

Records Manager interview questions

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What to expect

Records Manager interviews typically assess your understanding of the records lifecycle, your ability to apply privacy and FOI rules, and how you work with stakeholders who may not prioritise recordkeeping. Expect a mix of technical and behavioural questions, often with a scenario or work sample.

- **Technical and systems:** Questions about EDRMS platforms such as Objective ECM or Micro Focus Content Manager, metadata, access controls and migration.
- **Compliance and legal:** How you interpret and apply the Privacy Act, FOI legislation and state records acts, and how you keep up with changes.
- **Process and policy:** Walk-throughs of how you develop retention and disposal schedules, classify records or roll out a records policy.
- **Behavioural and stakeholder:** Examples of influencing staff, handling resistance, training teams and managing competing priorities.
- **Scenario and problem-solving:** Hypothetical situations such as a business unit storing records off-system, a disposal request that looks risky, or an FOI deadline approaching.

Interviews are usually conducted by a panel of two or three people, often including the hiring manager and a senior information governance or compliance colleague. Some organisations use a single interview, while larger agencies may hold a first phone screen followed by a panel. You may be asked to complete a short practical exercise, such as reviewing a retention schedule or drafting a policy extract, or to give a brief presentation on a records issue. Interviews run for about 45 to 60 minutes, with time for your questions at the end.

1. Walk me through how you would develop a retention and disposal schedule from scratch for a new business unit.

Why they ask

Tests your practical understanding of the records lifecycle and how you translate legal requirements into operational tools.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through: start with the legislative framework and relevant disposal authorities, then describe consultation with the business unit, function analysis, drafting, review and sign-off, and how you would implement and monitor it.

Example answer

"I would start by identifying which records acts and disposal authorities apply, then meet with the business unit to understand what they do and what records they create. I would map their functions to the relevant retention classes, draft a schedule in plain language, and check it against any whole-of-government requirements. After a review with legal and information governance, I would seek sign-off, load it into the EDRMS where possible, and train staff on how to manage records. I would also set a calendar reminder to review the schedule annually or when legislation changes."

2. Tell me about a time you had to enforce a records policy when a senior stakeholder pushed back.

Why they ask

Assesses your influencing skills and how you balance compliance with relationships.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took to influence the stakeholder, and the result.

Example answer

"A director in a previous role wanted to keep project records in a personal shared drive because it was faster. I explained the privacy and FOI risks, showed them how a recent audit had flagged similar off-system storage, and offered to set up a project site in SharePoint with the right permissions. I also ran a short session for their team. They moved the records within a fortnight, and the site became the standard for that division."

3. You discover a business unit is keeping duplicate copies of sensitive client records on a shared drive. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Tests your judgement under pressure and your approach to privacy risks and stakeholder management.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: acknowledge the risk, act proportionately, communicate clearly, and follow up to prevent recurrence.

Example answer

"First, I would not delete anything without understanding why the copies exist. I would check the content and confirm whether it is a privacy breach or a policy breach. Then I would speak with the business unit manager, explain the risks under the Privacy Act and our records policy, and agree on a plan to remove the duplicates and move any unique records into the EDRMS. I would document the issue, report it through the right channel if needed, and offer training so the team knows where to save records in future."

4. What is your experience with Objective ECM or Micro Focus Content Manager? How do you configure access controls?

Why they ask

Gauges your hands-on systems knowledge and understanding of security within an EDRMS.

How to structure your answer

Technical depth with examples: name the systems, describe your role, and give a specific configuration or administration task.

Example answer

"I have administered both Objective ECM and Micro Focus Content Manager in previous roles. In Content Manager, I have set up record types, locations and retention schedules, and managed security caveats to restrict access by team or classification. I have also run bulk imports and trained users on searching and sentencing. In Objective ECM, I worked on a migration project where I mapped existing folders to new classifications and tested access permissions with a pilot group before rollout."

5. How do you stay current with changes to privacy and FOI legislation across jurisdictions?

Why they ask

Shows whether you treat compliance as an ongoing responsibility rather than a one-off task.

How to structure your answer

Current awareness and risk: list your sources, describe how you filter what matters, and give an example of applying a change.

Example answer

"I subscribe to updates from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, the National Archives of Australia and my state records authority. I also follow relevant LinkedIn groups and attend local records management events. When a change comes through, I assess whether it affects our policies or retention schedules. For example, when the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme started, I

reviewed our incident response procedure and ran a briefing for the records team on what to do if a breach occurred.”

6. How would you train a team that is resistant to new recordkeeping procedures?

Why they ask

Assesses your ability to influence culture and deliver practical training.

How to structure your answer

Needs analysis and influence: understand the resistance, tailor the training, use real examples, and measure whether it worked.

Example answer

“I would start by asking the team why they are resistant. Often it is because the system feels slow or the process seems like extra work. I would show them how the new procedure saves time in a real scenario, like finding a document for an FOI request. I would run short, hands-on sessions using their own records, and provide a one-page quick reference. I would follow up after a few weeks to see what is working and adjust. If a few people become champions, I would ask them to help their colleagues.”