





DESIGNING A RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE FOR THE NATIONAL FORESTRY AUTHORITY RECORDS DEPARTMENT

BY

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A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELORS OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER, 2022

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
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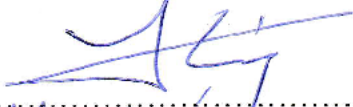
DECLARATION

As a group, we declare that the information presented in this project report is our own work and has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any academic purpose.

Date 24th October 2022.....

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APPROVAL

DEDICATION

We dedicate our work to those who have extended their helping hands to make us achieve this milestone and worked so hard and tirelessly to ensure that we attain this level of education.

Among all, are our beloved parents and guardians, our Supervisor Mr. KALYOWA FREDRICK and other lecturers at the East African School of Library and Information Science who have accorded us the required knowledge through our academic journey.

More thanks go to our beloved friends with whom we have always consulted and shared productive ideas, resources and knowledge and above all to the Almighty God who has always blessed and given us the wisdom and courage to work hard and come up with this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We give glory to the almighty God who has enabled us to come this far. We thank him for his blessings, unfailing love and protection.

We would like to express our gratitude to our supervisor Mr. KALYOWA FREDRICK. Who guided us throughout this project.

Our sincere heartfelt appreciation goes to our beloved parents for their support, love, care, protection and encouragement. May God bless them abundantly.

We also extend our appreciation to all our lecturers at the East African School of Library and Information Science for the wisdom and knowledge they have given us. Finally, we extend our gratitude to all our friends for their support and time.

ABSTRACT

Background

A records retention and disposal schedule is a systematic listing or description of organizations records which indicates the arrangements to be made for their custody, retention and final disposition. National Forestry Authority is the body of the Ugandan central government that is responsible for managing the country's Central Forest Reserves. According to their 2013 management annual report, staff and key stakeholders experienced major delays and challenges in finding various information. Hence the purpose of our study was to design a retention and disposition schedule for the organisation. The research objectives were to find out the types of records, how the records are retained and disposed of, identify the challenges facing the disposition schedule therein making appropriate recommendations.

Methodology

We used a cross sectional study design to collect both the primary and secondary data. Using purposive sampling to select the respondents. Interview guide, questionnaires and observation guides were used as data collection tools. The study population included all workers and administrators in the records department except non-officers. The raw data was entered, verified and interpreted using SPSS computer software, creating an electronic database secured with a password.

Findings.

The organisation information is classified under legal records, policy records, governing records, administrative records, reporting records, operational records, organizational records, research records and archives majority of which is kept in hard copy. The applied retention methods are; records filing, file tracking, file census, records access restriction, weeding and records appraisal. The NFA records disposition methods are burning, shredding, recycling and transfer to the archive/storage. Some of the challenges we identified were limited trained records personnel, premature disposition, lack of enough equipment, outdated regulation policies and guidelines for the management of both paper and electronic records.

Conclusion

Having a hard copy retention and manual disposition inclined system exposes the organisation to increased risk due to human error. Our finding highlighted various incidences of loss of information due to poor storage, misfiling and premature disposition. They have a parallel system of excel filling however these digital records are rarely updated and are stored offline which restricts their accessibility. Therefore, there is pressing need for training and adopting of a better retention and disposition system and schedule at National Forest Authority.

Recommendation

From our finding, we recommend that NFA adopt to our tailored retention and disposal schedule/system which factors in easier record tracking through storage space mapping, emphasis records digitalization, regular records department staff training, organisation wide sensitization on current laws, regulations and policies on retention and disposition and

construction of more storage facilities.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Organizations depend entirely on information to make critical strategic decisions, support innovation and generate revenue (Peppard & Ward, 2016). Most of this vital information is available in records which should not be revealed to unauthorized people. Retaining records is a legal responsibility and thus, organizations should designate qualified and well-trained personnel to manage records. (Stuessy et al, 2018).

Saffady (2016) defines records retention and disposition schedule as a document often developed using archival appraisal concepts and analysis of business and legal contexts within the intended jurisdictions that outlines how long certain types of records need to be retained before they can be destroyed. Ministries like any other organizations and government agencies need to retain records beyond current use needs. Good records management methods and the provision of records retention schedules in an organization is very important because it maximizes operational cost savings.

According to Corens, Peters & Walsham (2016), records to keep and for how long may vary from organization to organization. They further note that whether a record is in paper or electronic format, it does not determine its value or retention period and its content is the key factor. An effective records retention and disposition program is essential to successful records management which is an integral part of information resources management. There is no need to keep every individual record, but there is need to identify and preserve archives. Only a small proportion of all records created will be retained indefinitely.

Brien (2011), states that an archivist is responsible for ascertaining which records are to be kept permanently. He further states that, not all records need to be kept because the cost of managing and keeping the records would have a huge impact on the budget and would also require larger space.

Therefore, there is a pressing need for an organization to create a records retention and disposition schedule. By creating such a schedule, it can be used as a guide in the organization to dispose off active and inactive records based on the criteria that has been established.

Due to the increased reliance on authentic information and records in the running and operation of many organizations day to day business, there is need to keep the organizations records and information resources safe as long as they are still needed in the running of business. However different institutions create and receive a lot of records in the course of their operations hence the need to monitor and control the quantity and quality of records kept by the organization since the value of different kinds of records vary and change from time to time.

