

Oxfordshire History Centre: Guidelines for businesses on retention and disposal of records

This guidance is for businesses wishing to transfer their archives, including digital material, to Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) for long-term preservation of and general access to the documents. It assumes that the records under consideration are no longer required by the business for legal or administrative purposes.

Due to storage space and staff time, documents in the schedule marked 'destroy' should be disposed of by the business. Material earmarked for deposit at the History Centre should be box-listed prior to being brought in, so that staff are aware of the potential quantity and types. Please keep the records together to reflect the way they were created, as far as possible, but do not re-package items (e.g. in plastic wallets) or use additional paper clips or staples.

Ownership of the records can be retained by the business or can be transferred to OHC. Any items which, after appraisal by OHC staff, are deemed unsuitable for permanent preservation will be offered back to the business or destroyed securely, depending on what was agreed at time of deposit.

Any commercially sensitive records should be brought specifically to the attention of OHC staff. OHC is happy to accept born-digital material, but please indicate before deposit, the types of digital material you have. For records not covered by the schedule below, please ask History Centre staff for specific advice.

Type of record	Action	Notes
Company records		
Foundation documents - charters or Memorandum of Association	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Certificates of Incorporation	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Share registers and share ledgers	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Dividend lists	Destroy	
Correspondence	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Minutes and Meetings		
Board/ Directors minutes	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Other major series of minutes e.g. other committees	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	

Born Digital minutes	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	Please ensure they are unique and not copies of originals
Accounting and tax		More than 7 years old
Annual accounts and/or annual reports	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Nominal and personal ledgers	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Other ledgers, e.g. purchase, bought, sales	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Cash books	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Petty cash books	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Cheques and cheque book stubs	Destroy	
Bank books	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Paying in books	Destroy	
Bank statements	Destroy	
Journals	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Insurance policies	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Born digital accounts	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	Please ensure they are unique and not copies of originals
Employee and Pension records		
Staff lists/employee registers	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Wages'/salary ledgers	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Apprenticeship indentures	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Individual employee's records	Destroy	
Job/role descriptions	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Pension scheme trust deeds and rules	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Pension scheme trustee meeting minute books	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Pension fund annual accounts	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	

Pension fund investment records	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Health & Safety records		
Accident books	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Property records		
Title deeds & leases	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Property/ title deed registers	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Business development records - major building projects/ relocation or reorganisation of premises	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Building plans	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Planning applications	Destroy	Held elsewhere
Publicity/Promotional records		
Advertising records	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	N.B. OHC is unable to accept artefacts which may have formed part of promotional campaigns
Articles/ press-cuttings	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Conference proceedings	Destroy	
Circulars or industry-specific publications	Destroy	
Company brochures and in-house publications, including digital publications	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	Material may be transferred to our Local Studies collection
Photographs, films and videos, including digital files	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	Please alert us to the format of any material
Press releases	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Manufacturing/Production records		
Order books	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Letter books/ business correspondence series	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Machinery Registers/ plans & specifications	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	

Price lists	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Diaries - business or production	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Trademarks	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Licenses and patents	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Product design and sales literature	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Staff Social Events/ Sports & Recreational Clubs' records		
Staff reminiscences	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	Material may be transferred to our local studies collections
Staff outings/ photographs	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Minute books	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Accounts	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Photographs, films and videos, including digital material	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	Please alert us to the format of any material
Posters, programmes and tickets	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Other		
Strike/ industrial action	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Trade union records	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Employee welfare records, e.g. subsidised housing or medical schemes	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Official company histories	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
Records of other businesses acquired by the company	Use same criteria as above for individual business elements, but treat each business as a discrete unit	

Contact details:
Oxfordshire History Centre
St Luke's Church
Cowley
Oxford OX4 2HT
tel. 01865 398200
e-mail: oxhist@oxfordshire.gov.uk