

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT RECORDS SCHEDULE
N1-434-96-9, N1-434-07-01, and N1-434-08-02
Revision 3
March 2024

Scope. This schedule encompasses research and development (R&D) records generated within the Department of Energy (DOE) complex, which consists of all DOE offices and its contractor organizations, such as the National Laboratories. It applies to all applicable records regardless of media or format, including paper, audio and visual, and electronic records. Excluded from this schedule are R&D records pertaining to (a) nuclear weapons, which are covered by DOE Nuclear Weapons Schedule (NI-434-96-5 and N1-434-98-27), and (b) Work for Others, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA), and cost sharing agreements, which are covered by DOE Schedule N1-434-95-5 and N1-434-01-4.

R&D records consist of information generated by scientific and technical activities and collaborations that result in new or modified concepts, techniques, equipment, and materials. Scientific and technical activities may include:

1. administering technical projects.
2. establishing research priorities.
3. developing theories and models.
4. planning and designing experiments.
5. conducting experiments.
6. compiling, reviewing, and disseminating technical reports, conference papers, technical presentations, and articles for publication (also referred to as “scientific and technical information” or STI).*

R&D records accumulate at various organizational levels:

1. divisions that establish program direction,
2. research groups that generate projects,
3. facilities that conduct testing and experimentation, and
4. individual researchers.

Through an evaluation of the record series, organizations can accurately assess the lasting scientific and research value of these records. The records series may document (a) program direction, review, appraisal or analysis; (b) the research activity's overall organization, functions, procedures, and operations; (c) the research activity's results and conclusions that may have value for future researchers, and (d) the professional careers of individual researchers.

* In this context, “disseminating” means making available for external use, beyond the originating site (laboratory or facility). STI does not include internal work group presentations or reports.

Review Philosophy and Disposition Determinations. This schedule provides tools and guidelines to successfully complete the review of R&D records and to establish levels for disposition. The records in this schedule shall be reviewed at project closure or file cutoff to determine the appropriate disposition. The determination of the disposition level should be made by records management staff in consultation with project scientists and engineers.

A R&D Checklist should be the starting point for the evaluation (see the Research & Development Evaluation Checklist below). Ideally, the evaluation process would begin with an assessment of records written by the principal investigator(s) during or shortly after the close of a project. This provides a basis for a subsequent evaluation of the project.

All R&D records must be evaluated and assigned one of the following three levels, unless otherwise indicated in the schedule. Records retired under this schedule will not be accepted by a Federal records center without an appropriate disposition level designation. The three levels and their associated dispositions are:

Level I: Projects that received national or international awards of distinction; active participation of nationally or internationally prominent investigators; research, which resulted in a significant improvement in public health, safety, or other vital national interests; scientific endeavors that were the subject of widespread national or international media attention and/or extensive congressional, DOE or other Government agency investigation; show the development of new and nationally or internationally significant techniques which are critical for future scientific endeavors or made a significant impact on the development of national or international scientific, political, economic, or social priorities.

Permanent. Cutoff after project/program completion, cancellation or termination or in 5 year blocks. Retire to a Federal Records Center (FRC) within 2 years after termination of project/program. Transfer to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) 30 years after termination of project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

Level II: Research that leads to the development of a "first-of-its-kind" process or product, improved an existing process, product or application, or has implications for future research.

Temporary. Cutoff files after project/program completion, cancellation or termination, or in 5 year blocks. Retire to the FRC within 2 years after termination of project/program. Destroy 25 years after termination of the project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

Level III: Research projects/programs that do not fall into Level I or II.

Temporary. Cutoff files after project/program completion, cancellation or termination, or in 5 year blocks. Retire to the FRC within 2 years after termination of project/program. Destroy 10 years after termination of project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

Research & Development Evaluation Checklist. The following list is for guidance only. Individual sites are encouraged to develop an evaluation form for R&D records consisting of these elements or appropriate variations.

