



DIGITIZATION GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

1. PREAMBLE

The *Digitization Guidelines for Administrative Records* are a guideline on digitizing administrative records. Under these Guidelines, the digitized record will replace the paper record. These Guidelines establish consistent processes and procedures for the development of a credible digitization management program and comply with legal, provincial and university requirements.

Not all administrative records can or need to be replaced by a digital copy. Records that have enduring historical value and form part of the University's documentary heritage or that must be retained in their original paper format for legal or business purposes fall outside the scope of these Guidelines. Digitized records that do not comply with the *McGill University Records Retention Schedule* and do not adhere to the current Guidelines will not be approved for substitution under the McGill University *Substitution of an E-Version as Official Record*.

2. OVERVIEW

These Guidelines are issued in support of McGill University Archives' *Terms of Reference*, the *McGill University Records Retention Schedule*, *Substitution of an E-Version as Official Record* and *Recognition of the Born-Digital Record as the Official Record*.

The specifications enumerated in these Guidelines are applicable to the digitization of administrative records.

McGill University must conform to these Guidelines to ensure that the digital copies:

- Can replace paper records as the official documentary evidence;
- Are captured in a way that ensures their reliability, authenticity, and usability over their entire retention period;
- Are monitored or audited for compliance;
- Can be used to produce copies, which can be considered as equal to the original paper record.

By following these Guidelines, McGill University will be compliant with the following Quebec legislation and Canadian Standards and as such, will allow McGill University to dispose of the original paper records once the copies have been captured:

- Quebec A-21.1 *Archives Act*
- Quebec A-2.1 *Act Respecting Access to Documents held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information*
- Quebec A-C1.1 *Act to Establish a Legal Framework for Information Technology*
- Canadian Standard CAN/CGSB 72.11-93: *Microfilm and Electronic Images as Documentary Evidence*
- Canadian Standard CAN/CGSB 72.34: *Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence*

Refer to the Procedures contained herein for details regarding the implementation and interpretation of the Guidelines.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Guidelines, the following definitions apply:

Administrative Record

A document that has been created or received because it facilitates the operations and management of the University

Archival (Permanent) Record

Materials created or received by a staff or faculty member, in the conduct of their employment that are preserved because of the enduring and historical value as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of the University

Archives

The body of documents, regardless of format and date, created or received by the University and held by the McGill University Archives as having historical and enduring information value

Digital

Representing information through a sequence of computer code, and is often used synonymously with automated, computerized, electronic or with the prefix e-

Digitization

The process of transforming paper material into a digital form, especially for storage and use in a computer or on a network

Document

Information inscribed on a medium, such as paper, constitutes a document. A record may comprise one or more documents (see also record)

Record

Information of an official nature that is fixed on a medium, such as paper or digital, and that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference (see also document)

4. GUIDELINES

4.1 Scope

- a) These Guidelines apply to administrative records that are eligible for substitution under the McGill University Records Retention Schedule.
- b) The copies can be viewed using various software programs and access to them may depend upon the user's individual security profile.
- c) Security and access of the digitized record must comply with applicable legislation and the operational needs of the unit.
- d) These Guidelines do not cover processes used to evaluate the authenticity of the paper records.
- e) The Digitization Declaration for Paper Records and the Digitization Monthly Control Report (see Annex A and B) must be completed by the faculty/unit in order to document the digitization process and to comply with provincial regulations.
- f) Compliance with these Guidelines will ensure that the copy captured is a true reproduction of the paper records.

4.2 Digitization Technical Requirements for Paper Records

- a) Desktop scanners or Uprint are acceptable for digitization;
- b) The scanner is set-up for a resolution of 300 dpi, greyscale or colour;
- c) The paper records are imported in one of the following formats: JPEG, PDF or PDF/A;
- d) When possible, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) should be applied to the digital records.

4.3 Security and Access

- a) Both paper and digital records should have the same level of security and access;
- b) Security and access should reflect the appropriate level of confidentiality and protection of personal information contained within the records;
- c) Records that require greater security should be secured and protected;
- d) Paper records containing confidential, personal, health or sensitive information should be housed in a secure storage area or cabinet with limited access.

4.4 Quality Assurance:

- a) Quality assurance refers to the verification of the authenticity and reliability of the digital copy. Digital copies should be reviewed and checked for completeness of the records (all the pages have been digitized), clarity of the copy, and that the copies are in the correct order and rotation.
- b) The quality assurance must be applied to all digital copies.
- c) Training of staff is important for quality assurance. Staff should be trained on the digitization procedures, saving of records and security and storage of both paper and digital versions.

5. PROCEDURES: HOW TO DIGITIZE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

5.1 Preparing the Records for Digitization

- a) Remove staples and paper clips;
- b) Unfold and flatten documents;
- c) If the document is of an irregular size, torn, not legible, of poor quality, of poor color, then make a photocopy prior to digitization, ensuring that the photocopy represents an accurate version of the document;
- d) If a post-it must be scanned, put it on a separate empty page that will be digitized before the related page;
- e) Pages should be in sequence and properly orientated;
- f) Batches may be separated by coloured Batch Cover sheets, depending upon the scanner configuration (the Batch Cover sheet should include the batch number or identifier, date, total number of pages, and date of digitization);
- g) All pages of documents must have a document number;
- h) If the document is double sided, the setting on the scanner must be changed accordingly.

5.2 Logging In, Batching and Digitization

While each faculty/ unit is responsible for creating instructions for logging in, batching and digitization according to the software and scanner, the general steps to follow are:

- a) Follow the steps for logging in to the digitization software;
- b) Create the batch number or start a new batch;
- c) Begin digitizing the paper records;
- d) Save the batch;
- e) Repeat a) through d);
- f) Log off when finished.

5.3 Saving

The digital copies will be retained according to the McGill University Records Retention Schedule. While each unit is responsible for creating instructions for saving/safe guarding copies, the general steps to follow include:

- a) Create a folder or similar location for digitized records to be saved, according to the records classification system;
- b) Open up the digitized document;
- c) Enter a file name, such as batch or identification number, for the digitized document(s);
- d) Save the document or batch;
- e) Delete the images from the temporary location used for batching and indexing.
- f) A proper file naming convention should be employed and applied to the imaged documents.

5.4 Quality Assurance and Auditing

- a) Another staff member verifies the digitization work by viewing and ensuring that the digital copies and file names are accurate;
- b) Digitized images are verified to ensure that they are of good quality and are legible and readable when displayed on a computer screen and reproduced on paper;

- c) Processes and procedures are subject to monitoring and auditing on a regular basis to ensure the best quality digital copies;
- d) Copies are audited for reliability and authenticity;
- e) Monthly control report indicates the records that were scanned, the names and titles of the people who did it, if any issues arise during the digitization processes (for example, if the indexed document is missing an image) and if those issues were resolved.

5.5 Security and Access

- a) Paper records containing confidential, sensitive, personal or health information should be housed in a secure area in either a locked cabinet or room;
- b) Digital records containing confidential, sensitive, personal or health information should be stored on a secure server or network that is password protected and if required, the documents should be encrypted;
- c) Access to paper and digital records should be limited to those staff who need to use the records to perform their duties (those who do not need the records should not have access to them);
- d) Access will be assigned by the supervisor or head of the unit;
- e) ICS will implement the access restrictions for the digital records.

5.6 Temporary Storage of Paper Records

- a) Paper records are filed daily by batch;
- b) On a regular basis the following information is recorded on a spreadsheet (for each of the boxes or of the cabinet drawers): first document number, last document number, date range of the documents and digitization date;
- c) If any, the boxes are labeled and counted.

5.7 Disposal of Paper Records

Paper records should be retained for six (6) months after the quality assurance has been completed, then sent to the McGill University Archives for confidential destruction.

5.8 Scanner Maintenance

Either the unit or ICS is responsible for organizing regular scanner maintenance to ensure that the scanner is operating properly and achieving optimal performance.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

McGill University Archives
3459 McTavish Street, McLennan Building 4th Floor, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 0C1
(514) 398-6929
records.archives@mcgill.ca

7. OTHER RESOURCES

McGill University Records Retention Schedule
(<http://www.mcgill.ca/library/branches/mua/records-management/murrs>)

8. LIST OF APPROVED RECORDS FOR SUBSTITUTION

Please contact the [McGill University Archives](#) for the more up-to-date information on approved records for substitution.

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

Before a digitization batch:

- Check that only the equipment and configuration mentioned in these Guidelines (see section 4.2) and in the declaration (see Annex A, section 4) are used.

After digitization, the following quality assurance verification is done to all images:

- Quantity check
 - All pages of a document have been digitized.
- Quality check
 - Digitized text and annotations are clearly legible.
 - There is no line or page break.
 - The pages are correctly oriented.
 - The image is not too light or too dark.
 - The image does not have noise (dust on the paper or on the camera, undesired pixels, etc.).

ANNEX A

DIGITIZATION DECLARATION FOR PAPER RECORDS

1. Instruction

This digitization declaration must first be completed by the head of the designated unit. It indicates and documents the digitization process in the unit and it must be considered as a part of the Guidelines. For your convenience, some sections are already completed, but you can change them if necessary.

Once completed, the declaration must then be validated by McGill University Archives (MUA). Any further updates to this declaration must also be validated by MUA.

2. General Information

Unit Name	
Unit Address	
Supervisor of the Unit (name and title)	
Authorized Staff	All personnel from the indicated unit can digitize paper records and can index or control the quality of the electronic files. They must read and apply this declaration, the Guidelines and all other related procedures or policies specific to their unit.

3. Records to Be Digitized

Records Series Title or Brief Description	Year Range (estimation)	
	Start	End <small>("today" if all future records will be digitized)</small>

Add lines if necessary

4. Technical Information

Machines Used	Desktop scanners or Uprint machines (property of the University).
Color or Greyscale	
DPI (300 DPI at least)	
File format (JPEG, PDF or PDF/A)	
Optical Character Recognition – OCR (yes or no)	

5. Images Management

Software that manages the images or, if there is no software, the path to the repository on the shared drive.	
Name and title of people authorized to give adequate access and permissions to the software or shared drive.	
Staff teams or groups that can access the image to accomplish their tasks. For example: HR hiring team, bank accounts team, contributor group of an intranet site, etc.	
List of the index terms given to images	
File name convention for images	
IT security	The images, the software or the shared drive benefit from the same security measures as McGill's entire IT systems.

6. Approbation

I confirm that this declaration gives accurate information about the digitization done in the mentioned unit.

I also confirmed that all required personnel will comply with the procedures given in the *Digitization Guidelines for Administrative Records*. This compliance will be confirmed by a monthly control report sent to me.

The declaration must be validated by MUA. This declaration is reviewed when necessary and if the head of the unit changed. Any changes must also be validated by MUA.

Head of the unit (name and title):

Date:

Reserved to McGill University Archives

Records Series Title or Brief Description	Rule #	Classification Code	Can be destroyed after digitization?

This declaration has been reviewed and corrected if necessary. The mentioned records series can be digitized, in compliance with the University Retention Schedule and with the provincial and national laws and standards.

MUA representative (name and title):

Date:

ANNEX B

MONTHLY DIGITIZATION CONTROL REPORT

1. Instruction

This monthly digitization control report must be completed each month and given to the head of the unit.

2. Digitization Control Report

Report Date	
Digitization Dates Range	From: To:

Records Series Titles or Brief Description	Records Start date	Records End date	Digitization done by (name and title)	Quality assurance done and errors corrected, if any (yes or no)	Other comments

3. Quality Assurance Checklist

Before a digitization batch:

- Check that only the equipment and configuration mentioned and in the Digitization Declaration of your unit (section 4) are used.

After digitization, the following verification is done to all images:

- Quantity check
 - All pages of a document have been digitized.
- Quality check
 - Digitized text and annotations are clearly legible.
 - There is no line or page break.
 - The pages are correctly oriented.
 - The image is not too light or too dark.
 - The image does not have noise (dust on the paper or on the camera, undesired pixels, etc.).