

SYSTEMS SECTION FAQ

The purpose of the System Section is to provide system administrators with criteria that they can use to develop system purge or digital archives transfer routines for data, records, and other information that is covered by this ORCS, and retained in operational systems.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a data retention plan?

A data retention plan maps data, records, and other information in a system to classifications in the ORCS, and describes, based on the retention periods indicated in those classifications, how long it is to be kept before it's eligible to be destroyed or transferred to the digital archives. The data retention plan is part of the system overview.

What is the status of the Digital Archives?

The Corporate Information and Records Management Office (CIRMO) is committed to establishing a [digital archives](#). Work is underway to meet this commitment, and to implement a solution that meets client needs. The [CRO has issued guidance](#) on the management of digital records during the interim.

Do I need approval before deleting data that is scheduled within my ORCS?

Approval is required before deleting the data. Contact your [Government Records Officer](#) for more information.

Do the retention periods in this ORCS continue to apply if data is migrated to a new system?

If data is subsequently migrated to a new system, the retention periods indicated in the ORCS for that data should continue to apply, provided the data itself is largely unchanged. However, if the new system captures data that is not referred to in the system description, for example as a result of new legislation or significant functional changes, then please consult with your [Government Records Officer](#).

When can I decommission a system?

Systems can only be decommissioned when one of the following conditions have been met:

- all data on the system has been migrated to another system performing the same function, or,
- retention schedules covering all the data on the system have elapsed, or,
- the data has been preserved elsewhere (e.g. digital archives).

Before decommissioning a system, please consult with your [Government Records Officer](#).

What is transitory systems information?

Transitory systems information consists of information of temporary usefulness generated for, or resulting from, computer systems operation (also known as transitory electronic data processing [EDP] records). A common example is a datafile used to upload data from one system to another. Once the data is uploaded and verified, the datafile can be destroyed. Refer to the [Transitory Information Schedule](#) to determine if your data falls under the definition of transitory.

How long are back-up data and system logs kept?

Backup data are retained until no longer required for system recovery, and in accordance with the established backup cycle for the application or system. System logs, used for ongoing system maintenance and performance purposes, are retained until no longer required. Logs maintained for security purposes or investigations have longer requirements. See [ARCS primary 6820](#) for more details.

Where do I classify the documentation related to the management of the system?

Because the function of systems management is common across government (e.g., there are information management branches within each ministry responsible for supporting and maintaining information systems) these records are classified and scheduled within the *Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS)* - [ARCS primary 6450](#). This ensures that all offices are consistently classifying and scheduling their systems documentation.