

DIGITAL IMAGING GUIDELINES

This document is intended to offer guidance to all schools, colleges, departments, and offices across the University interested in digitizing their hardcopy (e.g. paper and film) records. Scanned University records are required to be authentic, accurate, complete, and retrievable. The reason for these requirements is to make certain that all digital images serve as acceptable evidence for any legal, audit, or administrative purposes. Adherence to these guidelines, along with industry best practices, aims to ensure that all digitized records will meet the above requirements for the duration of their respective retention periods.

Authenticity - An authentic record can be proven to be what it purports to be, created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it, and created or sent at the time purported.

Reliability - A reliable record can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities, or facts to which it attests.

Integrity - A complete and unaltered record is said to possess integrity.

Usability - A usable record can be located, retrieved, presented, and interpreted.ⁱ

File Formats

- Digitized images with retention periods of 10 years or more
 - TIFF or PDF/A
- Digitized images with retention periods of less than 10 years
 - TIFF, PDF, PDF/A

Imaging Resolution

- Minimum resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi)

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance procedures should be implemented to ensure that scanned materials are accurate and authentic. This is a 100% visual inspection authentication process. Images should be visually

inspected to verify that each digitized document is a legible and reliable representation of the original record. Any image deemed of unacceptable quality should be rescanned and re-inspected.

Records Retention

Digital images and correlating indexing data must be effectively and efficiently managed over time. All records, regardless of physical format, must be retained until their retention requirements have been met.ⁱⁱ Please consult the [University Retention Schedule](#) for more information about the University's records and their approved retention periods.

When digitizing documents, it is important to know that some records can only be scanned for access, not for replacement of paper or film records. In this instance, the original hardcopy materials will remain the official record. Federal and state regulations may mandate that you retain original documents for a specific period of time. Both record copies (original and scanned) must be retained for the duration of their respective retention periods. Contact University Records Management for more information.

Please note that these guidelines provide the minimum standards for digitizing most non-permanent records. Contact University Records Management for guidance prior to scanning any vital records (e.g. contracts/agreements, insurance records, retirement files, permanent business records, etc.). University Records Management can also advise and assist on larger imaging projects. Send an email to RM@syr.edu for help or more information.

ⁱ Patricia C. Franks, *Records and Information Management*, 2nd ed. (London: Facet Publishing, 2018), 60.

ⁱⁱ New York State Archives, *Digital Imaging Guidelines*. PDF File. 2019.

http://www.archives.nysed.gov/common/archives/files/mr_erecords_imgguides_0.pdf.