numbers into meaningful groupings and are used to separate the year, month and day.

The ISO date format provides a date representation that is universally and accurately understandable with the date format of YYYY-MM-DD where:

- YYYY is the year (all the digits, i.e. 2015)
- MM is the month (from 01 to 12)
- DD is the day (from 01 to 31)

ERMS date conventions include:

YYYY   Year. One year is expressed by 4 digits, e.g. 2015

YYYY-YYYY   Year to Year. Covers a period of years, e.g. 2014-2015

YYYY-MM   Year and Month. The year (4 digits) followed by the month (2 digits), e.g. 2015-10

YYYY-MM-DD   Year, Month and Day. The year (4 digits) followed by the month (2 digits) followed by the day (2 digits), e.g. 2015-10-05 represents 5 October 2015.

Dates can be used in any part of a record title however the importance of the date would be reflected in where it is included in the record title. A date is included in the beginning of a record title if it reflects a chronological list of similar records, for example meeting minutes.

9. Use a person's full name beginning with the surname, then given name

It is preferred that a person's full name be expressed if possible. The person's surname should be first, followed by a comma, then the given name. The comma provides a clear division of the surname from the given name, as both the surname and given name may be several words.

For example: Edward James Smith would be recorded as Smith, Edward James

Initials are not preferred unless there is no alternative.

For example: Smith, Edward James not Smith, EJ

4. Further assistance

University Records has extensive experience in the management of University records and as the owners of ERMS are able to advise on a number of issues.

The University Records team is available to provide assistance in the naming of records, and the structuring and naming of contribution folders.

Further information is available on the University Records website including records management policy, procedures and guidelines.

University Records helpdesk service phone: 54321 option 1 option 7

University Records general enquiries phone: 53560

Email enquiries can be sent to: records@anu.edu.au