Getting Started with ERA
User Account Guide

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Welcome to ERA

The Electronic Records Archives (ERA) is NARA's new system that allows Federal agencies to perform critical records management transactions with NARA online for the first time. Agency records management staff will use ERA to draft new records retention schedules for records in any format, officially submit those schedules for approval by NARA, request the transfer of records in any format to the National Archives for accessioning or pre-accessioning, and submit electronic records for storage in the ERA electronic records repository.

ERA has other important functions, too. As its name implies, it is the archival repository for preserving permanently valuable electronic records in the National Archives' custody. In addition, ERA's Online Public Access interface (http://www.archives.gov/research/search/) provides search of archival descriptions and electronic and digitized records, as well as other information sources, for the general public.

ERA has been developed in stages over the last several years with major development ending in 2011. Your comments and suggestions on the system will help NARA assess how we can improve ERA for agency use and also improve our training, this guide, and other kinds of assistance as we move Federal records management online.

ERA Data Center and Systems Operations Center at Allegany Ballistics Lab, Rocket Center, WV

Getting your Agency Set Up with ERA

Appointing an ERA Account Manager

Before you can start using ERA, your agency will need to appoint a representative who will be responsible for approving access to the ERA system. This representative is called the ERA Account Manager and will often be the Records Officer.

Because the ERA Account Manager is ultimately responsible for who can access ERA and perform ERA system functions, the Account Manager should carefully review this handbook and familiarize him or herself with the procedures for account creation, review, deletion, and modification contained inside.

Notifying NARA

To begin the process of creating ERA user accounts and to establish initial ERA system connectivity, your agency will need to notify the NARA ERA Account Official with the following information:

- ERA Account Manager name and contact information.

The agency Records Officer should contact the NARA ERA Account Official with this information directly by phone at 304-726-7821, or by e-mail at: ERAaccounts@nara.gov .

FAQs

What is the function of the ERA Account Manager?

The ERA Account Manager is the person within the user's agency charged with creating and approving requests for ERA user accounts.

Who Appoints an Account Manager?

In many agencies the ERA Account Manager will often be the Records Officer, though the Records Officer may choose to delegate this authority. The Records Officer must appoint the ERA Account Manager.

If I am an Account Manager do I need an ERA account?

No. An Account Manager does not necessarily need an ERA account at all if all he or she does is approve access to ERA.

Can an Agency have more than one Account Manager?

Yes. Each agency will require a minimum of one Account Manager, but the agency may have more than one Account Manager.

Creating ERA User Accounts

Understanding the ERA Roles

ERA provides five different roles that can be assigned to each user based on the user's job function. A user can be assigned one or several roles. The ERA Account Manager should understand and be familiar with these roles prior to assigning and granting prospective users ERA system access.

Scheduling Records

- **Records Scheduler**
  This role should be assigned to users who will be preparing draft record schedules and submitting them to the Certifying Official.

- **Certifying Official**
  This role should be assigned to users who will be certifying that the agency is officially submitting a Records Schedule to NARA for approval.

Transferring Permanent Records to NARA

- **Transferring Official**
  This role should be assigned to users who will create and sign draft Transfer Requests and submit them to the Transfer Approving Official for sign off and NARA approval.

- **Electronic Transfer Staff**
  This role should be assigned to users who will package and transmit electronic records to ERA via an electronic transfer method.

- **Transfer Approving Official**
  This role should be assigned to users who have the authority to sign and approve Transfer Requests and Legal Transfer Instruments on behalf of the agency.

A detailed explanation of each role is provided in Appendix A.

FAQs

Can a user be assigned more than one role?
Yes, provided the Account Manager approves the access.

What roles are necessary if my agency will be scheduling records in ERA?
If your agency will be submitting new records schedules in ERA, someone at the agency must have the "Records Scheduler" role to create the schedule and someone must have the "Certifying Official" role to certify that the agency is officially submitting that schedule to NARA for approval.