1.2 Background about NFA

The National Forest Authority is the body of the Ugandan central government that is responsible for managing the country's Central Forest Reserves. It was created as a semi-autonomous corporation through the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act of 2003 to replace the prior Forestry Department.

The National Forestry Authority was established by the Act of Parliament in 2003 to replace the century-old Forest Department which as a purely government department had failed to address the challenges that the forestry sector was facing in the 1970s through to the 1990s. The mandate of the National Forestry Authority is to manage Central Forest Reserves on a sustainable basis and to supply other high quality forestry- related products and services in accordance with sound financial and commercial practice.

1.3 Problem statement

According to the 2013 management annual report at National Forestry Authority, there has been a serious problem to the staff and key stakeholders like policy makers when finding necessary information. Consequently problem solving, decision making and information dissemination is very hard and it affects efficiency and productivity at National Forestry Authority.

According to Nahid & Maryam (2020), there is need to retain information or records in a way that they should be made accessible in the future, thus the necessity for organizations to have a well-established records retention and disposition schedule (RRDS). An organization with a solid foundation of proven successful records management practices will preserve the right information for the correct length of time, meet legal requirements faster and more cost effectively, control and manage records storage and destruction, archive vital information for business continuity and disaster recovery, provide information in a timely and efficient manner regardless of urgency of request hence a need to develop an efficient records retention and disposition schedule for National Forestry Authority records department.

It is therefore from this background that the researchers intend to carry out a study on designing records retention and disposition schedule at the National Forestry Authority records department.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to design a records retention and disposition schedule at the National Forestry Authority Records Department.

1.4.1 Objectives of the study

1. To identify the types of records at national forestry authority records department
2. To find out how records are retained and disposed off at the National Forestry Authority Records Department
3. To identify the challenges facing records retention and disposition schedule at National

Forestry Authority Records Department.

4. To suggest recommendations for improving records retention and disposition at National Forestry Authority Records Department.

1.5 Research questions

1. What kind of records are received and created at national forestry authority records department?
2. What is the retention and disposition schedule of national forestry authority records department?
3. What challenges are associated with the current records retention and disposition schedule at national forestry authority records department?
4. What should be done to improve the records retention and disposition schedule at national forestry authority records department?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study will help the record managers at national forestry authority records department to identify possible gaps that might be challenging or prove problematic in the management of their records in terms of retention and disposition of their records.

The national forestry authority records department will be able to meet legal and regulatory requirements regarding records retention and disposition.

The registry at national forestry authority records department shall be guided on how long specific records should be kept and the proper methods of disposal for such records.

1.7 Scope of this study

The scope of this study was divided into three major elements; these include: Geographical scope, time scope and conceptual scope

Conceptual scope

The study focused on two major areas namely; records retention and records disposition.

1.8 Definition of Key terms

Record

According to Dinneen & Julien (2020), the term record refers to information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

Government record

A government record is any recorded information in any physical format or media created or received by any government agency or ministry during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions. Unless otherwise specified, the word “record” mentioned in this publication refers to “government record” (Moatlhodi & Kalusopa 2016).

Active Records

Active records are those records frequently used for current business and therefore should be maintained in their place of origin or receipt.

Inactive records

Inactive records are those records which are no longer required or rarely required for the conduct of business or reference. Inactive records in physical form may be transferred to intermediate storage before disposal. The definition of inactive records may vary according to the nature of business and/or operational consideration of individual offices or organizations.

Records Disposal

Records disposal refers to the actions taken on inactive records which have little or no retention value. It takes the form of records destruction, records transfer to the public records office or for permanent preservation, records migration to different storage media (such as microform or DVD) for prolonged retention and transfer of records outside government control. (Duranti, 2010)

Records retention and disposal Schedule

According to Smallwood (2013), a records retention and disposal schedule is also known as a records disposal schedule or a disposal schedule. It is a systematic listing or description of organizations records which indicates the arrangements to be made for their custody, retention and final disposition.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review on record retention and disposition. Various studies have been carried out on records retention and disposition; therefore, this chapter presents scholarly works on records retention and disposition. It specifically follows the objectives of the study to include: types of records stored in government institutions, f retention and disposition schedules, different definitions of records retention and disposition, its benefits, elements of a good retention and disposition schedule among others

2.1 Types of records kept in an organization.

Records: Any document that your organization either created or received in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. Any document that has value requires retention.

Non-Records: Any material that does not contain valuable information. Non-records may include reference material, personal papers, junk mail, publications, or duplicate copies of documents.

Vital Records: Any document that will be needed immediately after an emergency in order for your organization to continue operation.

Archival Records: Historical records of enduring value that is preserved and stored within the organization's archives.

2.2 Records retention and disposition schedules

Kemoni (2008) states that a records retention and disposition schedule is a legal authority that describes records under the control of a government organization, specifies how long and where they must be kept as they progress through the phases of their life cycle, the format in which the records must be stored and what their final disposition will be (destruction or archival preservation) at the end of their life cycle.

The scholar further notes that a records retention and disposition schedule includes: descriptive information about the organization, its programs, services, functions, activities and legislation; descriptive information about each records series, its use, format, security needs, accessibility, significance to government programs and any legal or freedom of information/protection of privacy references, date ranges for each records series, the business rules associated with records closure (file completed or closed, i.e. completion of the active phase) for each records series;

Healy (2010), states that the basis of any good records management program is the implementation of well-developed records retention schedules. She further notes that a retention schedule is a plan for the management of your records. It lists your entity's records and how long they should be kept.