- (1) Full name of office or unit creating the records.
- (2) Official name of the project, project number or sub-project identifier, and summarized statement of work.
- (3) Summary of the project and its significance, including significant milestones (start, finish . . .)
- (4) Name(s) of principal scientist or engineer(s).
- (5) Names(s) of records management staff.
- (6) Location of principal scientists, engineers and records management staff.
- (7) Funding and/or oversight DOE program.
- (8) Research methodology, procedures, and techniques unique to project.
- (9) If a patent application has been filed.
- (10) Submission of the STI to the DOE Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI)
- (11) Whether the records are subject to pending litigation. (Note: No documents should be destroyed if they relate to a complaint or a claim that has been filed or is likely to be filed even if the retention has been reached or exceeded. Approved dispositions may be applied after resolution of the litigation and any subsequent appeals.)
- (12) Types of records (e.g., reports, correspondence, drawings).
- (13) Access restrictions.
- (14) Medium of records (e.g., paper, diskette, microfilm . . .)
- (15) Location of records.

- (16) Evaluation of records for future research and historical use.
- (17) Suggested retention (disposition level).

Disposition of Photographic and Other Audiovisual Records. When photographs and other audiovisual records are maintained in collections separate from the research and development records to which they relate, such as in centralized audiovisual collections, photographic offices or public affairs offices, the disposition of the records is governed by Administrative Records Schedule 21, Audiovisual Records.

Pre-Accessioning of Electronic Records. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) may accept electronic records associated with permanent research and development records prior to the expiration of the 30-year retention period specified in this schedule. During the 30 year retention period, legal custody (control of access) would remain with DOE. As with all transfers of electronic records to NARA, DOE and NARA will determine the medium and format of the records in accordance with NARA standards.

Research & Development Records Schedules

This schedule covers R&D records and reports for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) complex. Records covered by this schedule are grouped into the following categories: (1) research & development project records, (2) individual researchers' records (3) research & development program planning and management records and (4) medical research records.

1. Research & Development Project Records.

R&D project records may be maintained as: (a) a project case file or (b) individual record series. The project case file approach provides a complete record of a R&D project from start to finish, allowing the reconstruction of relevant procedures and analyses. The second method for organizing and maintaining R&D project records is by individual record series.

R&D project records are assigned one of the following three levels, unless otherwise indicated in the schedule. The three levels and their associated dispositions are:

Level I. Projects that received national or international awards of distinction; active participation of nationally or internationally prominent investigators; research, which resulted in a significant improvement in public health, safety, or other vital national interests; scientific endeavors that were the subject of widespread national or international media attention and/or extensive congressional, doe or other government agency investigation; show the development of new and nationally or internationally significant techniques which are critical for future scientific endeavors or made a significant impact on the

development of national or international scientific, political, economic, or social priorities.

Permanent. Cutoff after project/program completion, cancellation or termination or in 5 year blocks. Retire to a Federal records center (FRC) within 2 years after termination of project/program. Transfer to the National Archives 30 years after termination of project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

Level II. Research that leads to the development of a "first-of-its-kind" process or product, improved an existing process, product or application, or has implications for future research.

Temporary. Cutoff files after project/program completion, cancellation or termination, or in 5 year blocks. Retire to the FRC within 2 years after termination of project/program. Destroy 25 years after termination of the project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

Level III: Research projects/programs that do not fall into level I or III.

Temporary. Cutoff files after project/program completion, cancellation or termination, or in 5 year blocks. Retire to the FRC within 2 years after termination of project/program. Destroy 10 years after termination of project/program. (N1-434-96-9)

A. R&D Project Case Files. A project case file includes all records related to the project and may include but are not limited to the records itemized in B. R&D Records Series below. (N1-434-96-9, item 1A)

- (1) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (2) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (3) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

Refer to Appendix A for information on the disposition of scientific and technical reports or other forms of STI to OSTI.