What roles are necessary if my agency approves transfers of permanent records to the National Archives?
If your agency approves accessions of permanent electronic or non-electronic records to the National Archives via a direct offer or transfer from the Federal Records Center system you must have at least one "Transferring Official" and at least one "Transfer Approving Official" identified in the ERA system. In order to accession records into the National Archives, the Transferring Official and the Transfer Approving Official must both sign off on the Transfer Request, and the Transfer Approving Official must sign the Legal Transfer Instrument. This could be the same person with two different roles or different people. The Transfer Approving Official is the person to whom notices will be sent that there are transfers ready to be approved for accession into the National Archives.

What roles are necessary to electronically transfer electronic records to ERA?
The "Electronic Transfer Staff" has the rights to package and ingest records for submission into ERA. As with the transfer of records from the FRC to the National Archives, the "Transferring Official" and the "Transfer Approving Official" must first both sign off on the Transfer Request (TR). The TR is then submitted to NARA's Transfer Staff for approval. Once the TR is approved, the Electronic Transfer Staff is able to begin the ingest process. The Electronic Transfer Staff can then use the Packaging Tool to package permanent electronic records for ingest to ERA.

Creating ERA User Accounts

Getting Users Trained

Once the ERA Account Manager has identified the appropriate ERA ERA system role(s) for a user, he or she will need to ensure that the user completes the required ERA training for that role. Each user must complete training prior to submitting an ERA User Request.

All ERA training courses can be completed online. For detailed information on training requirements for each of the ERA roles, and to access each of the ERA training courses please visit:

http://www.archives.gov/era/training.

Submitting ERA User Account Requests

To submit a user account request, the ERA Account Manager should direct the user to the following address:

http://www.archives.gov/forms/era/era-account-request.html and have the user fill out the online request form.

Once submitted, the form will be forwarded via email to the ERA Account Manager. The Account Manager should verify that the request is correct and complete, and then forward the request to the NARA ERA Account Official at:

ERAaccounts@nara.gov

The account will be created, and the ERA Help Desk will contact the user with their username and password.

FAQs

What forms do I need to get an ERA user account?

After an ERA Account Manager or user identify a need for an ERA account, and the user completes required training, the user will need to submit the online ERA Account Request form at:

http://www.archives.gov/forms/era/era-account-request.html .

Who should I contact about ERA Training?

If you have ERA training-related questions, please contact :

eratraining@nara.gov .

Managing User Accounts

Responsibilities

The ERA Account Manager is responsible for managing the life cycle - from creation to deletion - of accounts in ERA for users at his or her agency. This includes ensuring that their users are trained, have a need to use the system reviewed at least quarterly, approve user account modifications, and delete accounts that are no longer used or needed.

The Account Manager should keep whatever files on their users as are necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.

Modifying Accounts

To modify an existing ERA account, the user and the ERA Account Manager should first discuss and agree on the changes that need to be made. Then the user should complete the online user request form by selecting *Modify Existing User* in Section 1 of the online form. Please note that a *Modify Existing User* request will entirely replace all information submitted in the original *Create User Account* request. Once submitted, the modification request will be forwarded via email to the ERA Account Manager. The Account Manager will verify that the request is correct and complete, and then forward the request to the NARA Account Manager at: ERAaccounts@nara.gov .

The account will be modified, and the ERA Help Desk will contact the user to let them know the modification is complete.

Reauthorizing Accounts

Quarterly, the NARA ERA Account official will contact the ERA Account Manager and verify that the accounts assigned to the Account Manager are still valid and have the minimum necessary privileges to do their job. The ERA Account Manager is responsible for maintaining current knowledge of the staff members who need to use ERA and what roles they should have. See the FAQ for some factors to keep in mind.

Deleting Accounts

To terminate an existing user account for your agency, please email the NARA Account Manager at: ERAaccounts@nara.gov , with the name of the user account to be deleted.

The account will be deleted, and the ERA Help Desk will contact the ERA Account Manager to confirm that the account deletion is complete.

FAQs

As an ERA Account Manager, who should I contact at NARA with questions regarding modifying, reauthorizing, or deleting user accounts?

The NARA ERA Account Official is the primary contact for questions regarding the on-going maintenance of user accounts under your responsibility. The NARA ERA Account Official can be reached by phone at 304-726-7821, or by e-mail at: ERAaccounts@nara.gov

What do I, as the ERA Account Manager, need to know to fulfill my responsibility to reauthorize accounts in ERA?

