



BOTSWANA
Qualifications Authority

BQA RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

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BQA RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Summary of changes	Version

1. PRELIMINARY

1.1 POLICY TITLE

The title of this policy is: **BQA Records Retention and Disposal Policy.**

1.2 DEFINITIONS

Archives - Records of continuing value selected for permanent preservation -.

Classification scheme — A pre-determined arrangement by which records are filed and/or electronically indexed to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records.

Disposal — The act of implementing appraisal decisions. This includes transferring records for archiving or destruction.

Electronic record- A digital record that can be stored, transmitted, or processed by a computer.

Information — Content of records.

Non- Current Records - Records which no longer have value for current business.

Preservation - Records & Archives protected for use by present and future generations.

Record — Recorded information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization.

Records Appraisal — The process of determining the value of records for its disposition.

Records Disposal Schedule - A timetable used to determine when certain records should be disposed.

Records Life Cycle — Full life span of a record's existence from its creation, use, maintenance, and to disposition.

Retention - The process of preserving and maintaining records for a given period.

Retention period — The length of time that records should be retained in offices before they are either transferred into archival custody or destroyed/deleted.

Retrieval - The process of recalling specific records from storage.

Storage- The measures for keeping records under defined conditions and permitting their retrieval.

Vital records- Records identified as essential for the continuing conduct of an organization's business, including the re-creation of its legal status, and determining the rights and obligations of its stakeholders

1.3 ABBREVIATIONS

2. BACKGROUND

Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) continuously creates vast volumes of records in its daily operations. However, at some point these records cease to be used in the daily conduct of business or add value to business operations. The Records Retention and Disposal Policy, therefore, acts as a guide for the management of non-current files. Poor management of noncurrent records may lead to poor planning, loss of resources and renting storage space for unimportant and worthless records.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 2.1 Ensure that records of historical and administrative importance are identified, and arrangements are made for their retention.
- 2.2 Provide guidance to the Authority on how and when records may be retained, archived or disposed.
- 2.3 Guide records creators, users, and management of the Authority on retention and disposal of records.

4. PURPOSE

This policy will guide the Authority to ensure that records are retained only for as long as they are needed for business purposes. When records are no longer required, necessary documentation must be done for the records to be disposed off, in a timely and appropriate manner. The ever increasing need for office accommodation particularly for non-current and semi-current records is expected to be reduced when this policy is implemented.

5. SCOPE

This policy shall be applicable to the following:

- i. All BQA employees including third parties contracted by or in partnership with the Authority.
- ii. All records formats in BQA, including but not limited to electronic and paper-based records (shared folders, e-mails, records management systems, databases). These records are outlined in the BQA classification scheme and are used to support the business operations.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

BQA commits to ensure that records of continuing value are preserved for posterity subject to records appraisal and that records without value are disposed as per the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

7. RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

7.1 RETENTION OF BQA RECORDS

7.1.1 Records Retention and Disposal Schedule (RRDS) shall be used to determine the retention and disposal periods of all non-current records.

7.1.2 The retention and disposal periods in the RRDS shall be determined in consultation with the Heads of Departments and responsible officers.

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7.1.3 The retention and disposal periods shall be subject to the legislation controlling creation of records. For example, in case of Finance and Accounting records, the Finance and Audit Act and the related Procedures and Instructions shall apply.

7.1.4 Records of continuing value shall be preserved subject to records appraisal to prolong the lifespan of useful research information and to slow down the rate of deterioration.

7.1.5 Records preserved as archives shall be kept in suitable storage environments and adopting safe handling practices.

7.1.6 Prescriptive preservation shall be a means of identifying and treating or copying damaged materials to restore useful access to the information they contain.

7.1.7 The Authority shall preserve its records because of the following reasons:

- i. legal value
- ii. evidential value
- iii. historical value
- iv. referential value

7.2 PROCEDURE FOR DISPOSAL OF BQA RECORDS

7.2.1 Records of temporary status shall be disposed at the expiration of the minimum retention period described in the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

7.2.2 Accession lists of BQA records must be retained permanently for accountability purposes.

7.2.3 The Authority shall ensure that records are destroyed in an appropriate manner and that sensitive and confidential information is not inadvertently released.

7.2.4 Records shall not be disposed if they are required for:

- i. any court action which involves or may involve the Authority

- ii. on-going investigation, audit, and commission of enquiry
- iii. any other purpose required by law

7.2.5 If in doubt about the legality or probity of the disposal of any document which may fall within these categories (6.2.3), the Authority shall obtain advice from the Legal Office and Botswana National Archives and Records Services.

7.2.6 The Records Manager shall recommend disposal of records to the Chief Executive Officer who shall authorise destruction.

7.2.7 No person shall destroy or dispose BQA records of any kind which are in his/her possession or control except with the written consent of the Chief Executive Officer.

7.3 METHODS OF DISPOSING BQA RECORDS

7.3.1 Disposal of BQA's records must be done completely so that no information is retrievable. It must be done in an environmentally friendly manner.

7.3.2 Hard copy (paper) records shall be destroyed by shredding, pulping, or pulverising.

7.3.3 Burning of records shall only be considered if there are no other disposal facilities available. Records will only be burned in accordance with appropriate environmental guidelines and local burning restrictions, and the Authority should employ appropriate processes such as the use of incinerators to ensure that records are properly destroyed.

7.3.4 Burying of records shall not be an acceptable method of destruction.

7.3.5 Electronic records shall be destroyed either by physical destruction of the storage medium such as cutting, smashing, or pulverizing or by such methods as digital file shredding.

7.3.6 Rewriting, degaussing, and reformatting shall also be used to scramble data to make recovery impossible.

7.3.7 The use of the "delete" function in software packages shall not be considered sufficient to destroy electronic records stored on media such as floppy disks, hard disks, and rewritable optical disks, as the information may still be recovered.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
Members of the Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the policy. Ensure that information security is given the highest possible degree of importance. Assess and approve proposals for disposal of records.
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for overseeing the policy development, implementation, and evaluation of impact areas.
Deputy Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy impact areas.
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure compliance with the policy with respect to records generated in their Departments. Accountable for management of records within their control in the Authority. This shall include putting measures and processes to manage risks associated with Departmental records in place.
Director Finance and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for management of records in the Authority including non-current records. Facilitation of the implementation of the RRDP, monitoring of performance, and reporting on business impact. Setting and implementing the records management processes to raise and maintain standards of records keeping and information management. Alignment of the policy to strategic initiatives. Periodic review of the policy.

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Manager, Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of the policy and the records retention and disposal schedule. ▪ Ensure that the Records Retention and Disposal standards are kept up to date and are relevant to the needs and obligations of the Authority. ▪ Create staff awareness regarding this policy. ▪ Ensure safe custody of records.
Manager, Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountable for all technical aspects in implementation of the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule on the electronic records management system.
Management (Extended Management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountable for monitoring compliance to the policy to eliminate poor management of records.
BQA employees and business partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comply with the policy, protocols to eliminate poor management of records.

9. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy shall be used in conjunction with and guided by:

- i. All legal instruments governing records management in Botswana.
- ii. Any records management or related policies that guides international use and management of information and its protocols.

10. POLICY REVIEWING

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years or when a need arises to ensure conformity to current legislation and records management requirements.

11. APPROVAL

This policy was approved by and signed on behalf by:

BQA RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Issue No:	Version	Name	Designation	Signature	Date
		Prof. B. Mosimakoko	Chief Executive Officer		
		Mr. Gabaake Gabaake	Board Chairperson		



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