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# Government of Ontario

## Records Schedule Requirements

This document is designed to support the records schedule requirements of the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006, S.O. 2006, chapter 34, Schedule A*. It provides additional detail as to how records schedules are to be prepared and submitted for approval by the Archivist of Ontario.

This document is available on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

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April 1, 2009

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**GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS**

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<b>REVISION LOG</b>	
<b>Summary of Change</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>First Issued</b>	<b>April 1, 2008</b>
Updated terminology throughout the document to refer to common series rather than common schedules.	April 1, 2009
Removed hyperlinks throughout the document.	April 1, 2009
Former Section 3.3.3 (now 3.4), - Disposition where public body or its functions change, expanded to explain how the requirements of section 14 of the <i>Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006</i> are to be implemented.	April 1, 2009
Removed material regarding initial implementation and transition period for older formats.	April 1, 2009
Expanded instructions for completing records series information to clarify what modifications to the templates are acceptable.	April 1, 2009
Requirement to use Internet Media Types (MIME) when describing digital information formats removed.	April 1, 2009
Updated mailing address of Archives of Ontario.	April 1, 2009
Reference added to availability of an optional list form for common series adoption with associated deletions.	April 1, 2009
All templates containing an Archivist of Ontario approval section are pre-filled with the Archivist's name.	April 1, 2009
Appendix A, Record series information template, reformatted with a new final disposition and Archivist of Ontario signature section.	April 1, 2009
Appendix D, Deletion template, Archivist's signature and date fields reversed to be consistent with the other templates.	April 1, 2009

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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This document has been developed to help ministries and provincial agencies prepare records schedules for approval by the Archivist of Ontario and keep them up to date. It provides additional detail as to how to meet the requirements of Sections 11 and 12 of the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006, S.O. 2006, chapter 34, Schedule A* (hereafter the “*Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006*” or “the Act”) regarding records schedules.

A **records schedule** sets out, for each class of public records that a public body creates or receives, the length of time that the records will be retained and the disposition of the records at the end of their retention period. Every public body must submit its record schedule to the Archivist of Ontario (hereafter “the Archivist”) for approval. No public records may be destroyed except as authorized in a records schedule approved by the Archivist.

Records schedules are an essential element of a full lifecycle approach to the management of information and should be prepared in that context. It is recommended that they be developed in conjunction with file classification plans (see the *File Plan Writer’s Guide: Creating File Classification Plans in the Government of Ontario* available through the Office of the Chief Information and Privacy Officer intranet site). This ensures that records are organized and captured in a recordkeeping system at the beginning of their lifecycle and managed throughout until their final disposition.

## **2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

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### **2.1 Application**

The requirements of this document apply to all public bodies as specified by the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006*. The Act defines public bodies as follows:

“public body” means,

- (a) the Executive Council or a committee of the Executive Council,
- (b) a minister of the Crown,
- (c) a ministry of the Government of Ontario,
- (d) a commission of inquiry under the *Public Inquiries Act*, or
- (e) an agency, board, commission, corporation or other entity designated as a public body by regulation; (“organisme public”)

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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Ontario Regulation 336/07 designates a number of provincial agencies, boards and commissions as public bodies. This regulation can be viewed on the Government of Ontario e-laws website.

The requirements of this document also apply where a legislative body or the Lieutenant Governor has made an election regarding records schedules under section 16 of the Act. For the purposes of this document, any reference to public bodies includes a legislative body or the Lieutenant Governor if they have made such an election.

### 2.2 Scope

These requirements apply to public records, as defined by the Act.

“public record” means a record made or received by a public body in carrying out the public body’s activities, but does not include constituency records of a minister of the Crown or published works; (“document public”) 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 2 (1).

Public records are created or received as part of the work of government, and do not include communications of a personal nature that OPS employees may receive or create while at work. These should be removed or discarded as soon as possible by the employee who received or created them.

A Minister’s constituency records, as well as personal records, are excluded from the definition of a public record. These records may be disposed of in any manner the Minister sees fit. Ministers interested in donating these as personal records to the Archives of Ontario should contact the Archives directly.

Published works are excluded from the definition of a public record. Published works include books, journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, reports, product manuals in any medium or form (printed material, web-based, optical disk, video or audio tape) that are made available in multiple copies or at multiple locations, to the public generally or by subscription, with or without charge.

Public records include recorded information in any form, including a digital form:

“record” means a record of information in any form, including a record made, recorded, transmitted or stored in digital form or in other intangible form by electronic, magnetic, optical or any other means, but does not include a mechanism or system for making, sending, receiving, storing or otherwise processing information; (“document”) 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 2 (1).

### **3. REQUIREMENTS**

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#### **3.1 Records Schedules**

##### **3.1.1 General**

The Act requires that each public body prepare a records schedule addressing all of the public records that it creates or receives:

##### **Records schedules**

**11.** (1) Every public body shall prepare a records schedule that sets out, for each class of public records that they create or receive, the length of time the records will be retained and the disposition of the records at the end of their retention period. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 11 (1).

The records schedule is organized by “classes” of records and spells out the retention and final disposition of these classes. It must specify the “form” in which the records are kept. The Archivist may require that additional information be included in the records schedule.

##### **Contents**

**11.** (2) A records schedule shall,

- (a) identify and describe the records or classes of records to which it applies;
- (b) specify how long the records are to be retained by the public body;
- (c) specify the form in which the records are to be kept;
- (d) identify the records or classes of records that are records of archival value;
- (e) specify the transfer of records of archival value at the end of their retention period to the Archives of Ontario or the continued retention of such records in accordance with an agreement entered into under clause 18 (1) (a); and
- (f) contain any other information that may be required by the Archivist. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 11 (2).