Before reauthorizing accounts you should find out:

- Have any ERA users' job functions changed so that they would no longer need access to ERA?

- Have any ERA users' job functions changed so that they would need different roles in ERA?

- Have any ERA users left agency employment?

- If so, have the former employees' ERA roles been assigned to new staff members?

- Do any other new staff members need ERA accounts?

The last two questions won't really affect reauthorizing existing accounts, but may help your agency maintain smooth transactions with NARA using ERA.

Getting Help

Online

There are several quick start guides online at :
http://www.archives.gov/era/training to assist you with using ERA.

By Phone

The ERA Help Desk can be reached from 6 AM to 8 PM EST at

1-877-372-9594

By E-mail

The ERA Help Desk e-mail address is ERAHelp@nara.gov

FAQs

What are the ERA Help Desk hours of operation?

The ERA Help Desk is open from 6am to 8pm EST Monday through Friday.

Can I e-mail the Help Desk?

Yes, you can e-mail the Help Desk. It is often helpful to e-mail the Help Desk a screen shot of the problem you are having in addition to a full description of what you were doing and what happened.

Appendix A: ERA Roles

ERA ROLES	DEFINITIONS	CAPABILITIES
For Scheduling Records		
Records Scheduler	Records Schedulers are agency staff responsible for preparing the draft Records Schedule and submitting it to the Certifying Official.	I am able to prepare a draft Records Schedule and submit it to the Certifying Official.
Certifying Official	Certifying Officials are agency representatives responsible for designating the official status of the Records Schedule before submitting it to NARA for review and approval.	I am able to certify that the agency is officially submitting a Records Schedule to NARA for approval.
For Transferring Permanent Records to NARA		
Transferring Official	Transferring Officials are the agency representatives that create the transfer request and submit it for approval by NARA.	I am able to create and sign off on a Transfer Request and submit it to the Transfer Approving Official for sign off and NARA approval.
Electronic Transfer Staff	The Electronic Transfer Staff is responsible for packaging electronic files and sending them to ERA. If the Electronic Transfer Staff has transmitted the files via an electronic transfer method, he/she is responsible for initiating the transfer processing of those electronic files once the transmission is complete.	I am able to package and transmit the electronic files to ERA via an electronic transfer method. I am able to initiate the transfer processing of those electronic files once the transmission is complete.
Transfer Approving Official	The Transfer Approving Official approves Transfer Requests and Legal Transfer Instruments on behalf of the agency.	I am able to sign off and approve Transfer Requests and Legal Transfer Instruments on behalf of the agency.

Appendix B: ERA Glossary

Legal Transfer Instrument

An instrument that formally conveys the legal custody of Documentary Material to the National Archives. The Legal Transfer Instrument and the Transfer Request together fulfill the same function of the old SF-258.

Records Schedule

A type of disposition agreement developed by a Federal agency and approved by NARA that describes Federal records, establishes a period for their retention by the agency, and provides mandatory instructions for what to do with Federal records (and non-record materials) no longer needed for current Government business.   The term refers to records schedules created by agencies as well as General Records Schedules. The Records Schedule is the ERA equivalent of the old SF-115.

Transfer Request

A request or offer from a Transferring Official to transfer physical custody of Documentary Material to NARA for archival storage. The Legal Transfer Instrument and the Transfer Request together fulfill the same function of the old SF-258.

Appendix C: Account Management FAQs

1.) What is the function of the ERA Account Manager?

The ERA Account Manager is the person within the user's agency charged with managing and approving requests for ERA user accounts. The ERA Account Manager is a trusted liaison between the users and the ERA system.

2.) Who appoints an ERA Account Manager?

The Records Officer appoints the ERA Account Manager. In many agencies the ERA Account Manager will often be the Records Officer, though the Records Officer may choose to delegate this authority.

3.) I have just been appointed as an ERA Account Manager. What do I need to do?

The Account Manager should ensure that they understand their role, and should review all relevant ERA Account Management information online located at: http://www.archives.gov/era/ .

4.) I have just been appointed as an ERA Account Manager. Do I need to have any ERA system roles or submit an ERA account registration form?

