

## GRS 2.5

### Employee Separation Records

This file contains three documents. The draft schedule is proposed as a new General Records Schedule. The Appraisal Memorandum provides additional background explanation and includes the appraiser's justification for the retention decisions proposed in the schedule. The Crosswalk matches authorities in the draft schedule with current GRS authorities.

| <i>Document</i>                | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Draft Schedule .....           | 2           |
| Appraisal Memorandum .....     | 4           |
| Crosswalk to current GRS ..... | 8           |

National Archives and Records Administration  
Office of the Chief Records Officer  
GRS Team  
March 12, 2014

## GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE 2.5: Employee Separation Records

This schedule covers records created in the process of employees leaving Federal service whether that service status is career, temporary, or political appointment. These records divide into two categories: records of managing an employee separation program in general, and case files specific to individual separations. Bullet lists describe records that *may* be contained in these files. They do not mean to convey that all of these records *must* be contained in every file. In particular, records pertinent to individual separating employees will vary depending on the type of service (career, temporary, or political appointment) and an employee's responsibilities.

| Item No. | Records Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Disposition Instruction                                                                                                                                 | Disposition Authority                                                                                                             | Legal Citations |  |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 100      | <p><b>Separation Program Management Records.</b></p> <p>Records documenting the general work processes of releasing career, temporary, and political-appointment employees from employment status. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registers of separation or transfers such as SF-2807, SF-3103, or similar records</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Records not specific to an agency separation initiative.                                                                                                | <b>Temporary.</b> Destroy when superseded or obsolete, but longer retention is authorized if required for business use.           | Pending<br>0001 |  |
| 150      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reports and control documents</li> <li>• exit interview compilations identifying and tracking trends</li> <li>• records documenting development of strategies to improve retention</li> </ul> <p><b>Supersedes:</b><br/>GRS 2, item 28 (N1-GRS-92-4 item 28)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Records specific to an agency separation initiative such as reduction-in-force, voluntary early retirement, voluntary separation, and similar programs. | <b>Temporary.</b> Destroy 2 years after date of program closure, but longer retention is authorized if required for business use. | Pending<br>0002 |  |
| 200      | <p><b>Individual Employee Separation Case Files.</b></p> <p>Records not included in separating employee's OPF, documenting individual employees' voluntary, involuntary, disability, early retirement, retirement, or death separation from career, temporary, and political appointment service; and legal and financial obligations of government to employee and employee to government. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• records of counseling activities and outplacement services</li> <li>• exit interview records</li> <li>• exit clearances</li> <li>• checklists of returned property</li> <li>• certifications of removal/non-removal of government records</li> <li>• records documenting notification of appropriate third parties (e.g., benefits providers, payroll, facility services, security, information technology) of impending separation</li> <li>• records documenting terms and entitlements of separation (e.g., leave balance pay out or transfer of account, severance, pension, temporary continuation of coverage, annuity)</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Temporary.</b> Destroy 1 year after date of separation, but longer retention is authorized if required for business use.       | Pending<br>0003 |  |

| Item No. | Records Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Disposition Instruction                                                    | Disposition Authority      | Legal Citations |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
|          | <p>estimates, assistance, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>records documenting employee financial obligations to government, such as salary offset notices in effect at time of separation; student loan repayment; recruitment, retention and relocation incentives; and determinations of settlement</li> <li>copy of leave record (see "Record of employee leave," below, for record copy) retained for agency use</li> </ul> <p><b>Exclusion:</b> Records required to be filed in employee's OPF are excluded from this item.</p> <p><b>Supersedes:</b><br/>GRS 1, item 39 (NC1-64-77-7 item 21b)</p> |                                                                            |                            |                 |
| 300      | <p><b>Records documenting capture of institutional and specialized knowledge.</b><br/>Includes status of current and pending assignments, and other job-related information an office may choose to obtain from a departing employee.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><b>Temporary.</b> Destroy when no longer required for business use.</p> | <p>Pending<br/>0004</p>    |                 |
| 400      | <p><b>Record of employee leave, such as SF 1150, prepared upon transfer or separation.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>File on right side of the Official Personnel Folder (OPF).</p>          | <p>N1-GRS-92-4 item 9a</p> |                 |



## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Date:** March 12, 2014  
**Appraiser:** Galen R. Wilson, ACNR  
**Agency:** General Records Schedules (GRS)  
**Subject:** DAA-GRS-2014-000X

### INTRODUCTION

#### Schedule Overview

Employee Separation Records (GRS 2.5)

#### Additional Background Information

This schedule covers records created in the business process of separating staff members from Federal employment. It is part of the new GRS 2.0 series of schedules covering all aspects of human resource management.

A severely limited number of these records have been covered previously in the GRS—by just three items (GRS 1, item 39 and GRS 2, items 9b and 28), schedules now 22 and 37 years old. Retirement assistance files (GRS 1, item 39) and GRS 2 item 28 (Retirement files) are sometimes mistaken for simple duplication of each other.<sup>1</sup> Indeed they were originally paired as GRS 2 items 19a and 19b in a long-superseded iteration of the GRS. They were separated in 1992 from under N1-GRS-92-4 on the argument that some files supported a personnel function while others documented a payroll function. Now they are once again reunited in a single schedule.

A number of records proposed for this schedule are covered for the first time. Items for newly covered records were crafted in part from existing agency schedules mentioned below, but also by examining the separation business process—certainly a function common across all government agencies—and determining what records are currently created in the course of carrying it out.