### 3.1.2 Records series

The classes of records to be used in records schedules are more specifically known as “**records series**”. A records series is defined as the total body of related records, whether in one or more formats, that is separately organized and maintained because the records relate to a particular function or subject or result from the same activity. A records series is assigned its own retention period and final disposition.

Records series can be divided into sub-series if necessary to specify a different retention and/or disposition for different types of records within a group of related records that support a single business process or activity.

A records series may consist of records in a mixture of digital, paper and other formats. If they are managed through different business processes, it may be best to separate the different types of records into sub-series. If there are no significant differences in business process or retention period, they may form a single series regardless of differences in format.

Records series should be based on a comprehensive file classification plan for the public body’s activities. This helps to ensure that records are accurately identified for retention and final disposition.

A records series may consist of one or more complete file classes. The level of file class that corresponds to series will depend on the structure of the public body’s file plan. A file class at the most detailed level of the file plan must not include records that form part of more than one records series.

Where an up-to-date file classification plan does not already exist, it is strongly recommended that one be prepared. It is recommended that program areas develop file plans based on functions and business processes rather than on subject or the public body’s organizational structure.

Public bodies are strongly encouraged to refer to the *File Plan Writer’s Guide: Creating File Classification Plans in the Government of Ontario* available through the Office of the Chief Information and Privacy Officer intranet site.

### 3.1.3 Describing records

A records schedule must include a description for each records series. The description should be brief and focus on information necessary to identify the records. It should allow both those who work with the records on a regular basis and those who do not, to accurately identify them so that they can apply the appropriate retention period and final disposition.

The records description should:

- Outline the purpose the records serve in conducting government business
- Describe in a general way the types of records included
- Note any closely related records that are not included in the series and provide a reference to any other series or sub-series that include them.

The date range of the records must also be specified - normally in terms of years only. This includes the first year of records found in the series and either the closing year of records or an indication that the series is continuing and records will be added in future. The date range allows retention and disposition to be applied accurately and obsolete series to be identified.

The description must also include information as to which organizational areas or “custodial offices” of the public body use the records series. This may be one or more divisions, branches, units or other organizational units as appropriate to the public body, or may be “all” if the series is used widely throughout the public body.

### 3.1.4 How long records are retained

A records schedule must specify the length of time each records series is kept, referred to as the **retention period**. The retention period is the length of time the records remain in the control of the public body. The public body recommends retention periods for its records and the Archivist approves them as part of approval of a records schedule.

Retention periods should be determined based on considerations of:

- Any regulatory requirements for keeping the records,
- What records need to be kept for evidentiary purposes, and
- The operational, fiscal and administrative needs of the program.

Consultation with the public body’s legal counsel regarding retention periods is strongly recommended.

A retention period may be lengthy if the program circumstances require, but it must be a finite length of time and not proposed as permanent. The retention period may specify a triggering event from which the length of time is measured, e.g. termination of the contract, dissolution of the organization, expiry of the statutory appeal period, disposal of the asset. If no triggering event is specified, the retention period is calculated from the end of the calendar year in which the record was created or received.

### 3.1.5 Form in which records are kept

A records schedule must specify the form in which information in a record series is kept – also known as the format or medium. This information must be kept up to date as recordkeeping systems and technologies change. There may be multiple formats within a single records series as long as all have the same retention period.

### 3.1.6 Identifying archival records

The Archivist of Ontario determines whether or not records described by each records series are of archival value, also referred to as determining the final disposition. If they are not designated as archival, the public body must destroy the records at the end of the retention period. Records are therefore described as having a final disposition of either “archival” or “destroy”.

There are two different procedures by which the Archivist of Ontario makes the determination of archival value for records of a public body:

- By approval of an archival appraisal prepared by Archives of Ontario staff for a specific records series;
- By approval for adoption of “government common” records series prepared by the Archives of Ontario.

Government common series are prepared by Archives of Ontario staff for series of records that are used by many or all public bodies. Archival appraisal is conducted and approved by the Archivist of Ontario prior to publication of the common series for use. These common series may, with the approval of the Archivist of Ontario, be adopted and included in the records schedule of a public body. Approved government common series can be viewed on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

An archival disposition may be further qualified by the condition “subject to selection”. Selection is a systematic means of reducing the extent of a body of records by selecting items from it to stand for the collection as a whole. Using techniques similar to sampling, a representative portion of records is selected for preservation from a larger series that will not be preserved in its entirety. The Archives of Ontario carries out selection of archival records in accordance with a formal procedure that requires a selection proposal that is approved by the Archivist of Ontario.

### **3.1.7 Custody of archival records**

At the end of their retention period, archival records are under the control of the Archives of Ontario and no longer of the public body. In most cases, the Archives takes physical custody of archival records at the end of their retention period. For records subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA), the Archives manages all access requests made under FIPPA upon taking custody.

The Act allows the Archivist of Ontario to enter into an agreement with another party for them to take custody of archival records at the end of their retention period. This may be the public body that created the records or another person or entity.

#### **Public records of archival value**

- 18.** (1) The Archivist may enter into an agreement,
- (a) with a public body providing that the public body will retain custody of all or some of the public body's records of archival value at the end of their retention period, and will retain and preserve them and make them accessible to the public in accordance with the Archivist's directions; or
  - (b) with any other person or entity providing that that person or entity will take custody of all or some of a public body's records of archival value at the end of their retention period, and will retain and preserve them and make them accessible to the public in accordance with the Archivist's directions. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 18 (1).