No. The ERA Account Manager is strictly an administrative function and not a system role. An ERA Account Manager does not necessarily need an ERA account at all if he or she does not also need to perform any of the system roles. However, many ERA Account Managers will also need one or several system roles as described in Appendix A.

5.) What forms do I need to get an ERA user account?

After an ERA Account Manager or user identifies a need for ERA account, and the user completes required training, the user will need to submit the online ERA Account Request form at www.archives.gov

6.) What ERA system roles are available to Federal agencies?

There are five ERA roles available to Federal Agencies: Certifying Official; Records Scheduler; Transferring Official; Agency Approving Official; and Electronic Transfer Official

7.) Can an ERA Account Manager assign several ERA Roles to a single user?

Yes. The ERA Account Manager can assign as many roles as needed to a single user.

8.) What training is required for each of the ERA system roles?

The following classes are suggested for users fulfilling the specific ERA roles listed. To take any of the online ERA classes and to print training certificates of completion, please go to: http://archives.gov/era/training/elearning.html

ERA Role	ERA eLearning Classes		
	Scheduling Records	Transferring Records	Transferring Electronic Records
Records Scheduler	X		
Certifying Official	X		
Transferring Official		X	
Electronic Transfer Staff			X
Transfer Approving Official		X	

9.) Who should I contact about ERA Training?

If you have ERA training-related questions, please contact: eratraining@nara.gov .

Appendix C: Account Management FAQs

10.) What roles are necessary if my agency will be scheduling records in ERA?

If your agency will be submitting new records schedules in ERA, someone at the agency must have the "Records Scheduler" role to create the draft schedule and someone must have the "Certifying Official" role to certify that the agency is officially submitting that schedule to NARA for approval.

11.) What roles are necessary if my agency approves transfers of permanent records to the National Archives?

If your agency approves accessions of permanent electronic or non-electronic records to the National Archives via a direct offer or transfer from the Federal Records Center system you must have at least one "Transferring Official" and at least one "Transfer Approving Official" identified in the ERA system. In order to accession records into the National Archives, the Transferring Official and the Transfer Approving Official must both sign off on the Transfer Request, and the Agency Approving Official must sign the Legal Transfer Instrument. This could be the same person with two different roles or different people. The Agency Approving Official is the person to whom notices will be sent that there are transfers ready to be approved for accession into the National Archives.

12.) What roles are necessary to electronically transfer electronic records to ERA?

The "Electronic Transfer Staff" has the rights to package and ingest records to ERA. As with the transfer of records from the FRC to the National Archives, the "Transferring Official" and the "Transfer Approving Official" must first both sign off on the Transfer Request (TR). The TR is then submitted to NARA's Transfer Staff for approval. Once the TR is approved, the Electronic Transfer Staff is able to begin the ingest process. The Electronic Transfer Staff can then use the Packaging Tool to package permanent electronic records for ingest to ERA.

Appendix D: Agency Requirements for Using ERA Applications

SUPPORTED BROWSERS:

- FIREFOX 3.6

- INTERNET EXPLORER 7

- INTERNET EXPLORER 8 IS NOT SUPPORTED AT THIS TIME DUE TO USER INTERFACE ISSUES

JAVA:

- VERSION 6 OR LATER

- YOU CAN CHECK YOUR VERSION AT http://www.java.com/en/download/installed.jsp?detect=jre&try=1

PACKAGING TOOL:

- STAND ALONE PACKAGING TOOL:

    - JAVA RUNTIME ENVIRONMENT V6 UPDATE 2 OR LATER

    - DELIVERED ON A CD

- CONNECTED PACKAGING TOOL:

    - JAVA RUNTIME ENVIRONMENT V6 UPDATE 2 OR LATER

    - INCLUDED IN LATEST BUILD

FILE TRANSFER LIMITATIONS:

- TRANSFERS COMPLETED THROUGH THE WEB INTERFACE ARE LIMITED TO 1 GB FOR THE ENTIRE SHIPMENT

- FOR TRANSFERS OVER 1 GB, SFTP CAN BE USED

TRANSFER TIME:

Connection Type	Bits per Second	~ Transfer Time
T1	1.5Mbps	3 Hrs