



Australian Capital Territory
Territory Records Office
GUIDELINE

Guideline to Principle 2: Capability Principle

**A resource for implementing
the
Standard for Records, Information and Data**

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INTRODUCTION

Records are evidence of business activity. The *Territory Records Act 2002* (the Act) defines them as ‘information created and kept, or received and kept, as evidence and information by a person in accordance with a legal obligation or in the course of conducting business’.

The Act allows the Director of Territory Records to approve standards for records management, which ACT Government organisations must comply with. The ACT Standard for Records, Information and Data was approved in 2016. It sets out seven principles for managing ACT Government records. This Guideline is intended to assist organisations to comply with the Capability principle.

While the term ‘record’ has a specific meaning, in practice it can at times be difficult to distinguish between records and other types of information or data. Although the Act only applies to records, its principles can be applied to all ACT Government information and data holdings. The Territory Records Office recommends this approach. If there is doubt as to whether ACT Government information or data meet the definition of a record, the standard should be applied.

The Capability Principle

The Capability Principle means ACT Government organisations should adhere to the capability assessment and improvement requirements endorsed by the Territory Records Office for records, information and data management.

Capability refers to an ACT Government organisation’s or an individual’s capacity or ability to fulfil certain records, information and data management requirements as outlined in the Standard for Records, Information and Data. It encompasses resources, skills and tools for managing records, information and data.

By adhering to the Capability Principle, ACT Government organisations can ensure their records, information and data management is appropriately resourced and can improve over time.

Complying with the Capability Principle

There are three aspects to complying with the Capability Principle:

1. identifying and providing the financial, human and other resources for records, information and data management;
2. planning for and measuring the performance of records, information and data management activities; and
3. reviewing and improving performance to meet the changing requirements of government business.

For an organisation undertaking a comprehensive assessment of their records, information and data management, use the Territory Records Office's [Compliance Checklist Tool](#) in association with this and other guidelines to implementing the Standard for Records, Information and Data.

Further information

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the Standard for Records, Information and Data and the Guidelines which support each of its seven principles.

Along with the seven guidelines, further information can be found in the following resources:

- *Territory Records Act 2002*
- International Standard: ISO15489—Records Management part 1
- International Standard: ISO15489—Records Management part 2
- Territory Records Office *Records Advice* series
- Territory Records Office's Compliance Checklist Tool
- ACT Public Service Shared Capability Framework

IDENTIFYING AND PROVIDING RESOURCES

In applying the capability principle ACT Government organisations must identify the human, financial and other resources they need and put in place mechanisms for ensuring that those resources are available and applied to adequately manage their records, information and data.

Annual

Assessments of records, information and data management capabilities should be undertaken annually using the Territory Records Office's [Compliance Checklist Tool](#). Results of each annual assessment should inform business and work planning. The Territory Records Office may provide a status report of records, information and data management to the Minister responsible for the Territory Records Office.

Organisation-wide

The annual capabilities assessment should be based on the whole organisation. It should not be focused on a single or small number of business units or solely on the records management unit. Parts of the assessment may, however, be useful to help individual business units meet information and data management requirements.

Resource allocation

Following thorough work planning processes, ACT Government organisations must ensure there are sufficient human, financial and physical resources to do the work required. This includes ensuring there are appropriately qualified staff available to meet work

requirements and that those staff have adequate tools and authority within the organisation to properly manage all of its records, information and data.

Organisations must ensure that the recordkeeping responsibilities of their staff are clearly stated, and that staff have the skills, knowledge and resources required to fulfil those requirements. Particular roles and responsibilities that must be clearly defined and assigned include:

- the Principal Officer: responsible for ensuring the organisation's compliance with the Act;
- a senior officer responsible for recordkeeping: organisations must ensure that a single identified senior manager is assigned responsibility for delivering the organisation's Records Management Program;
- organisation records manager: the organisation must ensure that it has access to appropriate professional records management expertise to assist in the day to day delivery of records management services; and
- all other staff: all staff within the organisation have a responsibility to create and properly manage records of their activities. Some categories of staff may have particular additional responsibilities which should be identified, defined and assigned. These may include ICT staff, business system owners, and managers and supervisors.

PLANNING FOR AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

To comply with the capability principle organisations should ensure that records, information and data management is a routine part of broader organisational planning processes. This includes setting targets for and measuring the performance of records, information and data management activities so that resources can be applied effectively and inadequate performance identified and improved.