Requests for agreements under this section of the Act are evaluated against criteria established by the Archives of Ontario, considering such matters as the storage conditions for the records, arrangements for public access, administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, how archival arrangement and description will be carried out, governance and organizational expertise and capacity. Records remain in the control of the Archives of Ontario despite an agreement for custody by another organization.

#### **Agreement to be reflected in records schedule**

- 18.** (2) A public body shall incorporate the terms of an agreement entered into under clause (1) (a) in their records schedule. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 18 (2).

Where an agreement is established with a public body under clause 18 (1) (a), the agreement is incorporated in the public body's records schedule. This is done by noting the final disposition for the affected series as "archival with agreement for custody" and including the agreement itself in the public body's records schedule. This is not the case with agreements with another person or entity under clause 18 (1) (b) – the Archives will maintain a separate record of these agreements.

Custody agreements are not intended to address ongoing operational access to records. Public bodies should establish long enough retention periods to meet the expected needs for access to their records for legal and operational reasons. Custody of archival records under agreement with the Archivist should only be proposed where the public body or other organization has a commitment to preserving the records and providing access to the public over the long term.

### 3.2 Approval of Records Schedules

#### 3.2.1 Legislative requirements

The requirements for approval and amendment of a public body's records schedule are outlined in section 12 of the Act:

##### **Archivist's approval of records schedule**

**12.** (1) Every public body shall submit their records schedule to the Archivist for approval. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 12 (1).

##### **Same**

(2) The Archivist shall review the records schedule submitted for approval and may approve the schedule or require that it be amended. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 12 (2).

##### **Amendment**

(3) The Archivist may at any time require that a public body amend a previously approved records schedule and the public body shall amend their records schedule accordingly. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 12 (3).

##### **Same**

(4) If a public body amends a records schedule after it has been approved by the Archivist, whether on its own initiative or in response to a requirement of the Archivist, the amended schedule must also be submitted to the Archivist for approval. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 12 (4).

### Exempted from approval

(5) If a public body is exempted by regulation from complying with subsections (1), (2) and (4), then its records schedule is deemed to be approved by the Archivist. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 12 (5).

A public body's records schedule consists of all records series approved by the Archivist of Ontario for current use by the public body. The records schedule may include records series that have been approved by the Archivist of Ontario at different points of time, including those that were approved prior to the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006* coming into force on September 1, 2007. Previously approved series continue in effect until they are replaced or deleted by the public body with the approval of the Archivist.

Where a new public body is created (e.g. a new ministry) or prescribed (e.g. adding a provincial agency to the regulation designating public bodies), the public body must submit a records schedule for approval by the Archivist of Ontario within six months of becoming a public body for the purposes of the Act.

### 3.2.2 Format of a records schedule

The records schedule of a public body consists of information for each records series and documents the approval of the Archivist of Ontario. The schedule is represented in the Archives of Ontario "Series Management System" database as all series and sub-series indicated as approved and current for the public body. The records schedule may also be represented in paper form as a compilation of all approved and current records series and sub-series.

Records series may be included in the records schedule in the form in which they were originally approved. They do not need to be reformatted or reapproved in order to be included in a public body's current records schedule.

Where amendments are made by adding or revising series or sub-series, the series or sub-series must be submitted to the Archivist for approval providing the information outlined in Appendix A. Instructions for completing the information fields are included and a template is provided.

### 3.2.3 Amending a records schedule

Any proposal to amend a public body's records schedule must be submitted for approval by the Archivist of Ontario. This includes adoption of additional government common series and any changes to information provided about a records series or sub-series. Amendments, including records series to be added to the public body's schedule, must be submitted in the manner outlined in Appendix B.

### 3.2.4 Adopting government common series

Government common series establish uniform retention periods and final dispositions for types of records that are commonly created or received by public bodies. They ensure consistency where business processes and records are similar and reduce the effort needed to keep records series current. Public bodies are strongly encouraged to adopt government common series where possible. Approved government common series can be viewed on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

A public body must secure the prior approval of the Archivist of Ontario to adopt government common series for use. Requests to adopt common series must be made using the amendment submission process outlined in Appendix B, and providing summary information as to the series adopted and the offices that will use them, as specified in Appendix C.

If government common series replace previously approved series, a request to delete the series that are replaced must be included in the amendment submission. A template for requesting deletion of a series is provided in Appendix D.

To streamline the submission process when requesting approval to adopt a large number of common series and replace previously approved series, an optional combined adoption/deletion list form template is provided on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

### 3.2.5 Deleting records series

A public body's records schedule must not include records series that:

- Have been superseded (or replaced) by a subsequent approved series,
- Have been superseded by adopting a government common series, or
- Are obsolete because all records described by the series have either been destroyed or transferred to the Archives of Ontario.

Records series that govern records that are in the public body's control (within the retention period) continue to be included in the public body's schedule, even if no new records are being created. When the last records in the series are destroyed or transferred to the Archives of Ontario, the series should be removed from the schedule.

In order to remove series from a public body's records schedules, follow the amendment process described in Appendix B. Provide information about the deletion as specified in Appendix D.

### 3.2.6 Revising records series

Information about a records series typically changes over time. For example, the names of the custodial offices that use the series may change, descriptions of the records need to be updated or the format in which the records are kept changes. A public body may also want to request changes to the retention period or on-site/off-site storage periods.

