

LEARNER'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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1. Introduction to Records Management

Records management refers to the systematic control of records throughout their lifecycle. This includes the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and eventual disposal of records. Records can be in physical or electronic form and are critical to supporting business operations, accountability, and decision-making.

2. Importance of Records Management

Records management is important because it:

- Ensures compliance with laws and regulations.
- Supports accountability and transparency.
- Facilitates efficient retrieval of information.
- Preserves organizational memory.
- Protects records as evidence of activities and transactions.

3. Principles of Records Management

The key principles of records management include:

- Creation – ensuring accurate records are created at the time of an event.
- Authenticity – records must be genuine and trustworthy.
- Reliability – records should accurately reflect the transactions they document.
- Integrity – records must be complete and unaltered.
- Usability – records must be easy to locate, retrieve, and use.

4. Types of Records

Records can be categorized into different types:

- Administrative records (e.g., policies, reports).
- Financial records (e.g., budgets, invoices).
- Legal records (e.g., contracts, agreements).
- Personnel records (e.g., employee files, payroll).
- Electronic records (e.g., emails, databases).

5. Records Management Process

The process involves several stages:

- Creation or receipt of records.
- Classification and indexing.
- Storage and maintenance.
- Access and retrieval.

- Disposal or archival preservation.

6. Tools and Technologies

Modern records management uses various tools and technologies such as Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS), cloud storage solutions, databases, and filing systems to ensure proper handling of information.

7. Challenges in Records Management

- High volume of records to manage.
- Transition from paper to digital systems.
- Data security and privacy concerns.
- Limited resources and trained staff.
- Obsolescence of technology.

8. Summary

Records management is an essential function in any organization as it ensures accountability, transparency, and efficiency. By following principles and using the right tools, organizations can overcome challenges and effectively manage both paper and electronic records.

9. Key Terms

Record: Any information created, received, and maintained as evidence of an activity.

Archive: A place or collection where records of historical value are preserved.

Disposal: The action taken regarding records no longer needed (destruction or archiving).

Lifecycle: The stages through which a record passes from creation to disposal.

Retention Schedule: A policy that defines how long records are kept.

10. Review Questions

1. Define records management and explain its purpose.
2. List and explain three principles of records management.
3. Differentiate between administrative and financial records.
4. Describe the stages of the records management process.
5. What are some challenges faced in managing electronic records?