B. R&D Record Series.

- (1) Administrative records that include correspondence relating to project justifications, staffing, initiation or execution, project management plans, and periodic reports. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B1)

- (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (2) Financial documents that include budgets, cost runs, work breakdown structure and travel expenditures.

Cut off files annually. Destroy 10 years after cut off. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B2) **Superseded by DOE 1.1, item 060 (DAA-GRS-2013-0003-0001)**

- (3) Contractual and procurement documents to include funded proposals, sponsor contracts, subcontracts, contract specifications, statements of work, letters of instruction, related service agreements and accompanying instructions and technical procedures and study protocols, procurement specifications and purchase orders and any subsequent revisions.

Cut off annually. Destroy 10 years after close of the contract or procurement. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B3)

Superseded by DOE 1.1, item 060 (DAA-GRS-2013-0003-0001)

- (4) Quality assurance (QA) documents including, but not limited to, quality assurance plans and related reports of QA audits, project assessments, nonconformance and corrective action reports, deficiency reports, and certificates of conformance. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B4)
- (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

- (5) Reports of inventions, disclosures/patents and copyrights.

Refer to DOE ADM 14. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B5)

- (6) Design documentation including experimental set up, schematics, flow charts and logs, test controls and instructions, test records and

certifications, measuring and test equipment control listing, and calibration records. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B6)

- (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

(7) Basic data sheets and data logs.

Destroy when 5 years old unless specifically designated as deliverables in contractual or procurement documents. If designated as such, apply Level III criteria and disposition instructions. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B7)

(8) Computer code documentation and software/hardware requirements, including benchmark test/data results. File specifications, record layouts relating to a master file or database authorized for disposal.

Destroy when superseded or obsolete or upon authorized deletion of the related master file or database, or upon the destruction of the output of the system, if the output is not needed to protect legal rights. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B8)

(9) Technical documents which include: technical papers, significant technical correspondence, engineering plans and drawings, final reports, photographs and negatives related to the project; test schedules, specifications, final approved standards, final research data, statistical analyses, tables, charts, graphs, computer printouts or analyses of scientific or engineering data, and other accumulated records documenting the progress and completion of R&D projects. Note: Scientific researchers should provide a copy of each final technical report to their laboratory STI review office. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B9)

- (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

- (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

Refer to Appendix A for information on the disposition of scientific and technical reports or other forms of STI to OSTI.

- (10) Supporting technical information that includes preliminary reports, working papers, computer printouts, draft copies of papers used by technical writers and any other preliminary or draft copies. Destroy when 5 years old unless specifically designated as deliverables in contractual or procurement documents. If designated, apply Level III criteria and disposition instructions.
(N1-434-96-9, item 1B10)

- (11) Preliminary sketches, drawings, specifications, and photographs. Destroy when 5 years old unless specifically designated as deliverables in contractual or procurement documents. If designated, apply Level III criteria and disposition instructions.
(N1-434-96-9, item 1B11)

- (12) Raw data used to collect and assemble data of a preliminary or intermediate character generated from such processes as experiments or observations used for reference in arriving at determinations in the conduct of research projects or determined to have probable value for secondary evaluations or future experiments.
Destroy when 10 years old (or earlier if authorized by appropriate site review) unless the records are specifically designated as deliverables in contractual or procurement documents. If designated, apply Level III criteria and disposition instructions.
[N1-434-07-001, item 4c(12)]

Above is the correct disposition authority, which was formerly N1-434-96-009, item 1B12.

- (13) Evaluated or summarized data resulting from study of raw data including memoranda, graphs, tabulations, reports, log books, and related papers. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B13)
 - (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

- (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (14) Controlled notebooks issued to researchers specifically to document research results. These notebooks contain technical and scientific data accumulated from the conduct of research and development and are not often duplicated in technical reports or project case files. These notebooks frequently contain data essential in establishing patent or invention rights. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B14)
 - (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
- (15) Technical progress reports submitted by laboratories or other project offices to show the initiation and degree of completion of projects, and consolidated reports prepared from them. (N1-434-96-9, item 1B15)
 - (a) Level I. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (b) Level II. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.
 - (c) Level III. See selection criteria and disposition instructions in item 1 above.