ARMA (2007) observes that once a record is no longer useful for performing current activities, it becomes inactive and should be retained as long as it is needed to meet the organization's administrative, fiscal and legal requirements. The length of time the records must be kept to meet those requirements is called a retention period.

2.3 Importance of a records retention and disposition schedule

A records retention schedule is the cornerstone of an effective records management program. It is a policy document that defines an organization's legal and compliance recordkeeping requirements, ARMA (2015). Pullen, Troy, & Maguire (2017) note that organizations implement records retention schedules in order to ensure that their records are kept as long as they are legally and operationally required and that obsolete records are disposed of in a systematic and controlled manner. They further note that a records retention schedule is intended to ensure that employees adhere to approved recordkeeping requirements.

Records retention schedules serve as organizations legal authority to retain and purge records and, therefore, hold great importance for a company. The records retention

schedule captures all of the types of records created and used by a company in the course of its business and indicates how long these records are required to be retained (Stephenson, & Sage, 2009).

According to McDonald, & Leveille (2014), a retention schedule needs to be developed and applied in a systematic manner, as part of an organizations corporate- wide records management strategy. Both development and implementation of a retention schedule are important elements in establishing a "good faith" effort and ensuring a sound records management program.

A well-developed records retention and disposition schedule is beneficial in that it helps to ensure that an organization meets all legal and fiscal retention requirements for records regardless of their media. It also helps in identifying records that require enhanced security, identifying the records custodianship for all multi-copy records, reduce floor space dedicated to storage of active records, establishes timeframes within which records should be transferred to semi-current storage and provide a go-ahead to purge unnecessary records from inactive storage (Fisher, L 2006).

Ssekitto (2019), states that disposing of records that are no longer needed is an important part of effective records management. In fact, records disposal is an activity that is under legislation such as the National Records and Archives Act, 2001 of Uganda.

Records disposal can be described as a process by which records are either destroyed or retained as archives (Ssekitto, 2019). He further notes that disposal may involve a range of processes associated with implementing the records retention, destruction or transfer decisions documented in the records retention and disposal guidelines of any given entity

Roediger & Butler (2011) in their article "The critical role of retrieval practice in long-term retention", note that finding information and retrieving of records becomes a lot more easier when records are destroyed after the lapse of their retention period because there is less to search from and it reduces the storage costs and management of information or

records that are no longer required for business operation.

A record retention and disposition schedule are a central feature of an effective records and information management service. It lists and prescribes mandatory requirements for the length of time an organizations' record must be kept and the rightful means of disposal and this is always driven by legislation, regulation, and policy (Garaba, 2010).

Millar (2009), pointed out the benefits of disposition of records as; it avoids unnecessary storage costs incurred by using office space to keep and maintain records.

Gingrich and Brian (2006) state that disposition is the final destination of a record after it has reached the end of their retention period in active or inactive storage space. Records may be transferred to an archive for retention or may be destroyed. He asserts that inactive storage may be housed on-site or offsite and that on-site is the storage of an organization while off-site storage is a potentially secure

2.4 Qualities of a good retention and disposition schedule

According to Myburgh (2005), records retention programs are developed to retain and protect a company's vital records and to dispose of the records that no longer serve as useful purpose.

Good records management methods and the provision of records retention schedules in an organization is very important because it can maximize operational cost savings and the availability of space within an organization.

William, (2018) opines that a good retention and disposition schedule is one that identifies records that are maintained by the organization and indicates the period of time that those records are to be kept in order to satisfy legal, operational and historical requirements. He also notes that it should also maintain records in a manner that is secure and cost-effective

2.5 Policies, laws, principles and rules for records retention and disposition

Understanding what information to keep and disposing of information that is no longer needed is an important part of effective information management. In fact, disposal is something that you are required to do under legislation such as The National Records and Archives Act, 2001.

According to state laws and rules, the retention periods established by individual organizations are minimum retention periods. This therefore, means that records can be kept for as long as they're needed for either fiscal, administrative, evidential or compliance purposes.

The following are some of the legislations policies and rules that require government institutions to retain and dispose of records rightly in Uganda.

- The Data protection and information security act also guides on the retention and disposition of public records and also clearly dictates the penalties in case such regulation is not met.
- The National Records and Archives act of 2001; this act clearly defines the term retention and disposition and states that every government institution, ministry and agency must retain records relating to government business for specific periods and after disposed of either by destruction or by transferring them to the National Archives.
- Other legislations, policies and laws regarding records retention and disposition include; Evidence and Privacy act, Employment acts, Acquisition of public records, destruction procedures among others.

2.6 Elements of a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

According to Kansas state university (2018), A retention and disposition schedule is a plan of action that indicates the period of time you should retain your records. Records schedules allow you to dispose of records in a timely, systematic manner by setting retention and disposal guidelines based on administrative, legal, fiscal, or research needs.