Requests for approval of revisions to records series or sub-series must be made using the amendment process in Appendix B, and information provided as specified in Appendix E. Revised records series information must also be completed for each series or sub-series to be revised, providing the information specified in Appendix A.

If changes to series are extensive, a request to add new series and delete the series that are replaced may be made instead of a revision.

### 3.2.7 Adding records series

New records series will need to be added to a public body's records schedule over time, for example as the public body undertakes new programs or services. Requests for approval of new series or sub-series must be made following the procedures in Appendix B and completing information as described in Appendix F. Series information must be provided as described in Appendix A for each new series or sub-series.

### 3.2.8 Amendments required by the Archivist

The Archivist may at any time require that a public body amend any aspect of its records schedule. The request may be general in nature, e.g. to review and update one or more series or to adopt additional government common series. It may also be specific, e.g. changing the final disposition of a records series or its retention period. In all cases, a written request from the Archivist will be made to the head of the public body (the deputy minister in the case of a ministry) or delegate specifying what action is required.

## 3.3 Complying with Records Schedules

### 3.3.1 General

The Act makes it clear that public records must be managed in accordance with a records schedule approved by the Archivist of Ontario.

### **Public bodies to comply with approved records schedule**

**13.** (1) Every public body shall retain and transfer or otherwise dispose of their public records in accordance with the public body's approved records schedule. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 13 (1).

This requirement applies to all public records as defined by the Act, including those that are considered "transitory", e.g. extra copies kept solely for convenience. The Archivist has approved government common series for transitory records to be adopted by each public body through submission of a records schedule or records schedule amendment for approval.

The Act also places an explicit obligation on public bodies to preserve their records throughout the approved retention period.

#### **Same**

(2) Every public body shall ensure that their public records are preserved and that the information in their public records is accessible until they are transferred or otherwise disposed of in accordance with their approved records schedule. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 13 (2).

#### **Same**

(3) A public record shall not be transferred, destroyed or otherwise disposed of except in accordance with the applicable approved records schedule or with the written consent of the Archivist. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 13 (3).

Records must not be destroyed or transferred from the custody or control of the public body except in accordance with an approved records schedule. The Act allows, as an alternative, that the Archivist of Ontario may provide written consent outside of the records schedule process. The Archivist will only consider providing this consent in exceptional circumstances and on the basis of a request from the head of the public body (e.g. the deputy minister in the case of a ministry) or their delegate made directly to the Archivist of Ontario.

### **3.3.2 Suspension of records schedules**

From time to time, circumstances may arise where complying with all or part of an approved records schedule would contravene the express provisions of another Act, or an order of the court or the Legislative Assembly. In such cases, the retention, transfer, destruction or other disposition activities approved by the records schedule are suspended. The suspension may be initiated by the Archivist of Ontario or by a public body.

### **Laws re privacy and access, privileges**

3. (1) Nothing in this Act limits the operation of any law or privilege governing the protection of privacy or access to information in respect of records held by public bodies and legislative bodies. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 3 (1).

### **Same**

- (2) Nothing in this Act limits the operation of any other privilege that may exist in respect of a record transferred to the Archivist or to another person or entity under this Act. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 3 (2).

### **Orders of Assembly and courts, statutory provisions**

4. Nothing in this Act shall be taken or deemed to authorize the retention, transfer, destruction or other disposition of any public record in contravention of an order of a court or of the Legislative Assembly or in contravention of an express provision in any other Act. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 4.

The Archivist of Ontario may suspend operation of an approved records schedule, or one or more records series, by invoking a moratorium on disposition of records. This may occur for reasons such as a police investigation, commission of inquiry, litigation or other requirement that affects records in one or more public bodies. The moratorium remains in effect for as long as the Archivist of Ontario deems it necessary to satisfy the requirement. The Archivist of Ontario will send notification to public bodies whose records are subject to a disposition moratorium and again when the moratorium is lifted.

Public bodies are responsible for immediately suspending records schedule implementation activities when the retention, transfer, destruction or other disposition activities could potentially contravene a court order, order of the Legislative Assembly or express provision of another Act, for example:

- The records are responsive to a request for information made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and must not be destroyed transferred or otherwise disposed of until all appeal timelines have passed.
- The records are a collection of personal information in contravention of FIPPA and an order of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to destroy them is issued.
- The records are required by a Commission of Inquiry, police investigation, or for impending litigation and must not be destroyed, transferred or otherwise disposed of until all limitation periods have expired and any legal action is complete.

The head of the public body or their delegate must notify the Archivist of Ontario, citing the reason, and expected duration of the action. The Archivist must also be notified when the suspension has ended and normal records schedule implementation activities resume.

### 3.4 Changes in a Public Body or Functions

#### 3.4.1 General

There is a further exception in the Act to allow for situations where a public body or its functions change.

##### **Exception**

**13.** (4) This section does not apply to records that are dealt with under section 14. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 13 (4).

In these cases, section 14 “Disposition of public records where public body, functions change” applies.

**14.** (1) If a public body is to cease to exist, the public body shall transfer or otherwise dispose of their public records in accordance with their approved records schedule as if it were the end of those records’ retention periods under the public body’s approved records schedule. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 14 (1).

##### **Same**

(2) If any of the functions of a public body are to cease, the public body shall transfer or otherwise dispose of their public records that pertain to the ceased functions in accordance with their approved records schedule as if it were the end of those records’ retention periods under the public body’s approved records schedule. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 14 (2).