2. Individual Researchers Collections

Some Department of Energy (DOE) and Contractor researchers have held a range of positions (graduate students, post-doctorate fellows, faculty members of major universities, and Laboratory scientists, engineers, technicians, and administrators) during their careers; or are recognized experts in an aspect of their specialty that crosses disciplinary and project lines. The records of these researchers, when preserved in their original order as a unique collection rather than divided into separate series, provide unique documentation of a wide variety of activities and functions. These collections may include, but are not limited to, any of the records types listed in N1-434-96-9, item 1.B as well as professional papers, notes

and correspondence, lecture, teaching, training, or presentation materials, diaries and calendars, drafts of publications and other writings, and biographical materials. (N1-434-08-02)

Use Item 2 of this R&D records schedule only in those instances when:

- the creating researcher has held a range of positions (graduate student, post-doctorate fellow, faculty member of major universities, and Laboratory scientist, engineer, technician and administrator) OR is a recognized expert in an aspect of their specialty that crosses disciplinary and project lines;
- The researcher's records have been created, organized and/or maintained in such a way that to attempt to separate them into case files or R&D records series would be extremely difficult and time-consuming, and would seriously diminish their present or future research value; AND
- One of the conditions listed in 2A and 2B (below) applies.

In all other instances, schedule researchers' records under the appropriate case file or R&D record series item in this schedule. (NOTE: It is anticipated that very limited use will be made of schedule items 2A and 2B.)

- A. The researcher has received a national or international award of distinction for scientific or technical research or for exemplary service; held high-level government or contractor positions; conducted research which resulted in a significant improvement in public health, safety or other vital national interests; was involved in scientific endeavors which were the subject of widespread national or international media attention and/or extensive congressional, DOE or other government agency investigation; participated in the development of new and nationally or internationally significant techniques which are critical for future scientific endeavors; or made a significant impact on the development of national or international scientific, political, economic, or social priorities.

Permanent. Cut off when no longer needed for current or ongoing work. Retire to FRC 5 years after cutoff. Transfer to NARA 30 years after cutoff.

- B. The researcher has conducted research that led to the development of a “first of its kind” process or product; improved an existing process, product, or application, or had implications for future research.

Temporary. Cut off when no longer needed for current or ongoing work. Retire to FRC 2 years after cutoff. Destroy 25 years after cutoff.

3. Research & Development Program Planning and Management Records.

A program is an organized group of projects that may be related by a single theme. Projects making up a program may involve different scientific and technical disciplines and may be conducted by several internal, external, or advisory organizations, including boards and committees. R&D program planning and management records document the basis for research and development program management decisions, direction, policies and responsibilities; and the planning, authorization basis, status, control and coordination of research projects within a program.

A. Program records maintained at the DOE Headquarters Program Manager level.

Permanent. Cut off files every 5 years and retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA 30 years after cutoff. (N1-434-96-9, item 2A1)

B. Program records maintained by a Laboratory Director or an organization delegated to implement Laboratory Director responsibilities.

Permanent. Cut off files every 5 years and retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA 30 years after cutoff. (N1-434-96-9, item 2A2)

C. Program records maintained at a Laboratory Program Manager level not covered by Item B, or maintained by other DOE staff or by other non-laboratory DOE contractors.

Cut off files every 5 years and retire to FRC. Destroy 20 years after cutoff. (N1-434-07-001 item 4e3)

Above is the correct disposition authority, which was formerly N1-434-96-009, item 2A3.

4. Medical Research Records.

Records of ongoing clinical research programs and clinically-based experimental treatment programs. Includes research activities that involve human subjects conducted in accordance with 10 CFR Part 745 - protection of human subjects.

