



The Structure of the GNWT Administrative Records Classification System (GNWT ARCS)

Remember:

- The GNWT ARCS is a standardized system for organizing and managing administrative records. Departments cannot make changes to it.
- The GNWT ARCS is designed to cover all of the records that you might have, not all of the records that you do have. Departments and agencies will not use all of the numbers all of the time. If you do not have a document to file, do not create a file folder.

How is the GNWT ARCS organized?

The GNWT ARCS is a block-numeric classification system. The block-numeric system groups records according to their subject matter. Similar subjects are kept together. Blocks or ranges of classification numbers are assigned to each subject area.

There are six *sections* or *blocks* in the GNWT ARCS. Each section covers a major administrative function. The sections and their corresponding functions are:

1000-1999	Administration
2000-2999	Buildings and Supplies
3000-3999	Equipment and Supplies
4000-4999	Finance
5000-5999	Human Resources
6000-6999	Information Services

Each section is divided into *primaries*. Primaries are the subject categories that fall under each major function. A *primary number* and *title* is assigned to each primary. The primary number is taken from the range of numbers assigned to the section. For example, the primary number for the “Assets Control and Inventory” primary is 3030. This number falls within the range of numbers assigned to the Equipment and Supplies section.

The primary number forms the first part of a file number. Before we look at how files are coded in ARCS, we must first look in more detail at how a primary is described and organized.

What are the elements of an ARCS Primary description?

If you browse through the ARCS manual, you will notice that each primary is shown on its own page. An example of a primary page is shown on the next page.



Primary Title → **ASSETS CONTROL AND INVENTORY** ← **Primary Number** 3030

Scope Note → Records relating to the administration, control and tracking of all assets. It includes a list of fixed assets, stock inventories and changes to asset inventories, such as the receipt, storage, stock taking, and discharge/removal of assets in including related correspondence.

Cross-reference → **For disposal of government records, see Primary 6255.**

Secondaries →

SECONDARIES		MASTER FILE			COPY FILE		
		A	SA	FD	A	SA	FD
00	Policy and Procedures	S/O	6	AS/D	S/O	Nil	D
01	General	2	Nil	D	2	Nil	D
20	Asset Inventories	S/O	5	D	S/O	Nil	D
35	Disposal and Surplus	S/O*	5	D	S/O	Nil	D
40	Recycling Programs	S/O**	5	D	S/O	Nil	D

Retention & Disposition Schedules →

S/O* = retain on-site until all actions relating to disposal have been completed
 S/O** = retain on-site until program is cancelled or amended.

- The text below the primary title is called a scope note. It describes the types of information that should be assigned this primary number.
- A cross-reference is located below the scope note. It directs you to other primaries that contain similar records.
- The table found below the scope note contains a list of the *secondaries* that belong to each primary. A secondary describes a file or a group of subject or case files that belong to the primary's subject. Each secondary is numbered between 00 and 99. Secondaries 00 and 01 are reserved for Policies and Procedures (00) and General files (01).

When the primary and secondary numbers are put together, they create a complete file number (e.g. 3030-35).

- The table also contains a retention and disposition schedule for each secondary. The retention schedule tells you how long the records should be kept and what to do with them at the end of that period.

How do I code a record using ARCS?

Follow these steps to code a record using ARCS:

1. Browse through the manual or use the keyword index to find the primary that most closely describes the subject of the record.
2. Read the scope notes to double-check that you have the correct primary. Assign the primary number to the record (e.g. 3030).



-
3. Records must be coded to a secondary as well as a primary. Choose the best secondary from the table. Assign the secondary number to the record (e.g. 3030-35). Secondaries cannot be changed and new ones cannot be added.
 4. Secondaries can be divided into *tertiaries*. A tertiary is a sub-category of a secondary. It is created when the secondary description is too general for filing. Contact your records coordinator for information about creating tertiaryies.

What is the legal status of ARCS?

All departments and agencies are approved to use the GNWT ARCS. This means that they can manage their administrative records using a common system. The GNWT ARCS gives departments and agencies the authority to dispose of records under the *Archives Act*.

For more information about the GNWT ARCS, contact your department's Records Coordinator, or contact the Records Management Unit at 920-3009 or 873-7627.