Identifiable

Records, information and data management plans may be standalone documents or can be incorporated into broader corporate plans. They must, however, clearly identify the activities, resources, and performance indicators in place to perform the records, information and data management functions of the organisation.

Performance Indicators for example may be embedded in Position Descriptions, detailing the records, information and data management expectations of the role being performed.

Planned

Having identified their existing capabilities and resource requirements, organisations should develop and implement annual plans that maintain or improve records, information and data management capabilities. This includes identifying and measuring performance indicators that can identify underperformance and guide the future application of resources.

Supported

Records, information and data management plans need to be developed with input from people who have an adequate understanding of professional requirements. They must be communicated to all relevant staff and supported by adequate resources.

Information, data and records management professionals should be supported to keep up to date with changes in their profession, organisation, government and society. In conjunction with professional development opportunities, professionals can keep up to date with changes by participating in regular meetings facilitated by the Territory Records Office, such as the Records and Information Management Community of Practice (RIMCoP).

Keeping up to date with organisational change is important – particularly when new software, hardware and other technological solutions are procured or implemented by business areas. Staff responsible for records, information and data management must be involved in and kept informed of organisational activities and changes that impact on the organisation's information assets and their management. This can include:

- changes in legislation, standards, practices and organisational responsibilities that may impact on the need to create and keep records, information and data;
- machinery of government and other organisational changes that may influence organisational responsibility for and access to records, information and data; and
- information and communication technology investment decisions and other changes that may influence the systems that capture the organisation's records, information and data or the way these systems are used.

Measured and reported

ACT Government organisations should establish key performance indicators for their records, information and data management activities, to support the regular measurement and review of the implementation of the Records Management Program. This includes establishing relevant directions and targets to enable inclusion in corporate plans and annual reports on matters relating to records, information and data management. Organisations must ensure their public reporting on records, information and data management is, at a minimum, consistent with the ACT Government's Annual Report Directions.

Relevant measures can include the extent of coverage for existing records disposal schedules, the provision of training and the success of that training, the use of endorsed and non-endorsed locations, the results of annual file censuses, digital and physical storage requirements, internal audits of the Records Management Program, quality control checks on data entry and other processes, and destruction quantities.

REVIEWING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

ACT Government organisations must use their established performance indicators to review their records, information and data management activities against plans and identify areas for change or improvement.

Plan to make improvements

Plans should be made each year to build records, information and data management capabilities. These plans should be approved and included in business and work planning documents and staff performance management discussions and reviews.

Ongoing skills improvement and training

Information, data and records management professionals should plan to participate in professional development and training opportunities conducted by industry associations such as the Records and Information Management Professionals Australasia, the Australian Society of Archivists and the Institute for Information Management. Further academic education opportunities should also be encouraged. On-the-job training is also essential to ensure practices remain consistent across the organisation.

For all other ACT Government employees, participation in training organised by the records manager and/or records management unit will assist them to understand their responsibilities. Business-specific and system-specific training could encompass the use of electronic document records management systems (for example, Hewlett Packard Records Manager or Objective), or other business systems that contain records, information and data.

An annual training plan should be established by records managers and/or records management units. The training plan should include induction training for new staff and refresher training for all other staff. Regular and up-to-date training must be provided by records, information and data management professionals to all staff of the organisation – including full-time and part-time staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants and outsourced providers. At a minimum, this training must ensure all staff are aware of their records, information and data management responsibilities as outlined by an organisation's Records Management Program – see the [Strategy Principle](#) for further guidance.

Implementing audit requirements

Audits, either internal to the organisation or those conducted by the ACT Auditor-General, may make recommendations regarding records, information and data management. Organisations should respond promptly to recommendations by auditors and other reviewing bodies relating to their own records, information and data management. They should also regularly review reports of the ACT Auditor-General regarding other entities and make assessments as to whether the recommendations they contain should also be applied within their own organisations. The Territory Records Office is also empowered by the Act to review organisations' records management arrangements, and may make recommendations for improvement in particular organisations or across the ACTPS.

Collaboration

Along with the Records and Information Management Community of Practice, organisations are encouraged to use their networks to collaborate across the government, and learn from and support each other to improve capability.

Collaboration with key stakeholders within each ACT Government organisation is a crucial aspect to records, information and data management. Scheduling regular meetings with stakeholders can help ensure timely advice about any information, data or records-related changes within the organisation.

Innovation

To meet this requirement, records, information and data management professionals should remain flexible to accommodate the changing needs of business areas and work with them to identify innovative solutions that allow the Standard for Records, Information and Data to be met.