##### **Same**

(3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), if any of the functions of a public body are to be transferred to another public body or any other person or entity, the public body shall enter into an agreement with the Archivist and with the public body or other person or entity with respect to the maintenance, retention, preservation, transfer and other disposition of the records pertaining to the transferred functions. 2006, c. 34, Sched. A, s. 14 (3).

### **3.4.2 When a public body or function ceases**

When a public body ceases to exist, all its public records are treated as if they have reached the end of their retention period and either transferred to the Archives of Ontario or destroyed, as specified in the public body's approved records schedule. Similarly, when any of the functions of a public body cease, the public records pertaining to the ceased functions are treated as if they have reached the end of their retention period.

If the records of the terminated public body or ceased functions are not included in a records schedule approved by the Archivist of Ontario, a records schedule must be submitted or the current schedule amended to cover these records, and approved by the Archivist of Ontario before any disposition activities take place.

The public body must also determine whether records schedule implementation for some or all of the records needs to be temporarily suspended, and the records retained longer, in order to fulfil legislative or other legal requirements as described in 3.3.2 of these Requirements, Suspension of records schedules. If the public body has ceased, this may entail identifying another public body or other organization to fulfil these requirements in its place, resulting in a transfer of records.

Once all the records pertaining to the ceased functions have been disposed of, the applicable records series must be removed from the public body's records schedule by submitting a deletion amendment for the Archivist of Ontario's approval. If the entire public body ceases to exist, the Archivist will confirm discontinuation of the records schedule for that body.

### **3.4.3 Transfer of functions to another public body**

When any of the functions of a public body are transferred to another public body subject to the Act, the transferring and receiving public bodies must enter into an agreement with the Archivist of Ontario for the transfer of the public records pertaining to the transferred functions. However, this requirement for an agreement may be satisfied by both public bodies submitting amendments to their records schedules.

The records series pertaining to the records of the transferred functions must be incorporated (added) into the receiving public body's records schedule and removed (deleted) from the transferring public body's records schedule. Both must be submitted to the Archivist of Ontario and approved before any transfer of public records.

#### **3.4.4 Transfer of functions to another entity**

Where functions of a public body are transferred to other persons or organizations not subject to the Act, e.g. the private sector, broader public sector or another jurisdiction, the public body must enter into an agreement with the Archivist of Ontario and with the entity receiving the public records for the transferred function.

This records transfer agreement specifies terms and conditions for maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposition of the records and includes the records series information from the public body's approved records schedule, for the records being transferred. If the records of the transferred functions have not been scheduled, a records schedule must be submitted or the current schedule amended to cover these records in order for the agreement to be signed by the Archivist of Ontario.

Once all the records pertaining to the transferred functions have been disposed of, the applicable records series must be removed from the public body's records schedule by submitting a deletion amendment for the approval of the Archivist of Ontario.

## **4. Implementation**

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This document is in effect as of its date of approval. The process for submission and the templates outlined in this document are to be used for new records schedules and for all submissions for approval of records schedule amendments.

**APPENDIX A: RECORDS SERIES INFORMATION TEMPLATE**

**RECORDS SERIES INFORMATION**

Records Schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Page [X] of [Y]

<b>Series or sub-series #</b>	
<b>Series or sub-series title</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	
<b>Contents</b>	
<b>Date range</b>	
<b>Format(s)</b>	
<b>Custodial office(s)</b>	
<b>Information Security &amp; Privacy Classification</b>	
<b>Annual accumulation(s)</b>	
<b>Total retention period</b>	
<b><i>For non-digital records only</i></b>	
<i>On-site storage period</i>	
<i>IS&amp;R storage period</i>	

**For [PUBLIC BODY]:**

<b>[NAME, TITLE]</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Add as required</i>		

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**GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS**

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**RECORDS SERIES INFORMATION**

Records Schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Series (or Sub-series) [#] [TITLE]

Page [X] of [Y]

Determination by the Archivist of Ontario of the final disposition:

	<b>Destroy</b>
	<b>Transfer to Archives</b>
	<b>Transfer to Archives, subject to selection by Archives</b>
	<b>Transfer to Archives, subject to agreement for custody (per agreement attached)</b>
	<b>Other:</b>

Approval under authority of the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006*:

**Miriam McTiernan**  
Archivist of Ontario

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions for completing records series information

Records series information templates for review or approval by the Archivist of Ontario are submitted as an attachment to an email, with the final signed version also submitted on paper with signatures. Microsoft Word should be used to prepare the information unless otherwise agreed by the Recordkeeping Support Unit at the Archives. Please “accept” any tracked changes (e.g. revision marks and editorial comments) before submitting the template to the Archives of Ontario.

You may copy the templates directly from this document, using the copy and paste feature of Microsoft Word, or for your convenience, downloadable copies of the templates are available on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

Include as much text as necessary to provide clear, concise information for public body and Archives use (boxes will expand). Each series information template may extend over more than one physical page as required to accommodate the information included. When it does, please ensure that the public body name, page number, and series/sub-series number and title carry over onto each additional page.

The final disposition table and signature boxes for the Archivist of Ontario must be placed together on a page separate from the rest of the series information. This allows the disposition to be completed without altering the page that has been signed by the public body.

Minor variations in formatting and appearance are acceptable as long as the required information is presented clearly. For example, you may use a different font.

You are **not** permitted to:

- Change the order of the fields;
- Rename the field headings;
- Delete fields (if the field is not applicable, enter “not applicable”, or “none” as appropriate);
- Add extra fields for additional information.

