

## SETTING UP COMPUTER FOLDERS FOR A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS)

Here is a bit of info on how to setting up documents in a quality system

Firstly a note on procedures, forms, records and registers. Here is the typical format in Windows Explorer. Each indent represents one level lower in the directory tree.

Quality System folder

- Quality Manual
- Procedures
- Forms
- Registers
- Records
  - Record 01 Nonconformances
  - Record 02 Audits
  - Record 09 Training
  - Record 15 Maintenance etc

- External Documents
  - External Controlled Documents
  - External Uncontrolled Documents

### External documents

Subdivide these into two types, controlled documents and uncontrolled documents.

Controlled external documents are “good” documents because an external organisation has stated that you are on their controlled document list. If they don’t tell you about or give you the latest version, it’s their fault!

Uncontrolled external documents are not as good because they are uncontrolled. You are never sure if you have the latest version, and should check on the source regularly to see if you are still up to date. These can be downloaded internet files etc. You can also hyperlink to the internet file. But links fail, so it is best to do both.

### Forms

Forms are blank templates for the purpose of adding data to create a “record”. Forms can contain a lot of detail which are similar to “questions”. The data added is the answer to the “questions” which, becomes a “record”. Blank forms should not contain data (answers).

### Records

Filled in forms.

### Registers

A register is best thought of as a multi line form, a list or a database (e.g. MS Access). They are those kind of forms which get filled in periodically over time. A blank register is saved as a form, so by looking at the blank form you can tell if it is going to create a record or a register.

Note: Important thing with registers. Some people create unnecessary registers for everything. You should always question whether a register is really needed. For example a list of all the audit records created in Word requires a lot of typing. On the other hand it may be enough just to see the records listed in their own Windows Explorer folder, especially if you make the filename descriptive enough. Remember it was 10 years ago (Windows 95) that filenames were no longer restricted to eight

characters! I always use the “View Details” way of looking at files in Windows Explorer. It is much easier to see the files properly including when last saved and filesize.

#### File naming and numbering

The rule here is that a form with a certain file name and number retains the same file number as a record or register e.g. ‘Form 09 Training.doc’ when filled in is saved as file ‘Record 09 Training John Smith 050213’. Note the ‘yymmdd’ date format that places all files in correct date order.

Because there are usually many records of the one type, by having subfolders for each record type they are sorted more easily. I leave all the others in their own undivided folder and let Windows Explorer display them for me.

#### Electronic archiving

Archive folders are kept under the relevant folder, e.g. Forms\Archive Forms. I have archive folders for all QMS documents: forms, procedures, registers and records.

Archive registers each year (e.g. Register 08 Calibrations becomes Register 08 Calibrations 2005 and placed in the archive folder) before creating the same but blank register (form) at the start of 2006. When archiving a form or procedure I place “arch yymmdd” at the end of the filename to show when the file was archived.