They further point out the key elements that a records retention and disposition schedule as;

- Records series title and description
- Minimum retention period
- Final disposition requirements
- Access restrictions and
- Vital records identification

2.7 Types of records retention and disposition schedules

According to the Alberta government information branch (2004), there are two types of records retention and disposition schedules:

Continuing Schedules; These should be prepared when you are scheduling; – records of an ongoing program, service, function or process; – records that are still being created; and – records that are active or that have long term value. Continuing schedules should be used in the vast majority of scheduling projects.

One-Time Schedules; These should only be prepared when you are scheduling; – records of a program, service, function or process that has been discontinued; – inactive records that will not be converted to a new records classification structure; and – records that are being alienated or transferred outside the custody and control of government. All one-time records schedules automatically lapse one calendar year after the date on which they were approved by the Alberta Records Management Committee or sixty days after the final disposition is to take place, if the final disposition is more than one calendar year from when the schedule was approved.

Steps involved in designing and developing a records retention and disposition schedule in his Journal “Toward a Record Retention Policy”, Vaughan (2007), states that there are three steps towards the development of the records retention and disposition schedule and they’re as below;

2.8 Factors determining the retention period of a record

Documents are an essential part of business operations, and many organizations wouldn't be able to operate without their files. Documents must not only be easily accessible as required, but they must be retained for certain lengths of time. The question is, what factors determine how long to keep your documents?

Bridget Giacinto (2018), on a Nova Backup security blog outlines three major factors that determine how long documents should be kept as follows;

Laws and Regulations; she asserts that companies must not only contend with federal and state laws regarding document retention, they need to also comply with industry standards. For example, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act requires health institutions to keep patient files for at least six years and describes how these documents must be secured during this period.

The information itself; Bridget (2018) notes that before further discussing document retention, it's first important to understand retention meaning. Document retention refers to how long to keep documents. Many organizations develop a document retention policy with guidelines as to how long to keep different types of records. She further notes that while laws and industry regulations are possibly the biggest factors for document retention, the information itself should be another major indicator for what files should be kept. The Rockefeller Archive Center noted that any documents that contain compliance information, identify business participants or serve as transaction evidence have solid cases for retention. She also notes that other organization communications, policies and reports should also be retained permanently. However, for files like budget records, service requests, utilities records and administration logs, these documents have limited value and could be stored for up to three years, unless otherwise specified by regulatory laws. Businesses can look to retain records with little to no long-term value for up to 30 days or fewer, depending on the subject matter.

Decision Making Capabilities; information is key to making long-term choices, and document retention could be a major facilitator in these efforts. Bridget (2018) notes that not only will keep a data trail help determine how problems occurred, but it will also protect your organization as you make better decisions for the future. Keeping files like financial records and business models could also help make you more attractive to prospective buyers and investors, enabling them to understand how the company operates and what potential it has.

2.9 Research Gap

In view of the above, it can be asserted that there has been a lot of research about records retention and disposition schedules however there is no specific research that has been conducted in special reference to records retention and disposition at national forestry authority records department. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate if the authority has well established policies regarding the subject under study. That is why the group has conducted a study leading to the designing and development of a records retention and disposition schedule at the authority.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological aspects used in this study. The chapter discusses the research approach and design, area of the study, the population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection methods, validity and reliability of Research Instruments, research ethical consideration, and data analysis which were employed in this study.

3.1 Research approach and design

A research design is a plan for collecting, organizing and analyzing data with the objective of combining the relevance of the research with the economy in procedure (Kothari, 1985). In this study a cross sectional study design was adopted whereby data (both primary and secondary) was collected at a single point in time. This provided a snapshot of ideas, opinions, and information and so on (Bryman, 2001; Creswell, 2009). It was most preferred because of its broad scope and can incorporate many variables of interest to the researcher. The research was an institutional-based cross-sectional study through interviews of administrators and other workers.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in the Records Department of the National Forestry Authority head offices located on Plot 10/20, Spring Road in Kampala capital city.

3.3 Study population

The study population included all workers and administrators of the authority in the records department. Non-officers such as security personnel's, office messengers and drivers were excluded in the study.

3.4 Sampling procedure and sample size

Sampling is defined as a deliberate process of selecting a part of population for study with the intention of generalizing the findings to the whole population. According to Marshall &

Rossmann (2001), valuable information is gained from people selected on the basis of positions they hold in administrative levels of their institutions. If a sample is to be used, by whatever method chosen, it is important that the individuals selected are representative of the whole population.

In this study, the respondents were selected using purposive sampling. This technique relies on the judgment of the researcher when choosing who to ask to participate. Therefore, the researchers selected only those individuals with explicit knowledge about the topic under study. The estimated study population of 10 officers was selected.

3.5 Data collection methods.

During this process of gathering information, the researchers used an interview guide questionnaire and observation as data collection tools.

The researchers employed the above method because it is easy and quick to collect information compared to other methods of data collection.

3.6 Data Management and Analysis

An electronic data base was created from the raw data using SPSS computer software. Double entry check was conducted to minimize entry errors. A database was created specifically for safe data storage. The data in the computer was secured with a password only known to the researchers.