A. Patient case files. Records of patients treated by physicians as a part of ongoing clinical- research programs and clinically-based experimental treatment programs. Each medical case file includes the complete medical history and record of treatment for individual patients.

The medical documentation component of the individual case files may include, but is not limited to, the following types of records: referral correspondence, initial clinical data, correspondence with collaborating medical institutions, treatment plans and data, patient treatment notes and procedure notes documenting the course of the diagnostic and treatment procedures.

Administrative documentation in the case file may include, but is not limited to, the following types of records: patient data sheets and insurance records, release copies for any medical record information requests, consent forms and permission to treat, and billing documentation.

The imaging records in the file may include, but are not limited to, the following types of records: diagnostic (pre-treatment) and follow-up (post-treatment) images and may include x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, and position emission tomography studies.

Cut off files at termination of medical research program. Retire to FRC when appropriate. Destroy 75 years after cutoff. (N1-434-96-9, item 3A)

- B. Medical research case files. These records document the history of research projects on human subjects from initiation to completion, and include records relating to the prospective evaluation of the safety and efficiency of proposed diagnostic, therapeutic, or preventative treatments as well as research, development, design and test results. The records may include but are not limited to the following: project proposal, review memoranda and comments, project authorizations and directives, approved protocols, documentation of assurance, unpublished manuscripts, journal articles and conference papers, progress reports, correspondence, lists of publications resulting from the project, test treatment data, daily calibration data, equipment operation logs, operation and safety procedures, and institutional review board records.

Permanent. Cut off after completion or termination of program, or in 5 year blocks. Retire to FRC 2 years after cutoff. Transfer to NARA 30 years after termination of project/program. (N1-434-96-9, item 3B)

- c. Medical equipment data records. Records include, but are not limited to, equipment and instrument calibration; experimental set-up of equipment; daily calibration data; equipment operation logs; equipment service, maintenance and repair records; operations and safety procedures, that are not appropriate for inclusion in the medical project case file.

Cut off files annually. Destroy 75 years after cutoff. [N1-434-07-01, item 4e(3)]

Appendix A

R&D Technical Reports or Other Forms of STI Submitted to the Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI)

Scientific and Technical Information (STI) consists of the experimental, observational, and analytical findings and conclusions resulting from basic or applied research and development activities, as well as other relevant associated information and data. Specifically, STI is knowledge or information resulting from sponsored research, development, or demonstration, or derived from scientific and technical studies, analyses, or other endeavors which contribute to the DOE mission and/or the national science or technology base. STI is not analogous with R&D Project Files but rather is the knowledge or information resulting from the research. Project files may include copies of the STI maintained by OSTI. However, the preferred method of documenting a project file is including in the file a comprehensive listing of STI deliverables sent to OSTI. This method offers a reference to further information while eliminating the high cost of maintaining duplicate reports.

STI is documented in many formats, including textual or electronic documents such as technical reports and published papers, presentation, numeric data, audiovisual materials, etc., regardless of media or level of classification. It is produced by contractors, subcontractors, grantees or other financial assistance recipients, or by Federal staff. (Reference DOE O 241.1A, Scientific and Technical Information Management, approved 4-9-01, or current version in effect; and DOE G 241.1-1A, Guide to the Management of Scientific and Technical Information, approved 11-23-01, or current version in effect.)

To comply with Public Law 93-577 of 1974 (42 USC 5916) which, in part, requires the Secretary of Energy to “acquire and maintain a central source of information on all energy resources and technology,” and pursuant with the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58), which states “the Secretary, through the Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI), shall maintain within the Department publicly available collections of scientific and technical information resulting from research, development, demonstration, and commercial applications activities supported by the Department,” OSTI is charged with maintaining a central repository of all STI development by the Department and its contractors. This collection has an approved permanent retention under NARA (N1-434-91-4, pending N1-434-06-1.)