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Electronic Records Naming Conventions

A RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICE GUIDELINE

Introduction

- This document is a companion document to the Records Management Manual. The purpose of this document is to help units to name electronic files and folders in a manner that is consistent and efficient.

- Units must ensure that the records under their care are secure, authentic, and reliable. Multiple documents stored on shared drives, or in systems such as SharePoint, can become unruly quickly. Without a naming convention it is difficult for users to determine the revision status and whether the record has been acted upon. All records should be named consistently with a method for naming that is documented, shared, and agreed upon by the unit.

Document Naming Checklist – A Quick Guide

- ✓ Seek agreement on the order of the elements that will make up the filename

- ✓ Separate elements using an underscore

- ✓ Use letter code when drafting (A, B, C) and use numbers starting with 0 when the document is final

- ✓ When sending a final document by email, save and send it as a PDF rather than the native file

- ✓ Use tags or keywords in the properties of the document

- ✓ Include the file path in the footer information

Naming Elements

The name of the document is made up of elements that when brought together will form the filename.

Key elements include:

- Project code, contract code, account number etc.

- Subject or activity (required)

- Document form

- Date

- Revision

Element Overview

A sample title using all the elements is shown below:

XYZ_ContractNegotiations_MIN_20240325_Rev0.pdf

The document's name tells the reader that the document contains meeting minutes from contract negotiations concerning contract XYZ, dated March 25, 2024, and that it's both final and acted upon.

The name can be further broken down like so:

Contract Code	Subject	Document Form	Date	Revision	File Extension
XYZ_	ContractNegotiations_	MIN_	20240325_	Rev0	.pdf

Document Form

Use one of the abbreviations below to identify the document form.

ACT	Action Request	LTR	Letter
AGD	Agenda	MEM	Memo (internal)
AGR	Agreement	MIN	Minutes
ANN	Announcement	MNL	Manual
APP	Appendix	MTG	Meeting
ART	Article	NSL	Newsletter
BIO	Biography	PLN	Plan
BRC	Brochure	PMT	Permit
BRN	Briefing Note	POL	Policy
CHT	Chart	PPR	Paper
CON	Contract	PRC	Procedure
COV	Cover Page	PRF	Profile
DFT	Discussion Draft	PRO	Proposal
DRT	Directory	PRS	Presentation
DWG	Drawing	PRL	Press Release
ETD	Electronic Thesis and Dissertation	PST	Poster
EXA	Example	RPT	Report
FCT	Fact Sheet	RVW	Review
FRM	Form	SCH	Schedule
GRA	Grant	SPE	Speech
GUI	Guidelines	SRY	Survey
INT	Interview	SUM	Summary
INV	Invoice	SUP	Supplement
INX	Index	TML	Timeline
LCT	Lecture	TOR	Terms of Reference
LGL	Legal Document	YRB	Yearbook

Date Standard

When dating the document, use the following format which is based on the [ISO 8601 Standard](#) for dates:

YYYYMMDD (no dashes between year, month, or day)

Revision Status[1]

It should always be clear when a document is in drafting mode and when it has been finalized and acted upon. This is achieved through two steps:

1. By adding the revision element (letters for drafting and numbers for final) separated by an underscore when naming the document, as illustrated in the [Element Overview](#)

2. Saving the document as a PDF to signify that there are no intentions to make further changes

Revision Details

DRAFT REVISIONS (Letters)	
A	Initial draft sent for review
B	Official draft sent for external or internal review
C	Next incarnation of official draft sent for internal or external review
FINAL REVISIONS (Numbers)	
0	First final revision
DRAFT AFTER FINAL HAS BEEN PRODUCED (Number followed by Letter)	
0A, 0B, 0C, etc.	Drafts after final has been produced, next **final issue** will be a **number only**
FINAL REVISION	
1	Next revision after final

If a record goes back to drafting after the final has been produced, the revision number remains along with a drafting letter. Following drafting, the document will move to the next consecutive number. For example:

FILE NAME	REVISION INFORMATION

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[1] This revision status was inspired by a similar method in place at WorleyParsons Engineering.

XYZ_ContractNegotiations_MIN_20240325_Rev0A.docx	Finalized document that has gone back to drafting
XYZ_ContractNegotiations_MIN_20240325_Rev1.docx	Final document

Units can define for themselves the order in which they want to place the elements based on their requirements.

Keep the subject simple and capitalize the first letter of each word if using multiple words – this is a technique called PascalCase. Do not use all-caps except for acronyms.