3.7 Data validity and reliability

All filled questionnaires and interview guide questionnaires, will be checked for validity before leaving data collection site, they will be checked for completeness, accuracy, stored in files and entered correctly in the computer. The questionnaires will be kept properly in a locker to avoid losses and access to those not authorized before being prepared for analysis.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Before carrying out the study, the researchers obtained authority to conduct research

from the University. Thereafter, the researchers had to seek permission from the National Forestry Authority administration to meet the participants. The study involved mostly human subjects hence; the researchers ensured that the privacy of the individuals was maintained. Respondents voluntarily chose to participate in this study. The respondents were provided with adequate information pertaining to the study, procedure that was to be followed, objectives of the study, and benefits of taking part in the study, manner in which the findings would be disseminated. These enabled participants to make informed decisions on whether to participate or not. Anonymity (identity of individual) was protected by avoiding use of names on the questionnaires. In regards to the analysis, the researchers ensured that the analysis was done objectively, no fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, was applied in this study. The study results were shared with all interested respondents and management of the Authority.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the study according to the objectives of the project. The findings were presented in accordance with the objectives of study.

4.1 Description of Respondents

This section provides an overview of the demographic profile of the sample. We were able to interview a records manager who attained a bachelor's degree in records and archives management and a master's degree in information science, five records officers who were all bachelors' holders in the field of records management and four records assistant who were diploma holders in library and information science. The respondents were distributed in different designations that are the records manager (1), records officers (5), records assistant (4). The above people were chosen because they were in the direct management of records at the National Forestry Authority.

4.2 Response rate

The researchers had interviews with different staff at the National Forestry Authority that mainly consisted of the records management staff including the records manager, records officers and assistants. Below is the response rate for the respondents in the study.

Table 1: Response Rate

Category of Respondents	Expected Number	Actual Number	Response Rate %
Records Manager	1	1	5
Records Officers	6	5	10
Records Assistant	5	4	40
Total	12	10	55

Source: Field data 2022

Table 1 above shows the response rate of the respondents in the study. It shows that the researchers expected 12 respondents but managed to interview only 10 respondents

4.3 Gender of the Respondents

The researchers observed and also asked respondents about their gender in order to find out how many female and male respondents were involved in the study and this is represented in the table below;

Table 2: Showing Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
Male	4	40
Female	6	60
Total	10	100

Source: Field data 2022

Results from Table 2 above showed the gender of the respondents who participated in the study at the National Forestry Authority. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 6(60%) were female and 4(40%) were male.

4.4 Types of records generated, received and maintained at the National Forestry Authority

When respondents were asked on the types of records generated, received and maintained at the National Forestry Authority, they explained different types of records which included the following;

Administrative records

These are records which obtain the origin, development, activities and accomplishments of the authority. These generally fall into two categories: policy records and operational records.

Policy records:

These are records that relate to the organization such as plans, methods, techniques, or rules which the authority has adopted to carry out its responsibilities and functions. These include three basic categories.

Reporting documents: Annual reports, periodic progress or summary reports, special reports or accomplishment, transcripts of hearings, minutes of meetings and conferences, and agency histories

Organizational documents: Budgets and budget planning records, fiscal records, organizational and functional charts.

Governing documents: Manuals, directives, orders and interpretations issued from top authority levels, correspondence files of high-level officials, regulations, circulars, instructions, memoranda or regular issuances that establish a course of action and staff studies or special reports relating to methods of workloads and performances.

Operational records

These are records necessary to implement administrative policies, procedures and operations. The operational value is the usefulness of a record in the conduct of an organization's business. Examples include mandates, procedural records, or records that give direction.

Legal records

These are records of legal value and these include those with evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations of the state. These may include:

Records relating to employment: veterans' records involving legal rights attached to employment, basic state personnel records and in some cases payroll records.

Records relating to property rights: land, probate, contracts, agreements, leases, licenses.

Records relating to citizenship rights: vital statistics, such as birth, death, marriage, some legal proceedings, and criminal cases

Records containing information required to protect the state against claims or to enforce statutes: executive orders, rules, regulations and records to establish or support judicial

opinions and interpretations

Research records

These are records that can be described as records that report different aspects which are to be referred to, projecting certain events. They include research data and materials as well as documenting information. These records may include important information on problems, conditions and specific events. These included case files, correspondences, among others.

Historical records

These are records worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and they are selected for deposit in the National Archives. These records are retained for many uses. For example, to give consistency and continuity to the actions of the public officials and to find successful ways for solving recurrent problems

4.5 Practices for proper retention and disposition of records at National Forestry Authority.

On practices for proper retention and disposition of records that are being practiced at National Forestry Authority, respondents highlighted several practices as explained below;

Records Filing; While interviewing the respondents, we noted that records are filed daily by the records managers in the registry department, they are put into files, file folders and big boxes and this also protects the files from being mishandled and keeping them tidy. They are kept in a way that can easily be accessed incase their need arises.

File census; This helps the records management staff to know the records count and also identify those records whose retention value has elapsed and require destruction and those that need to be transferred for permanent preservation.

Regular cleaning of the storage area; According to the records assistant, the storage area and the storage equipment should always be kept clean and tidy, dust free in order to ensure that these records are safely kept for as long as their retention value lasts.

Weeding of records; This is done regularly and it involves the removal of inactive records from the active storage areas to be transferred to the semi-active storage facilities.

Records access restriction; This is carried out to ensure that the handling of records is restricted to appropriate staff only. This helps to ensure that records are handled with care and can always be found when required which also helps to track the location of the file whenever needed.

