

Australian Standard™

**Work process analysis for
recordkeeping**

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Council of Federal State and Territory Archives
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Institute for Information Management
Institute of Internal Auditors - Australia
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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/ Standards New Zealand Committee IT-021 on Records Management. After consultation with stakeholders in both countries, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand decided to develop this Standard as an Australian, rather than an Australian/New Zealand Standard.

The objective of this Standard is to provide guidance on undertaking work process analysis for recordkeeping purposes.

The IT-021 Committee on Records Management developed the AS 4390 series of Standards on Records Management in 1996. IT-021 established several subcommittees to investigate and develop supplementary standards, one of which was dedicated to 'workflow' or work process analysis. The IT-021-04 Subcommittee has developed this Standard for work process analysis to support the AS ISO 15489 series which superseded the AS 4390 series.

All organizations create records from their business or work processes. To identify what records need to be created for those work processes, and to manage those records, the work processes themselves need to be analysed from a recordkeeping viewpoint. This Standard provides guidance on undertaking work process analysis for recordkeeping purposes.

In addition, as more of their business activities operate in an electronic environment, organizations have the opportunity to integrate recordkeeping processes with the work processes themselves. Processing orders, accounts, payments or wages, stock control, managing assets, managing quality assurance systems and contract management are examples of business activities in which recordkeeping is normally integrated with the processing of transactions. As computer applications become more sophisticated, there exists the possibility of automating work processes, including the recordkeeping processes, to less structured activities such as complaint management and general correspondence management. Work process analysis from a recordkeeping perspective is essential for developing such an automated application.

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. An 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

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FOREWORD

Work process analysis is undertaken for a variety of recordkeeping purposes. It is essential to the tasks of determining records requirements for a business activity and development of disposal authorities and function-based classification schemes. It supports other purposes related to recordkeeping including—

- (a) identification and management of information/data/record flows;
- (b) standardization of processes and codification of variations;
- (c) identification and assessment of risk with recordkeeping implications;
- (d) assessment of compliance with the regulatory regime which is applicable to the work processes;
- (e) standardization of classification and naming conventions for thesaurus development;
- (f) integration of work processes with and automation of recordkeeping; and
- (g) development of the recordkeeping aspect of quality management systems.

This Standard uses a non-linear approach to analysing work processes. It identifies two principal approaches to analysis of work processes—functional and sequential, both of which may be employed in various combinations depending on the purpose of the analysis. The components of the two approaches may be undertaken in various combinations and in a different order from that described here, depending on the nature of the task and the scale of the project.

Work process analysis enables a precise mapping of work processes in relation to an organization's functions, its systems and rules. It may be extended to describe the derivation of the organizational procedures and rules from the socio-legal context in which the organization is located.

Work process analysis for recordkeeping purposes is specific—it describes and analyses what happens in a specific activity in a specific business context. It cannot take place in the abstract but is dependent on accurate information gathering and a well-grounded understanding of the organization's context.

This Standard gives an account of the different approaches with lists of questions/matters to be considered under each element of the analyses. Appendices give examples of elements of work process analysis taken from personnel management, which was selected because it is a function that occurs in every workplace so some familiarity with it is expected. The examples are based on analysis of personnel management processes in a variety of Australian workplaces.

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Australian Standard

Work process analysis for recordkeeping

1 INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this Standard, work process refers to the sequence of steps or actions to produce a business outcome that complies with governing rules. All organizations, no matter what their size or the nature of their business, employ such work processes. All work processes use rules and procedures to define what should be done, in what sequence and by whom, in order for the task at hand to be performed to an appropriate standard and in compliance with the relevant regulatory framework.

In a recordkeeping context, work process analysis generally refers to a descriptive and analytical account of work processes occurring in actual workplaces in real time. This account of work processes for recordkeeping purposes is distinguished from analysis of workflow as defined by the Workflow Management Coalition, which specifies the purpose of the analysis as automation.

2 SCOPE

This Standard has been developed for use by any organization that wishes to analyse its work processes as the starting point for a variety of recordkeeping purposes. It will be useful to organizations regardless of size, sector, or industry.

The Standard arose from the need for guidance on what has been identified as a foundation activity in recordkeeping. The intention is to eliminate the confusion about the recordkeeping analysis of work processes as distinct from the profusion of practices and products referred to as 'workflow'.

3 APPLICATION

The application may be scaled to meet the organization's specific requirements, from identification and analysis of all functions of an organization down to the micro-level of keystroke analysis of an activity in a single business unit.

This Standard is a voluntary code of practice. It is independent of technology, although it can be used in the assessment of the adequacy of technical tools to support an organization's work processes.