

Jersey Heritage

Records Appraisal Policy

Definition

Appraisal is the process of evaluating an organisation's activities to distinguish records of continuing value from those with no further value so that the later can be disposed of.

Effectively through appraisal we decide which records should be kept and for how long to meet the requirements of the organisation, government accountability and the expectations of researchers and other users of records.

Appraisal supports good records management practices because when carried out successfully it:

- maintains the efficiency of States departments records management systems by limiting their contents to those records of continuing value for business, legal or archival purposes.
- ensures that records of long-term or archival value are identified, transferred to the Jersey Archive and permanently preserved.

Legal Background

Under the Public Records (Jersey) Law, 2002, Part 2 – Functions in Relation to Records the Archivist is required to:

9(b) appraise public records and survey the disposal of public records

Part 4 – Appraisal and Retention of Public Records specifies the following procedures for appraisal:

- 17(1) The Archivist shall appraise regularly the public records of each public institution for the purposes of this Law and further appraise records in accordance with the schedules referred to in this article.
- 17(2) The Archivist shall carry out his or her first appraisal of any class of electronic records so far as is possible in anticipation, that is, at the time when the electronic programme for creating records of that class is designed, or set in operation, for the public institution that is to create records of that class.
- 17(3) The public institution shall provide the Archivist with such assistance as the Archivist may reasonably require in order to carry out appraisals of the public records of the institution under this Article.
- 17(4) The Archivist shall on the basis of these appraisals prepare and update schedules that classify the public records appraised and indicate when further appraisal of the records should be carried out under this Article or disposal of the records should occur.

19(1) The Archivist shall further appraise public records at regular intervals, in accordance with the schedules prepared and updated under Article 17.

This policy establishes the general principles of appraisal followed by Jersey Heritage and gives details of the current process of appraisal.

General Appraisal Policy

The value of records produced by any administration can be divided into three categories; their 'primary' value to the organisation (business value), their 'secondary' legal or evidential value and their 'tertiary' value to society, providing an essential resource for historic research and government accountability (archival value).

The process of appraisal should identify records of business value, legal value and of archival value and establish retention periods for each series of records. It should be recognised that often records will be of business, legal and archival value.

Appraisal should include both electronic and paper records.

Business Value

Appraisal and identification of records kept for their business value should incorporate the following criteria:

- Records that assist efficient and effective administration through reducing the time taken to retrieve information;
- Records that enable informed policy development;
- Records that allow departments to account for the management of resources and policy making to the public and
- Records that allow departments to be open to legal and financial scrutiny.

Legal or Evidential Value

Appraisal and identification of records kept for their legal value should incorporate the following criteria:

- Records that must be kept for a certain period of time under statutory provision;
- Records that give details of continuing rights or obligations of the States of Jersey under national or international law and
- Records that give evidence of title and legal precedence.

Archival Value

The aims of archival appraisal are to ensure that records of the highest archival value are preserved for future generations, to avoid duplication and to develop consistent appraisal decisions.

Appraisal and identification of records kept for their archival value should incorporate the following criteria:

- Records that show Jersey's social development, including demographic, cultural and economic change;
- Records that document change, continuity and development in Jersey over time and assist with the historic interpretation of such changes;

- Records that show States' administration's policies, procedures and decision making processes;
- Records that show and document the significant functions and activities of States of Jersey administrations;
- Records that show changes to Jersey's physical environment;
- Records that relate to notable events or persons;
- Records that are suitable for statistical and quantitative analysis;
- Records that show the development of communities in Jersey and
- Records that can be used in the growing field of genealogical research.

Appraisal Process

The current process of appraisal is as follows:

- Appraisal of documents from a States administration is conducted by Jersey Heritage staff with assistance from staff at the relevant administration.
- Jersey Heritage staff will then draw up a retention schedule giving details of each records series appraised, suggested retention periods and suggested disposal (i.e. destroy or archive).
- Large records series of case files may be sampled when information in each file is largely duplicated and the bulk of the series precludes the preservation of each file.
- The retention schedule is agreed with the States administration.
- As laid out in the law, any records that have been identified as having archival value, are to be transferred to Jersey Archive after 20 years.
- Records identified as having archival value can be transferred to the Jersey Archive sooner if appropriate.
- Each year the Archivist will write to administrations who have signed off retention schedules in place to request that any records of archival value are transferred.
- The Archivist will review any records identified as needing further appraisal.
- Signed off retention schedules should be revised by re-appraisal of records every 5 years. Re-appraisal will identify any new record series.

Approved by JH Board 15/05/2009

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