

What is a “Record”?

Purpose

This Records Advice has been prepared to provide ACT Government employees with information for understanding their responsibilities for creating official government records, information and data.

Background

The *Territory Records Act 2002* (the Act) defines a ‘record’ as the 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. This includes information in written, electronic or any other form.

The Act requires all ACT government organisations to make and keep full and accurate records. These records must be maintained or managed by the organisation to provide evidence of business activities. This means that all documents and information, whether hardcopy or digital, made or received by ACT Government organisations, that provide evidence of a business activity, are records.

Records may be in any form, including:

- Office documents (i.e. Word, Excel, PowerPoint), e-mail, digital images
- Information and data held within, and extracted from, business systems
- Audio (e.g voicemails) or video, including hosted materials on websites (e.g.YouTube)
- Communications on social media applications
- Handwritten documents
- Paper, microform, digital
- Maps, plans, drawings, photographs etc.

Tool

The Territory Records Office has a simple tool to help ACT Government entity staff determine what is considered a record.

The tool can be found at - [Is it a Record?¹](#)

Record types found across government

Record types will vary across government because of the diverse range of functions it performs. It is however important to note that there are common types of records with

¹ [Assess \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

evidential or business value that will be found across government. These frequently used types will include, but are not limited to:

- 'Common' (the type that everyone may use) records – policies, procedures, documentation, forms and correspondence. e.g. staff manuals, rosters, travel bookings;
- Financial records – invoices, bank account records, customer billing reports;
- Project records – correspondence, notes, proposal and product development documentation; and
- Case files – client records, personnel records, contracts and other legal files.

Further to this, information and data in business systems may constitute a record, if it is used in the context of a business transaction or decision process. Such sources of records, information and data must also be managed in accordance with the Standard for Records, Information and Data and associated guidelines.

For more information

[Standard for Records and Information Governance](#)

[Guideline to the Assess Principle](#)

[Guideline to the Describe Principle](#)



The *What is a Record?* Records Advice is licensed under [Creative Commons — Attribution 4.0 International — CC BY 4.0](#). You are free to re-use the work under that licence with attribution.

Please give attribution to: © Australian Capital Territory, 2023

The licence does not apply to the ACT Coat of Arms, the ACT Government logo and branding, images, artwork, photographs or any material protected by trademark.

CONTACT US

Territory Records Office | www.territoryrecords.act.gov.au | TRO@act.gov.au