Please note that the templates, Appendix E - Revision of Records Series, or Appendix F - Addition of Records Series, are separate documents from the Records Series Information template. Although Appendices E or F must accompany Appendix A, they should be kept as separate documents to avoid confusion with page numbering or revision.

Do not leave any information fields blank. If a particular field is “Not Applicable”, or the answer is “None”, please enter this information rather than leave the field blank. Please do not use the abbreviation “N/A”.

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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Sub-series may be used where there are closely related groups of records that require different retention periods. The template should be completed for each sub-series in the same manner as for a series, but using a numbering and title convention that indicate that they form part of a series. Do not prepare a series template where the series comprises sub-series, as most information fields would be blank at the series level.

*Do not fill in the “final disposition” fields – this is completed by the Archives of Ontario.*

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Public body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please provide the full name of the public body, e.g. Ministry of Government Services, or Ontario Securities Commission.</li></ul>
<b>Series or sub-series #</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the series or sub-series number.</li><li>• The public body determines the series numbering.</li><li>• Series are usually numbered sequentially throughout the schedule in the form of [Schedule # - Series #] (i.e., Series MGS 25-1, Series MGS 25-2).</li><li>• Sub-series should be numbered sequentially after the series number (e.g., Sub-series MGS 25-1-1, Sub-series MGS 25-1-2).</li><li>• A series or sub-series may retain the same number regardless of amendments. Alternatively, the public body may change a series or sub-series number when proposing amendments. The public body makes this decision.</li></ul>
<b>Series or sub-series title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the title of the series or sub-series</li><li>• Be descriptive and clear – the title should easily convey the program or service the series addresses, the purpose and/or general content.</li><li>• Do not use abbreviations or acronyms.</li><li>• Sub-series titles should indicate that they form part of the same series (e.g. Grievance Settlement Board Case Files; Grievance Settlement Board Case Files – Index)</li><li>• If the way that staff commonly refers to the records is not descriptive, use the term “also known as” (e.g., Integrated Knowledge System, also known as Eunice).</li><li>• A series or sub-series title should correspond where possible to a file class title in a file classification plan – this can facilitate implementation.</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Briefly describe the specific purpose for which the records are created and/or received. Be concise and to-the-point.</li><li>• This description should convey information that will allow someone not familiar with the records to identify them and understand their purpose. Avoid acronyms or program-specific terms.</li><li>• Remember that series information is used to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow program staff to know which records go with which series when they are implementing the schedule</li><li>• Help locate records to respond to <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> and other access requests.</li><li>• Help Archives staff determine whether records will be destroyed or transferred to the Archives</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Contents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summarize the type and subject matter of the records included in the series.</li><li>• The records should be summarized in relatively general terms, e.g. “correspondence between the public body and transfer payment agencies regarding grants for special needs”, “application forms for licenses submitted by individuals and corporations”.</li><li>• Information should be provided as to the relationship with a file classification plan for the records, indicating which file class or file classes are represented by the series.</li><li>• Note any closely related records that are not included in the series and provide a reference to any other series that includes them, e.g. a sub-series of case files cross-referenced to another sub-series that is the index to the case files; a series of approved grants applications cross-referenced to another series of rejected grants applications)</li><li>• In the case of a database or other information system, summarize the information that is managed. Indicate where to find systems documentation.</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Date range</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the range of dates during which the records subject to this schedule are or have been created.</li><li>• Use the format “YYYY-MM-DD TO YYYY-MM-DD” for a series with a known end date. (YYYY-MM-DD is the GO-ITS 74.00 date format standard).</li><li>• If records will continue to be added to the series or sub-series in future, use the format “YYYY-MM-DD TO PRESENT”.</li><li>• The starting date will usually be the beginning of either a calendar year (e.g. YYYY-01-01) or a fiscal year (e.g. YYYY-04-01). It is not necessary to determine the specific date of the first record.</li></ul>
<b>Format(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the formats and media present in the series, e.g., paper files, digital files on a server, maps in paper form, microfiche.</li><li>• Be as descriptive as possible, e.g., “digital files stored on servers”, “35mm film transparencies in slide mounts”.</li><li>• For databases, indicate the database management software used to manage the data.</li></ul>
<b>Custodial office(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide the name(s) of the organizational area(s) that create, receive and maintain records in this series (e.g. branch, unit, and regional offices).</li><li>• If the series or sub-series is widely used through the public body, simply indicate “ALL”.</li><li>• Note that, for digital records, the custodial office(s) are the one(s) responsible for the content and business use of the records, not the I&amp;IT cluster or enterprise-wide I&amp;IT service that maintains the servers, hardware or software required or provides database administration services.</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Information Security &amp; Privacy Classification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indicate the highest level of classification that has been assigned to records within the series under the <i>Government of Ontario Information Security &amp; Privacy Classification Policy</i>.</li><li>• Enter “HIGH”, “MEDIUM”, “LOW” or “UNCLASSIFIED” as determined by the public body in implementing the requirements of the policy.</li><li>• If Information Security and Privacy Classification has not yet been implemented for the records series, enter “NOT IMPLEMENTED”</li><li>• Where a series includes more than one classification level, show the highest level that applies to records within the series.</li></ul>
<b>Annual accumulation(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide the estimated volume of records created each year, in appropriate units for the format (cubic feet for paper records, megabytes, number of units, etc.).</li><li>• If there is more than one format in the series, provide the annual accumulation for each and note the format to which it applies.</li><li>• If the records pertain to a newly established program, provide a forecast of the expected annual accumulation.</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Total retention period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine the total period for which records will be maintained in the control of the public body based on regulatory, evidentiary, and operational needs.</li><li>• For non-digital records, the total retention period includes on-site and off-site storage.</li><li>• During the retention period, the public body has full responsibility for the records (e.g. for FIPPA requests) and full access to them.</li><li>• Retention periods may be specified in relation to a triggering event appropriate to the records and business process, e.g. termination of contract, completion of project, year of plan or budget.</li><li>• If no triggering event is specified, the end of the calendar year that the document was created or received will be treated as the trigger event.</li><li>• Retention periods may be expressed in calendar or fiscal years, with the Ontario government fiscal year being from April 1 to March 31.</li><li>• Retention periods may be written out fully or expressed using a short form. Examples include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calendar year the project is completed + 10 additional years</li><li>• Current Calendar Year (CCY) + 2 years</li><li>• Current Fiscal Year (CFY) + 1 year after lease expires</li><li>• Fiscal year of budget plus 6 additional years.</li><li>• 10 days after scanning completed and verified.</li></ul></li><li>• Don't use indefinite retention periods (e.g., unknown; permanent, to be determined).</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Records Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b><i>For non-digital records only:</i></b> <b><i>On-site storage period</i></b> <b><i>IS&amp;R storage period</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These fields are completed only if the series includes paper or other non-digital records (e.g. microfilm) that are accepted for storage at the Information Storage &amp; Retrieval (IS&amp;R) government records centre.</li><li>• Determine how long records must remain readily accessible, i.e. in the office, and specify this in the “On-site storage period” field.</li><li>• If records are to be stored with IS&amp;R, complete the “IS&amp;R storage period field”. If IS&amp;R storage is not used, indicate “NONE” in this field.</li><li>• Records remain in public body control during the full retention period even if stored with IS&amp;R.</li><li>• The IS&amp;R storage period must not specify a triggering event – they are unable to implement disposition based on a triggering event. The IS&amp;R storage period must be a simple number of years, either calendar years or fiscal years.</li><li>• The total of these two fields must equal the “Total retention period”.</li></ul>
<b>For public body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the name, title, signature and date of signature for individuals approving submission of the records schedule or records schedule amendments for the public body.</li><li>• Additional individuals may be included at the public body’s discretion – add additional rows as needed.</li><li>• The public body signature should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A senior manager with responsibility for the records described by the series.</li><li>• An individual with responsibility for information or records management co-ordination for the public body</li><li>• Legal counsel for the public body</li></ul></li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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*Separate page - This information must be placed on a separate page.*