File tracking; files are always recorded before being taken out of the registry when they are requested for by the action officers and this helps to easily monitor their movements and also ensure their safety while in custody of other offices.

Records appraisal; This is the process for determining the value of records. It is also known as the evaluation, review or selection process that determines which records are to be destroyed and those that require permanent preservation because of their enduring value.

4.6 Methods used for records disposal at the National Forestry Authority

After records appraisal, records are either transferred to a low-cost storage facility or destroyed. The study established that once the retention period for specific records has elapsed records are appraised and appropriate disposition actions are undertaken. Respondents clarified that National Forestry Authority employs different methods of disposition of records and they are as follows;

Burning; Records are first collected in batches and taken to a safer burning ground under the supervision of a senior records management staff. Records are not allowed to be exposed to the public and this why they resort to burning them.

Shredding; this involves the use of shredding machines that tear records/paper in tiny bits in such a way that such records cannot be restructured. The shredded materials cannot be put back together and made comprehensible.

Recycling; records are well packed in sacks and transferred to the recycling places. Records

management staff usually supervise the activity closely to ensure that all records are destroyed by the recycling machine and that no record remains untouched.

Transfer to the archive; records that have been evaluated by the senior staff members at registry are selected for permanent preservation due to their enduring value. This is usually done under the guidance of the retention and disposition schedule which clearly indicates those records that require permanent retention. This helps to create more storage space at the registry.

4.7 Challenges faced in the retention and disposition of records

In an interview with records management staff at the National Forestry Authority they mentioned that the department faced a challenge of limited funds to facilitate the activities for example, to purchase equipment like recycle bins, shredders and hiring professionals to execute the retention and disposition procedures.

It was also observed that there was limited storage space for both active and inactive records at the ministry, thus no space to allocate records meant for destruction leading to the destruction of records that are not meant to be destroyed.

There was a challenge of limited skilled records management personnel to handle the retention and disposition of records at the ministry.

There was destruction of records that are still vital and required in the running of current business since their destruction is not properly guided. This makes the records unavailable in case they are needed for other activities.

There was a challenge of high costs that are incurred in the management of records since the organization uses large volumes of records that are actually not needed and consume storage space that would have been used for other vital records.

There was lack of enough equipment for the retention and disposition of records such as

shredders, filing cabinets, shelves and this leads to improper disposal of records or retention of unnecessary records.

There was lack of proper regulation, legislation, standards and guidelines for the management of both paper and electronic records, this leads to storing of unnecessary records for so long and destroying of others before their retention period lapses.

4.8 Suggested solutions to the above challenges

Designing and developing of a proper records retention and disposition schedule to determine records that require permanent preservation and those that need to be destroyed and for how long certain records should be retained.

Allocation of enough space

There should be allocation of enough space for the disposal and destruction of records that is only restricted to the authorized personnel to avoid information leakages.

Training of staff in records retention and disposition

Records management staff should be trained on the proper ways of retaining and disposing of records. This helps staff to avoid retaining of unnecessary records and destruction of records with enduring value.

Automation of records management system

There should be automation of records management systems. This will facilitate easy archiving and retrieving of records when needed by the authorized users in the organization and also identifies the records that require permanent preservation from those that need to be destroyed hence ensuring that the ministry only retains those records that are needed.

Sensitization on current laws, regulations and policies on retention and disposition

The organization staff should be equipped with updated laws, regulations and policies regarding records retention and disposition and also ensure that these are strictly followed

Increase funding vote for the records department

The government should also increase on the funding provided to the records department to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the management of records at the authority.

Construct storage facilities

The ministry should also construct new storage facilities since it has large volumes of records that accumulate over years.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter consisted of data presented and the discussion of findings. The findings were discussed based in the objectives and directly connected to the research questions that guided the project.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE ANALYSIS, DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the study analysis, design, development, test and implementation of a records retentions and disposition schedules at National Forestry Authority of Uganda.

5.1 Study of the existing records retention and disposition schedule

The study was conducted at the National Forestry Authority, with the major purpose of studying how records at the authority's registry were retained and disposed off. Findings showed that there is no specific records retention and disposition schedule for the National Forestry Authority records department. The existing schedule was designed by the ministry of public service and it is not appropriate for the National Forestry Authority. Records are transferred and disposed unsystematically.

5.2 Weaknesses of the existing records retention and disposition practices

The way records are retained and disposed off is not documented hence it is not clear for how long records should be retained and when they should be disposed of. This has constantly led to the destruction of records that are still important and keeping of records that lost their value hence misusing the already limited space.

5.3 System analysis and design

Under this section, the focus was on the requirements of well-established records retention and disposition schedule and these were categorized into three categories; legal requirements, user requirements and operational requirements.

Table 3: Summary of Requirements

Legal requirements	User requirements	Operational requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National records and archives act, 2001 • Access to information act, 2005 • Data protection and privacy act, 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include all record categories and series • Must be comprehensive enough to include all units • Easy to understand and implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be comprehensive to include all record categories • Must clearly state the retention action and methods of disposal

5.4 Comprehensive records retention and disposition schedule designed and developed for the registry at the National Forestry Authority

5.4.1 Purpose;

This records retention and disposition schedule provides for the systematic review, retention and destruction of records received and maintained at the registry of National Forestry Authority. This policy/schedule covers all records and document categories regardless of their format. It contains guidelines for how long certain documents should be kept and how they should be disposed off. The schedule is designed to ensure compliance with various state laws and regulations that require sufficient retention and disposition of public records, to eliminate accidental or premature destruction of records and to facilitate the departments operations by promoting efficiency and freeing up valuable space by ensuring that only records worth keeping are retained and those that are not are disposed off. The policy will ensure that records are maintained throughout their life-cycle according to accepted standards, which are valuable for decision making, are protected from unauthorized loss or release, and are either stored for long- term or historical purposes or disposed off only when all legal and operational obligations have been met.