The draft schedule was sent out to 13 agencies, primarily those who had responded with comments to draft GRS 2.1 (Employee Acquisition Records). Of these, seven responded but mostly just to report that they had no comment. Comments were received from only two: Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Environmental Protection Agency. This is not a schedule that inspired a great deal of excitement or interest or controversy, which came as no surprise.

---

<sup>1</sup> GRS 2012 survey data.

**Overall Recommendation**

I recommend approval of this schedule.

**APPRAISAL****Item 100: Separation Program Management Records not specific to an agency separation initiative.****Item 150: Separation Program Management Records specific to an agency separation initiative.**

These two items cover records created by a separation management program in general as opposed to records documenting the departure of a specific individual. The only difference is that item 100 refers to the routine on-going function of processing separations as they come up in the day-to-day course of business (231,106 employees separated from Executive Branch agencies in 2013<sup>2</sup>) while item 150 concerns specific separation initiatives that an agency may undertake in order to purposefully reduce its workforce.

Item 150 is based primarily on N1-115-94-3 which addresses reduction-in-force records at the Bureau of Reclamation, but also on N1-537-00-2 (separation incentives, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency), and N1-506-02-3 (voluntary early retirement, Defense Commissary Agency).

**Proposed Disposition**

Temporary

**Appropriateness of Proposed Disposition**

Appropriate

**Appraisal Justification**

\*Previously approved as temporary:

GRS 2, item 28 (N1-GRS-92-4 item 28)

**Adequacy of Proposed Retention Period**

Adequate from the standpoint of legal rights and accountability. The retention of current GRS 2 item 28, proposed for supersession by these items, are linked to OPM's "acceptance" of an office's annual summary of all employee separations. Electronic processing of forms and in particular electronic interconnectedness between OPM and agencies has made this function of the SF-2807 and SF-3103 less significant. Proposed retention period is sufficient for an agency to monitor its own program.

The difference in retention between items 100 and 150 is that because the former is linked to an on-going program its retention is very fluid ("destroy when superseded or obsolete") while the records of the latter, documenting initiatives with start and end dates, should be retained and destroyed as a solid unit.

**Media Neutrality**

Approved

**Item 200: Individual Employee Separation Case Files.**

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/federal-employment-reports/#url=Reports-Publications>

**Proposed Disposition**

Temporary

**Appropriateness of Proposed Disposition**

Appropriate

**Appraisal Justification**

\*Previously approved as temporary.

GRS 1, item 39 (NC1-64-77-7 item 21b)

GRS 2, item 9b (N1-GRS-92-4 item 9b)

\*Has little or no research value. These are strictly business records whose value is linked entirely to the need to document that certain business has been accomplished. Long-term records such as are filed in the OPF are specifically excluded from this item.

**Adequacy of Proposed Retention Period**

Adequate from the standpoint of legal rights and accountability.

A survey of agency schedules addressing employee separation revealed anecdotal evidence that military and law-enforcement agencies are likely to retain these records longer than agencies whose employees do not carry guns. Department of State tops this list (N1-59-00-16) with retention of 25 years. This item includes an elastic clause expanding retention to the degree an agency has a business purpose for the records, but we acknowledge that some agencies may choose to continue using their own lengthier retention requirements.

**Media Neutrality**

Approved

**Item 300: Records documenting capture of institutional and specialized knowledge.**

This new item provides disposition authority for records that certainly exist in many offices. They have been scheduled as a separate series by only a handful of agencies: Railroad Retirement Board (N1-184-78-1), NASA (NC-173-115), and Civil Service Commission (NC1-146-77-1). They have been included in larger groupings of separation records in a few other agency schedules.

**Proposed Disposition.**

Temporary

**Appropriateness of Proposed Disposition**

Appropriate.

**Appraisal Justification**

\*Has little or no research value. These records may be retained for many years depending on their content or quality, or may be disposed of within a few weeks after everything on them—such as assigning unfinished work to other staff members—is essentially checked off. But in no case should these records be accessioned into the National Archives. At best, they may end up in a continually growing collection of selected individuals' institutional memory retained as a sort of history file in the face of ever-changing procedures and workload. But as years go by, less and less of it continues to have relevance.

**Adequacy of Proposed Retention Period**

Adequate from the standpoint of legal rights and accountability. The schedules listed above placed the informational value of these interviews identically at 6 months. A proposed GRS schedule (N1-GRS-07-2) repeated that retention period but was later withdrawn. The

proposed item is open-ended, allowing records to be retained for exactly as long as an agency finds a business use for them.

**Media Neutrality**

Approved

**Item 400: Record of Employee Leave**

This item is being carried forward from the current GRS without edit. Therefore no new appraisal is necessary.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Galen R. Wilson". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

GALEN R. WILSON  
Senior Records Analyst

| New GRS |          |                              |                                      |                               | Old GRS |          |                              |                       |
|---------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|----------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| GRS No. | Item No. | Retention                    | ERA Number/<br>Disposition Authority | Notes                         | GRS No. | Item No. | Retention                    | Disposition Authority |
| 2.5     | 100      | Superseded or<br>obsolete    |                                      |                               | 2       | 28       | Upon OPM<br>acceptance       | N1-GRS-92-4 item 28   |
| 2.5     | 150      | 2 years                      |                                      |                               |         |          |                              |                       |
| 2.5     | 200      | 1 year after<br>separation   |                                      |                               | 1       | 39       | 1 year                       | NC1-64-77-7 item 21b  |
| 2.5     | 300      | No longer needed             |                                      |                               |         |          | New item                     |                       |
| 2.5     | 400      | File on right side of<br>OPF | N1-GRS-92-4 item 9a                  | Old authority still<br>valid. | 2       | 9a       | File on right side of<br>OPF | N1-GRS-92-4 item 9a   |