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**Final disposition**

- Leave the check boxes in the final disposition table blank for completion by the Archivist of Ontario.
- The final disposition is determined by the Archivist of Ontario

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**Approval**

- The Archivist of Ontario provides final approval of the records series or sub-series information, including the final disposition of the records.
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## **APPENDIX B: RECORDS SCHEDULE AMENDMENT PROCESS**

### **Format for requesting records schedule amendment submission**

All requests to the Archives of Ontario for records schedule amendments must be submitted as an attachment to an email. For each series for which amendment is requested, one of the following must be completed.

- Adoption of common schedule series template (Appendix C).
- Deletion of a series or sub-series template (Appendix D).
- Revision of a series or sub-series template (Appendix E) and a records series information template (Appendix A).
- Addition of a series or sub-series template (Appendix F) and a records series information template (Appendix A).

You may copy the templates directly from this document, using the copy and paste feature of Microsoft Word, or for your convenience, downloadable copies of the templates are available on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.

### **Review of draft amendments**

The public body and the Archivist of Ontario must approve amendments to a records schedule before they are implemented. In order to ensure that submissions for amendments have been completed correctly before asking for public body approvals, they must be submitted to the Archives in draft form first. After the draft has been reviewed by Archives staff and any comments addressed, public body approvals may be obtained and the amendments submitted for approval by the Archivist of Ontario.

Where addition of a records series or major revisions to a series are proposed, it is recommended that the relevant portion of any file classification plan that applies to the records be included with the submission. This will assist with the process of archival appraisal.

The public body must submit draft amendments via email to the Archives' Schedule Review Coordinator at [recordkeeping@ontario.ca](mailto:recordkeeping@ontario.ca). The subject line should read: "Request review of schedule amendments". In the body of the email, identify who will serve as the public body's contact for all communications about the amendments. Include the name, title, organizational area, address, phone number and email address if the contact is other than the sender of the email. You should also explain any relationships between amendments if not readily apparent, for example, the deletion of a series as a result of a revision of another series.

Staff from the Recordkeeping Support Unit (RSU) of the Archives will review the draft for compliance with the requirements outlined in this document and for ease of understanding and implementation. They will also review any new or revised retention periods and the

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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accompanying rationale provided by the public body. Questions and issues will be communicated to the public body contact and the draft revised by the public body. Within 20 working days of accepting material for review, the Schedule Review Co-ordinator will provide either confirmation that the amendments are ready to submit for approval or a summary of what remains to be addressed. If the amendments are determined by the Co-ordinator to be minor, the response will be provided within 5 working days.

### **Submitting amendments for approval**

After the Schedule Review Co-ordinator has confirmed the amendments are ready for final submission, the appropriate public body officials will then sign the amendment templates. These are submitted in hardcopy, together with a brief covering note, to the following address:

Schedule Review Coordinator  
Archives of Ontario  
134 Ian Macdonald Blvd  
Toronto, ON M7A 2C5

At the same time, a digital version (unsigned) of the submission must be emailed to the Archives' Schedule Review Coordinator at [recordkeeping@ontario.ca](mailto:recordkeeping@ontario.ca), noting that the signed hard copy is on its way. The subject line should read: "Request for approval of schedule amendments". Unless otherwise stated in the body of the email, the public body contact identified during the draft review phase will continue to serve as the contact for all communications about the amendments.