5.4.2 Scope

This policy addresses the retention and disposal of the department’s files and records, regardless of format and applies to the National Forestry Authority. All records regardless of their format, whether they are electronic or paper files, emails, voice notes among others

that are generated or received in support of business operations at National Forestry Authority are to be managed in conformance with this schedule.

5.4.3 Policy statement

This policy represents the authority's policy regarding the retention and disposition of all records held by the organization. The policy is intended to ensure that the National Forestry Authority meets legal and regulatory standards, reduces risk by prioritizing the disposal of confidential information in the right way, optimizes the use of electronic and physical storage space, minimizes the cost of records retention, maintains documents according to their legal and business requirements and disposes of records securely when they are no longer needed.

5.4.4 Goal

To ensure that records keeping meets the legal and operational requirements regarding retention and disposition of records at National Forestry Authority

5.4.5 Relevance/significance of the schedule

- This policy clearly defines what documents need to be maintained and for how long.
- A retention schedule helps to ensure that businesses are in compliance with state laws and regulations
- To maximize the use of the limited space for keeping records since it will be easy to identify and isolate records that are no longer needed for preservation.
- To ensure quick and easy retrieval of records
- To ensure the organization meets the legal and operational requirements.

5.5 The records retention and disposition schedule

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for National Forestry Authority, Uganda

S/ N	Record Group/Series	Record Title	Period of Retention (Active)	Period of Retention in Offsite Storage or Records Centre(inactive)	Destruction	Transfer to Archives Repository	Remarks
1	Financial	Pay Record Cards	30years	30years	Disposal after all benefits have been paid	No	
		Pay sheets	30years	30years	Disposal after all benefits have been paid	No	
		Severance	30years	30years	Disposal after benefits have been paid	No	
		Schedule of accounts	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Vouchers	7years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Mino reequipment files	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Authorization to Sign Cheques	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Draft Estimates	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Expenditure/Income Statements	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Reconciliation Statements	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	

		Pay slips	1year	Not transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Invoice Order Books	7years	Not transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Releases	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Warrants	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Checklists	3years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Cashbooks	20years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Ledgers	10yearsafterclosure	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Vouchers (not salary related)	7years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Vouchers (salary related)	To be Processed and then placed with there levant pay record cards	No transfer	Disposal after all benefits have been paid	No	
2.	General Administration	Contract documents	5years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Acquisitions	20years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	Or the Expected life of the asset

		Accommodations	5years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Complaints	5years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	Or until issue is resolved
		Tender documents (Registers/ Files)	15years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Minutes of Meetings	20years	No transfer	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives
		Policy	10years	50years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives
		General Circulars	7years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Correspondence Registers (incoming and outgoing)	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Communication/Public Relations info on invitations, complaints, newsletter, donations, visits	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Publications: documents produced by the organization e.g. journals, newsletters	10years	50years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives

3.	Office Management	Requisition books	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Logbooks	5 years (After audit)	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Gas & Oil books	5 years (After Audit)	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Contract books	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Approval to purchase	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Quotations	1year	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Inventory files	15years	10years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
4.	Human Resource Management	Personal files	30years	30years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	Or until Officer has been paid all benefits
		Job Descriptions	10years	10years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Policy files	10years	50years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives

		General including vacancies/ circular files	2years	5years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Return of Personnel	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Establishment books	30years	30years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives
		Attendance Registers	30years	30years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Unpunctuality Reports	7years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Minutes of Meetings	10years	50years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives
		Application for Employment	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Operation Manuals	10years	50years	No Destruction	Yes	Transfer directly to National Archives
5.	Audit	Bank Reconciliation	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Financial Statements	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	

		Reports and Queries	5years	10years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Investigations	10years	10years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
6.	Project Unit	Draft Estimates of DP projects	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Development Program projects	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Project progress reports	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Cabinet Notes/Minutes	7years	3years	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Investigative Reports	5years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	Or until matter is closed
7.	Training	Booklets and Pamphlets	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Application for courses	3years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Report on courses attended	2years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	
		Training plan	10years	No transfer	Disposal after Retention Period	No	

NB: The schedule starts when the records become inactive, some records that may be for some reasons are to be put on hold and those needed in courts of law, should not be disposed off until such matters are resolved. Thus these should be retained for more than their anticipated retention period.

Effective date

The policy is effective from Nov 10th 2022.

Approval, signature and date

The policy has to be approved and signed off by the permanent secretary and the director records and archives at National Forestry Authority.

Approval

.....

PERMANENT SECRETARY

National Forestry Authority, Uganda

5.6 Testing and Implementation of the Schedule

The records retention and disposition schedule was tested after its development to make sure that all record series were included in the schedule and appropriate retention actions and time was accorded.