Document File Path

It is good practice to include the file path in the footer of a document. Doing so will tell the user how to find the native file of document again should the document be printed and the revision status.
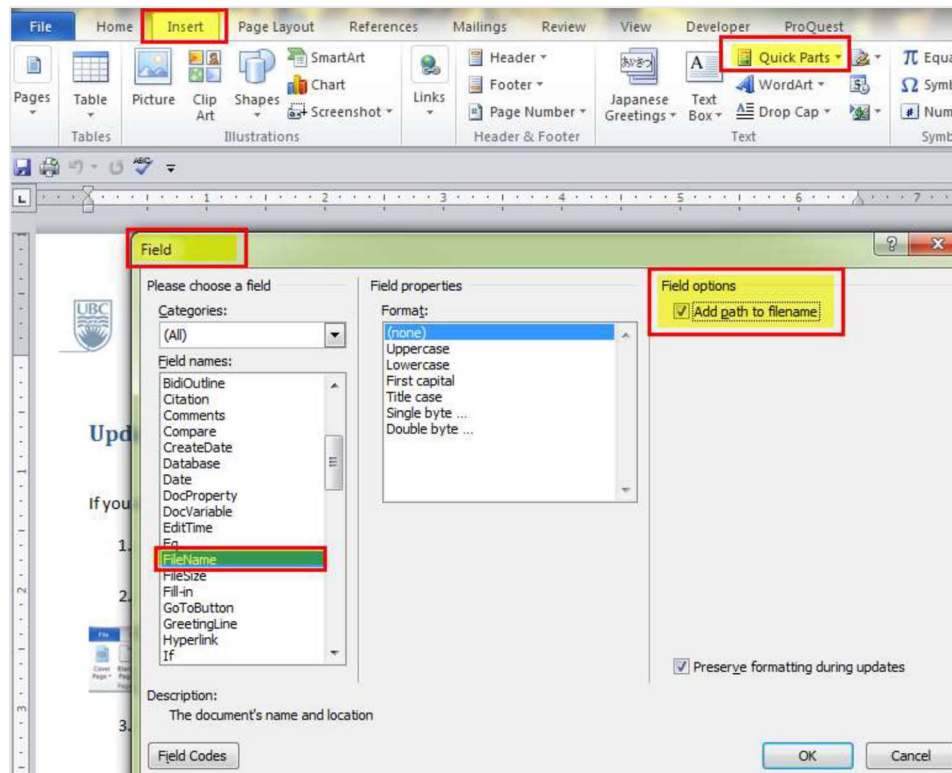
To insert filepath into document footer in Microsoft Word, choose: **Insert** > **Quick Parts** > **Field** to bring up a dialog box. Scroll through the **Field Names** to select **FileName** and then check **Add path to file.** To update the field, right click on it and select **update field** (or press the F9 key).

Principles for Naming Emails

Seek agreement within your unit as to how emails will be named. Use the naming standards defined in this document where possible. At the very least, separate the subject line into elements separated by dashes starting with general and move to specific. Subject lines should be kept as

short as possible. There is a 255-character limit when storing records on the shared drive. This number includes the entire directory path.

A sample subject line would read: RMS Project - Internship Student.msg

Naming documents in SharePoint

SharePoint is becoming increasingly popular as a tool for fostering teamwork, sharing organizational information, and storing data. Considering how SharePoint's search works, underscores and the PascalCase convention should be avoided in filenames:

> XYZ Contract Negotiations MIN 20231015 Rev0.pdf

To batch rename files and folders and replace underscores with spaces, you can use the following 'Renamer' Python script: https://github.com/UBC-Archives/Renamer.

Tips & Examples[2]

Tip	Good Example	Bad Example	Note/Reason
Denote dates in YYYMMDD format	20160403	04032016	Computers will sort YYYMMDD in chronological order
Make a concise unique project or account identifier	UBCO	University of British Columbia Okanagan	Keep it short to avoid side scrolling and column adjustment when browsing through your files
Use the document form element to enhance the summary of the document in the file name	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject_20160409.docx	Files will be found more quickly and easily when you can include abbreviated descriptive information in the file name
Use an underscore as a delimiter and avoid spaces or other special characters such as: & , . * % # ; ( ) ! @ $ ^ { } [ ] ? < > + =	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject-Guidelines 2016 04 09*RevA.docx	The special characters are difficult to read and different systems handle them differently
Keep track of document revisions by adding the	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject_Guidelines_20160409_FinalDraft.docx	Keep the revisions clearly documented because category

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[2] These tips and examples were first developed by Eugene Barsky for use with Research Data Management.

revision element separated			style addendums will be confusing in the future
Avoid complex folder hierarchies if possible	F:/Env/LIBR/RMProject_GUI_20140409_RevA.docx	F:/Environment/LibraryjWoodward/Data/Education/Materials/Draft/2014/04/RMProject_GUI_20160409_v01.docx	Complex folder hierarchies make file paths longer and require more effort for file navigation, saving and system backups

Glossary

Term	Definition
authentic	An authentic record is what it purports to be: it was created by the person listed as the author, for the intended purpose, at the listed time or date of creation
document register	A list of all records in a project, unit, department, or organization, where each document is given a unique identifier
ISO Standard	Internationally recognized standards formulated in committees of experts by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO); each Standard is a formula or roadmap outlining the agreed upon best way to do something
metadata	Data providing information about an object, such as the title, document form, date created, and the creator
PascalCase	Writing phrases with no spaces in between the words and the first letter of each word capitalized, for example: ThisIsPascalCase
reliable	A reliable record is complete, capable of being used, and capable of achieving the purpose for which it was created

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DOCUMENT CONTROL		
Revision	Issued For	Date
0	Issued for Use	20150209
1	Removed dashes and replaced with underscore to be in-line with research data management naming principles; removed version and replaced all with revision	20160418
2	Corrected error in example	20170327
3	Corrected duplication error	20170512
4	Updated document style	20210406
5	Corrected ISO number for date standard	20221130
7	SharePoint naming convention section added; Minor changes in other sections;	20240325