An archivist from the Collections Development and Management unit of the Archives will review the amendments and make an appraisal recommendation to the Archivist of Ontario on the value of the records for permanent archival preservation. During the course of the appraisal, the reviewing archivist may need to contact the public body for additional information in order to determine the archival value of the records.

Once the Archivist of Ontario has determined the disposition and approved the records schedule amendments, the Schedule Review Coordinator will notify the public body contact by email that the amendments have been approved. A digitally scanned version of the approved amendments with the disposition completed will be provided to the public body for reference. The Archives' database will be updated to incorporate the amendments. IS&R will then make changes to its database to add or delete series and to implement any revisions in retention or disposition that affect records stored with them.

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**GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS**

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**APPENDIX C: ADOPTION OF COMMON SERIES TEMPLATE**

**ADOPTION OF GOVERNMENT COMMON RECORDS SERIES OR SUB-SERIES**

Records Schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Page [X] of [Y]

<b>Common series document title</b>	
<b>Series or sub-series # and title</b>	<i>List as required</i>
<b>Custodial office(s)</b>	<i>List or indicate "ALL"</i>
<b>Comments</b>	<i>(E.g. related deletions to other series)</i>

For [PUBLIC BODY]

<b>[NAME, TITLE]</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Add as required</i>		

**Approval**

<b>Archivist of Ontario:</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Miriam McTiernan, Archivist of Ontario		

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Adoption of Common Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Public body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please provide the full name of the public body, e.g. Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Ontario Securities Commission.</li></ul>
<b>Common series document title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the name of the government common series document that includes the series adopted, (e.g. Government of Ontario Common Records Series Transitory Records)</li><li>• A separate template must be completed for each common series document that is proposed for adoption of series.</li><li>• Government common series can be viewed on the Archives of Ontario recordkeeping website.</li></ul>
<b>Series # and title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the common series that will be used by the custodial office(s). This may be one or more series.</li><li>• If all series from the common series document are being adopted, enter “ALL”.</li><li>• If some but not all series are being adopted, please create a list that allows the series to be clearly identified (e.g. all series except [# &amp; TITLE], all Human Resources series 1000-1999).</li><li>• Enter the common series number(s) and the title(s) exactly as shown in the government common series document.</li><li>• Government common series numbers include a component for an acronym that identifies the public body. Include the acronym determined by the public body in the number entered here (e.g. GOV-acronym-1000, PP-acronym-2100).</li></ul>

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## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO RECORDS SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

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### Adoption of Common Series Template Field Guide

<i>Field</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Custodial office(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide the name(s) of the organizational area(s) that are adopting the government common series listed above (e.g. branch, unit, and regional offices).</li><li>• If the series or sub-series is widely used through the public body, simply indicate “ALL”.</li><li>• Note that for digital records, the custodial office(s) are the one(s) responsible for the content and business use of the records, not the I&amp;IT cluster or enterprise-wide I&amp;IT service that maintains the servers, hardware or software required or provides database administration services.</li></ul>
<b>For public body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the name, title, signature and date of signature for individuals approving submission of the request for adoption of common series for the public body.</li><li>• Additional individuals can be included at the public body’s discretion – add additional rows as needed.</li><li>• The public body signatures should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where records series are specific to a program area (e.g. Deputy Minister’s office), a senior manager with responsibility for the records described by the series.</li><li>• An individual with responsibility for information or records management co-ordination for the public body</li><li>• Legal counsel for the public body</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Approval</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Archivist of Ontario provides final approval of the adoption of the government common series.</li></ul>

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**APPENDIX D: DELETION OF SERIES TEMPLATE**

**DELETION OF RECORDS SERIES OR SUB-SERIES**

Records schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Page [X] of [Y]

<b>Series or sub-series # and title</b>	<i>List one or more series as appropriate</i>
<b>Reason for deletion</b>	<i>(E.g. transferred to specified public body, no records remaining in public body control, incorporated in another series through revision)</i>
<b>Comments</b>	<i>(E.g. related revisions to other series)</i>

For [PUBLIC BODY]

<b>[NAME, TITLE]</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Add as required</i>		

**Approval**

<b>Archivist of Ontario:</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Miriam McTiernan, Archivist of Ontario		

**APPENDIX E: REVISION OF SERIES TEMPLATE**

**REVISION OF RECORDS SERIES OR SUB-SERIES**

Records schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Page [X] of [Y]

<b>Existing series or sub-series #</b>	
<b>Existing series or sub-series title</b>	
<b>Reason(s) for revision</b>	
<b>File plan attached?</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<i>(E.g. related revisions to other series, condition, special access restrictions)</i>

***Attach Series Information***

**APPENDIX F: ADDITION OF SERIES TEMPLATE**

**ADDITION OF RECORDS SERIES OR SUB-SERIES**

Records schedule of [PUBLIC BODY]

Page [X] of [Y]

<b>Series or sub-series #</b>	
<b>Series or sub-series title</b>	
<b>Reason for addition</b>	
<b>Rationale for retention period</b>	
<b>File plan attached?</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<i>(E.g. related deletions or revisions to other series, condition, special access restrictions)</i>

***Attach Series Information***