5.7 Conclusion

In this study, we evaluated and analyzed the retention and disposition of records National Forestry Authority, the different challenges faced at the authority that are directly associated with records retention and disposition, proposed solutions to those challenges that eventually led to the development of a comprehensive records retention and disposition schedule in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the management of records at the authority.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter involves the summary of findings that were got from the assessment and interpretation of the collected data from the different respondents from the records management department at National Forestry Authority that participated in the study. It further presents conclusions made out of deductions from the data analyzed in chapter four above. This chapter also provided the different recommendations to be implemented at the Authority.

6.1 Summary of findings

This section provides the summary of the research findings which were based on the objectives of the study. The main aim of the project was to review the existing retention and disposition schedule, find out its defects in order to design and implement an effective records retention and disposition schedule for the registry at National Forestry Authority. The data collected was acquired with the use of three methods that is; interview, questionnaire and observation as shown in chapter three above. We mainly used the qualitative methods to gather the data from the authority. The target population of the study was the staff in the records department of the ministry and they included the records manager, records officers and assistant records officers

6.1.1 Challenges faced at National Forestry Authority

National Forestry Authority has got a number of challenges that affect the proper retention and disposition of records, these include, limited skilled records management personnel to handle the retention and disposition of records at the ministry, limited funds to facilitate the activities in terms of purchasing equipment such as shredders and recycling bins, there was limited storage space for both active and inactive records at the ministry thus no space to allocate records meant for destruction leading to the destruction of records that are not meant to be destroyed, destruction of records that are still vital and required in the running of current business, lack of enough equipment for the retention

and disposition of records such as shredders, filing cabinets, shelves among others thus leading to improper disposal of records or retention of unnecessary records, lack of proper regulation, legislation, standards and guidelines for the management of both paper and electronic records thus leading to the retention of unnecessary records for so long and destruction of others before their retention period lapses.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, we conducted the study project and were able to achieve the main aim of the study and the objectives of the study, that is to say; found out the types of records that are received and kept at the registry of National Forestry Authority, established the relationship between the use of a records retention and disposition schedule and the costs incurred in the management of the organizational records, found out the challenges that are associated with the absence of a records retention and disposition schedule in an organization and designed a comprehensive records retention and disposition schedule for National Forestry Authority.

6.3 Recommendations

Basing on the project study findings and interaction with the records department staff at National Forestry Authority, we came up with the following recommendations;

There should be automation of records management systems to facilitate easy archiving and retrieving of records by authorized users.

The government should increase on the funding provided to the records department to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the management of records at National Forestry Authority.

The authority should also construct new storage facilities since it has large volumes of records that accumulate over years.

Enough space should be allocated for the disposal and destruction of records and this

should only be restricted to authorized users.

The organization staff should be given updated laws, regulations and policies regarding records retention and disposition and also retains those that are needed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Estimated Budget

No	Item	Quantity	Rate @	Amount
1	Stationary			
	Flash disk	1	30,000/=	30,000/=
	File Folders	3	500/=	1,500/=
	Sub total			31,500/=
2	Secretarial Services			
	Internet surfing		30,000/=	30,000/=
	Typing and printing proposal	1 copy	30,000/=	30,000/=
	Photocopying proposal	4 copies	20,000/=	80,000/=
	Binding proposal	4 copies	1,500/=	4,500/=
	Photocopying interview guides	52 copies	600/=	31,200/=
	Sub Total			175,700/=
3	Data collection			
	Transport		50,000/=	50,000/=
	Sub Total			50,000/=
4	Final Report			
	Typing and printing report		30,000/=	30,000/=
	Photocopying report	4 Copies	40,000/=	160,000/=
	Binding report	4 Copies	4,000/=	16,000/=
	Sub Total			206,000/=
	Miscellaneous (10% of Total)			40,000/=
	Supervisors fee			500, 000/=
	Total			540,000/=
	Grand Total			1,053,200/=

Appendix II: Work Plan

	Activities	Months in 2021				
		Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Writing proposal					
2	Data Collection					
3	Data Analysis					
4	Report Writing					
5	Report Binding					
6	Final Report Submission					

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RECORDS FOR STUDY ON RETENTION AND DISPOSITION OF RECORDS IN NATIONAL FORESTRY AUTHORITY RECORDS DEPARTMENT

(Records staff, administrators, procurement officers etc)

This study is being conducted by students of Makerere University carrying out research on the retention and disposition of records at National Forestry Authority records department as a requirement for the fulfillment for the award of a degree in records and archives management. *Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated.*

Questions;

1. Age

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2. Gender

Male Female

3. Marital Status

Single Married Divorced Separated

4. Religion

Catholic Protestant Pentecost Muslim Born Agai

5. Education Level

Primary Secondary University Tertiari

6. Profession

.....

7. What records are in the NFA records department (PROBE: received, generated,

purchased, nature [manual, electronic, CD, Videos etc)

8. What are the processes in the NFA records department for retention and disposition of records at the Authority? (PROBE: processes, who does, when, after what periods, how long, retention period etc

12. What challenges does the records department face in relation to retention and disposition of records (PROBE: challenges by administration, records staff, environment, social, economic etc)

13. What do you think can be done to overcome such challenges? (PROBE: suggestions for improvement ie by records officers, administrators, procurement officers, security officers etc.

(THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING).