

Document Naming and Control Guidelines

March 2016

Document Control

Title	Document Naming Guidelines
Prepared By	John Simmons, Records Manager
Approved By	Head of Business Portfolio and Corporate Services
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Document Distribution

All members of staff in the National Records of Scotland (NRS).

Amendment Suggestion

If you have suggested amendments please make them to the [NRS Records Manager](#).

Status Control

Version	Date	Status	Prepared by	Reason for Amendment
1.0	24 January 2013	Final	Ava Wieclawska	
2.0	24 June 2015	Final	John Simmons	Revised to extend guidance, improve naming conventions and include rules on document control
2.1	7 July 2015	Final	John Simmons	Minor amendments
2.2	16 September 2015	Final	John Simmons	Amended for use with Objective eRDM
2.3	15 December 2015	Final	John Simmons	Minor amendments
2.4	31 March 2016	Final	John Simmons	Minor amendments

Contents

1. Scope and Purpose	3
2. Overview.....	3
3. Document Name Elements.....	3
4. Naming Rules	4
5. Version Control.....	6
6. Document and Status Control.....	7
7. Headers and Footers	8
8. Templates.....	9

1. Scope and Purpose

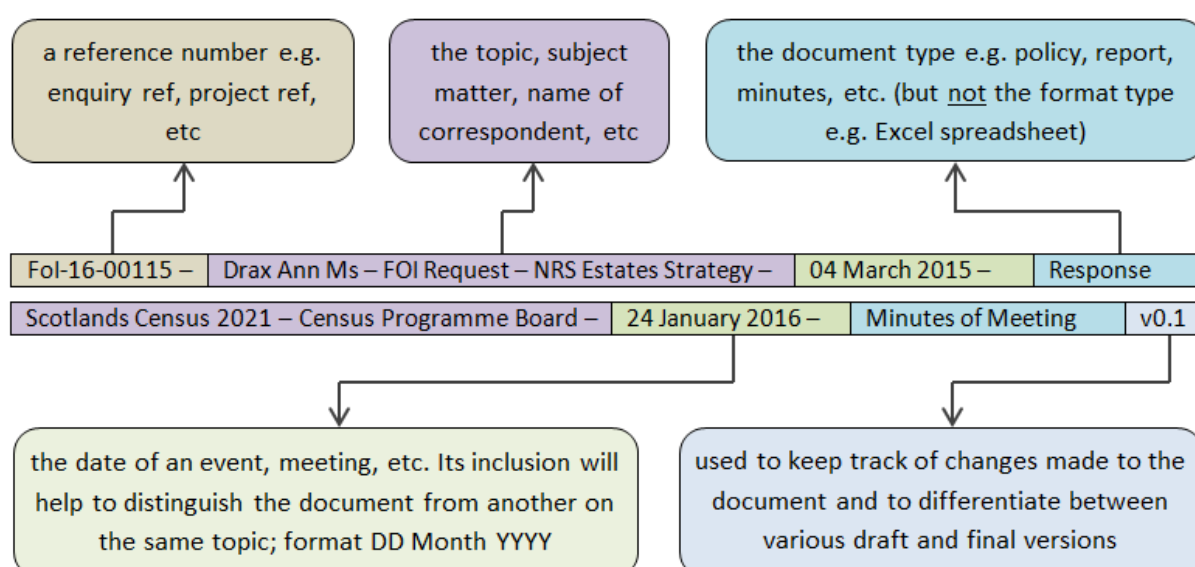
- 1.1 This document provides guidance for naming documents. The guidance has been developed primarily for naming electronic documents, but the general rules within it should be followed when naming all documents, irrespective of their format or where they are stored. The guidance should be followed by all employees and any other individuals representing NRS, including contractors and consultants.

2. Overview

- 2.1 Naming documents accurately and consistently can greatly improve the storage and retrieval of information. It is important that documents are given appropriate names when they are first created. A document's name should be a concise and meaningful description of its content or purpose. It should help to associate it with documents of a similar type, but also distinguish it as unique from all other documents held in the same folder or library.
- 2.2 Documents that have been named coherently are easier to manage and locate. Time is too often wasted searching for information which has been poorly named. By giving a document a consistent and logical description you will make it easier to differentiate between related documents at a glance and help your colleagues browse and access information. Once learnt these naming rules should also make the naming of documents simpler as you will not have to rethink the naming process every time.

3. Document Name Elements

A document name should be made up of some or all of the following elements, and usually in the following order:



- *Reference*, if appropriate – a reference number, e.g. enquiry ref, project ref. Not all documents will have one.
- *Description* – the topic or subject matter.
- *Type*, if appropriate – the document type, e.g. letter, report, minutes, etc. Not to be confused with format e.g. Excel spreadsheet. Used to distinguish the document from others on the same topic.
- *Date*, if appropriate – the date of an event, meeting, etc¹. Used to distinguish the document from others on the same topic.
- *Version Number* – used if there is a need to keep track of changes made to the document by retaining copies of earlier versions. Not applicable to emails. Versioning is automated in Objective eRDM.

4. Naming Rules

4.1 Keep names short but meaningful.

4.2 **Be consistent** in the terminology and elements you use when naming documents of a similar purpose or content.

4.3 **Use hyphens to separate elements** of a document name. Arrange the elements of a document name in an order which best suits how you will want to sort and retrieve related documents. The beginning of a file name will determine its sort order so if you want to be able to order documents chronologically you should put the date at the start of the document name. In other instances it may be preferable to order documents by their reference or description.

e.g. Scotlands Census 2021 – Data Collection – Draft Fieldwork Areas - Fife

4.4 **Use only alphanumeric characters** and hypens in document names. Avoid other characters as they can cause problems when searching or transferring information to other systems:

- It is not possible to use the following characters: " / \ : & + # % * ? @ > < |
- % causes confusion with web addresses (URLs)
- Avoid punctuation. A single full stop can be included in a version number, but placed elsewhere in a document name can cause confusion with file extensions. Multiple full stops can be isolated by some anti-virus engines.

• 4.5 **Use upper and lower case consistently**. Do not write words all in capitals. The first letter of nouns and adjectives of people, places and institutions should usually be capitalised, whereas general text should be written in lower case.

e.g. National Galleries of Scotland – partnership agreement v1.2

¹ But not the date of creation which is usually captured automatically by the software application.

- 4.6 **Dates** – when including a date in a document name always state the date with two digit days, the month as text, and four digit years: DD Month YYYY or Month YYYY or YYYY-YYYY.
- e.g. Audit and Risk Committee – Agenda – 02 November 2014
- 4.7 **Numbers** – when including a number in a document name add leading zeros to ensure that electronic files will remain in a sorted order.
- e.g. Paper 01, Paper 02
- 4.8 **Personal names** – where possible use an individual's position rather than their name e.g. Registrar General rather than Tim Ellis. When including a personal name enter it in the order, surname, forename(s) or initial(s), title.
- e.g. Durie James Mr
- 4.9 **References** – if you are including a reference state it in full.
- e.g. GD1-901 – Durrisdeer Estate Rentals – deposit agreement – 07 April 2016
- 4.10 **Recurring Events** – the names of documents relating to recurring events should include the date and description of the event.
- 4.11 **Correspondence** – the document names of correspondence should include the name of the correspondent, an indication of the subject, the date of the correspondence and whether it is incoming or outgoing correspondence i.e. enquiry from, response, etc.
- e.g. Burke Francis – Montrose customs records – 24 May 2015 – enquiry from
- 4.12 **Email attachments** – the document name of an email attachment should include the name of the correspondent, an indication of the subject, and the date of the correspondence. To link the attachment with the covering email this should be the same as the document name of the email.
- e.g. Graeme Alison – subject access request form – 12 August 2014
- 4.13 **Abbreviations and acronyms** – use these consistently and only when they are unambiguous and widely recognised across NRS. Always include the full name as well as the abbreviation or acronym to allow searching for both.
- e.g. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – funding application v0.1
- 4.14 Do not include terms describing the document's format, e.g. email, spreadsheet. This information is already denoted by the three letter file extension, which appears at the end of the document name.

5. Version Control

5.1 Version control brings order and clarity to the process of creating, revising and publishing documents, particularly where more than one person is involved. It helps distinguish documents which have been finalised, issued or published, from documents which have not reached this state.

5.2 Version numbers should be included in the file name of any documents which are likely to be created and retained in a series of different versions. A document may go through various drafts before being approved as a final document. Documents may also be reviewed and updated again at a later date. It is important to be able differentiate between all of the versions which are retained by assigning them their own sequential number.

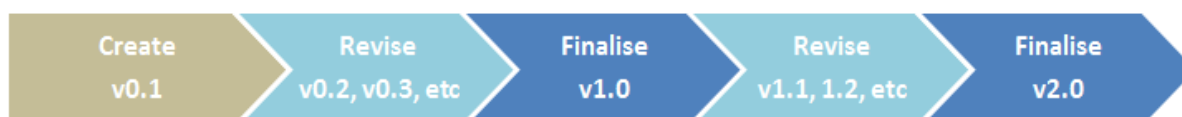
5.3 Version control should be used when saving documents in file shares on shared drives. Objective eRDM includes versioning functionality so you do not need to add a version number to the names of documents stored in this system. However, if you are working on a formal document then you should still include version numbers in the document and status control tables (see below) as the current final version of a document may get out of sync with the version number assigned by the eRDM system during the revision process.²

5.4 When naming documents place a version number at the end of the document title, prefixed with the letter v and before the file extension. For example:

Laying reports before the Scottish Parliament v1.1.doc
Historical Search Room – visitor statistics – July-September 2013 v2.0.xls
Business Leadership Group – Minutes – 13 November 2014 v0.3.doc

5.5 When numbering use ordinal numbers to reflect major changes (i.e. 1.0, 2.0, 3.0) and decimal numbers (i.e. 1.1, 2.1, 3.1) to reflect minor changes in documents.

5.6 A major change to a document would include a significant redraft that changes the meaning or emphasis of the document, an amalgamation of amendments, an annual update of a document, a redesign of a database, or a new release of a publication. A minor change would constitute redrafting work which does not change the meaning or emphasis of the document for example, editing changes, or stylistic adjustment.



² For further guidance on how version control works in eRDM, users should read 'Objective eRDM users eRDM Introduction – Module 2 – Working with Documents – 04 Version Control' which can be accessed under eRDM Instruction and Guidance in the system.

The table below provides examples.

Version Number	Document State	Document Name (showing description, version number, file extension)
v0.1	First draft A document is created and then circulated for approval or comment.	Records Management Policy v0.1.doc
v0.2	Second draft Comments and changes are incorporated to create a second draft. Subsequent drafts will employ sequential numbers after the point (v0.3, v0.4, etc).	Records Management Policy v0.2.doc
v1.0	Final document The document is approved and/or finalised. A final document will be a record.	Records Management Policy v1.0.doc
v1.1	First revision Subsequent minor revisions will employ sequential numbering after the point (v1.2, v1.3, etc).	Records Management Policy v1.1.doc
v2.0	Final document This represents a major revision. Subsequent major revisions will employ sequential numbering before the point (v3.0, v4.0, etc).	Records Management Policy v2.0.doc

6. Document and Status Control

- 6.1 If a document is likely to go through a number of versions and changes during its lifecycle then a document control table should be used to keep a track of these changes. Document control tables are generally useful to include in any document a number of users will be working on and they also should be included in any formal document that is likely to become a record, such as a policy, strategy or report, or will have a wider audience, such documents that that will be published on Connect.
- 6.2 The table can be used to record who the document was prepared by, who it was approved by and when, the version number, the review frequency and the next date of review. The inclusion of the version number along with a next review date will help colleagues understand whether they are accessing the current version of a document.

6.3 Document control example:

Title	Training and Development Strategy
Prepared By	Corporate Development Manager
Approved By	Head of Business Portfolio and Corporate Services
Date of Approval	27 January 2015
Version Number	1.1
Review Frequency	Annually for the first 2 years, then every 2 years
Next Review Date	January 2016

6.4 A status control table can also be used to record the revision history of a document and note changes that have been made since the last version. This will help colleagues looking at the document to identify any significant changes that have been made. The table should be updated every time a new version is created. Once a final version has been created, the document history of the previous draft versions can be removed. If the next final version is an update of a previous document then a brief summary of any significant changes since the previous final version should be entered in the table.

6.5 Status control example:

Version	Date	Status	Prepared by	Reason for Amendment
0.1	5 Jun 2014	Draft	James Kerr	New section on metadata requirements
0.2	7 Jun 2014	Draft	Helen McCammon	Costs table added on p.9
0.3	8 Aug 2014	Draft	Natalie Prentice	Formatting of text

7. Headers and Footers

7.1 A document header and footer can be used to repeat some of the key information from the document control table on each page throughout a document. This can prove useful if the document will be printed and has multiple pages that may become separated. The standard fields used in the header of our templates are: organisation name, document name. The standard fields used in the footer of our templates are: author, location (i.e. filepath, file reference), date last saved/updated, version number, page number.

7.2 In Objective eDRM all Microsoft Word documents should have the unique Object ID assigned to a document in eRDM included as part of the document's footer. This allows a user with a printed copy of the document to search for the document in eRDM by Object ID. Searching by Object ID is the quickest way to find anything in eRDM. The standard fields of author, location, date last saved and version number are captured by the system.

8. Templates

- 8.1 Templates have been designed for most common document types. Letter templates for each of our buildings as well as a PowerPoint presentation template are available on Connect. SCOTS templates for agenda, minutes of meetings, reports, and fax can be accessed in Word (File>New>My Templates>More>NRS>).

Any queries about templates, or suggestions for improvement, should be directed to the [Communications Team](#).