Electronic Filing: Naming Convention & Quality Control

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Academic & Clinical Central Office for Research & Development (ACCORD) is a joint office comprising clinical research management staff from NHS Lothian (NHSL) and the University of Edinburgh (UoE).

1.2 This document is intended to provide a common set of rules to apply to the naming of electronic documents. This will aid the storage and retrieval of records, allowing staff to locate and file documents more efficiently.

1.3 All Sponsor electronic documents are filed on the ACCORD SharePoint site either in the appropriate Quality Management System Folder or Studies Folder. All R&D hosted study electronic documents are filed on the R&D shared drive. Essential study documents will be filed in the most appropriate folder: the folder structure is based on the essential study document checklist (see CR001 Establishing & Maintaining ISFs, TMFs and Sponsor Files).

1.4 This guideline will apply to all ACCORD personnel involved in document control and filing essential documents electronically on the ACCORD SharePoint site or on the R&D shared drive. It is the responsibility of the individual creating or altering documents to ensure they are naming documents in accordance with this guideline and SOP QA008 (Document Version Control).

[NOTE. If receiving non-trial related documents from external parties e.g. validation documents, there will not be a requirement to rename documents according to this guideline unless deemed appropriate].

2 Instructions

2.1 Naming Convention Rules

2.1.1 If using a date in the file name always use two-digit days, three-digit months and four-digit years: DD-MMM-YYYY (01-Jan-2001). By ordering the date by D-M-Y, the most recent file name will appear at bottom of their respective lists, and therefore be easier to locate for files that have titles starting with dates.

2.1.2 When including a number in a file name, always give it as a two-digit number, e.g. 01-99, unless it is a year or a number with more than two digits.
- **Example:** FileDocument01, FileDocument02, FileDocument03. With this method, it will ensure that alphanumerically ordered files will be in correct order. Otherwise, the order would go incorrectly as such: FileDocument1, FileDocument10, FileDocument11, FileDocument2.

2.1.3 Avoid using non-alphanumeric characters when naming files.
- Avoid characters such as * < >"? [ ] ; = + £ $, . Usage of these characters may cause issues such as files being unable to be saved or sent, or not being recognised by certain systems.
- **Example A:** Correct would be JaneSmithDocument. Incorrect title would be Jane,SmithDocument.
- **Example B:** Correct title would be FilesAndDocuments. Incorrect title would be Files&Documents.

2.1.4 When including a personal name in a file name give the family name first followed by the initials.
- **Example:** Brown_SR_GCP Cert. DD_MMM-YYYY

2.1.5 Version number of a record should be indicated in its file name by the inclusion of 'v' followed by the version number at the end of the title, and, where applicable, 'DRAFT', if not a finalised document.

2.2 Document Naming Convention

2.2.1 When creating or updating an electronic file, apply a name and version number where appropriate.
- **Example A:** For study documents,
  Study Name_Protocol DRAFT v1.0
- **Example B:** For meeting minutes,
  Study Name_TSC Meeting Minutes_23-Oct-2023

- **Example C:** For documents such as monitoring visit reports, visits are categorised by site, so location should be next, followed by date of visit,
Study Name_Visit Type_Location_Date

2.3 Email Naming Convention

2.3.1 Only relevant correspondence that is necessary for the reconstruction of key activities and decisions should be filed in the most appropriate folder.

2.3.2 The file names of correspondence should include the following elements so that the record can be easily identified and retrieved.
   o Name of the correspondent (sender or receiver as appropriate)
   o Subject description
   o Date of the correspondence
- **Example:** *Brown_S_Violation Report_DD-MMM-YYYY_01*

2.3.3 If numerous emails regarding the same subject are received from the same correspondent on the same day, either include the time of the email to differentiate, or number the files in order of time received.

2.3.4 In an email chain, try to only save the final email (if no attachments throughout the email chain). Ensure all attachments are accessible.

2.3.5 Email correspondence should be saved as a PDF file, and not MSG or EML. To save an email as a PDF file, select 'print', when selecting the printer there should be an option to 'save as PDF'. The email file should be named following section 2.3.2. When saving an email in a PDF format, all attachments should be accessible. The file name of the attachment should be linked to the email for example this should match what is referenced in the email.

2.4 Quality Control

2.4.1 For studies subject to a combined risk assessment (GS002), the QA Administrator will perform a quarterly quality control (QC) check of electronic documents to ensure these are filed and named appropriately.

2.4.2 The QA Administrator will use the Electronic Filing QC Form (GL007-F01) to document this check. Once complete, the form will be reviewed by the QA Coordinator before sharing with the appropriate individuals for review and action. The QA Administrator will follow-up with individuals for completion of actions monthly until complete.

Parties using this guideline must visit www.accord.scot to guarantee adherence to the latest version.
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2.4.3 Once actions have been complete, the QA Administrator will initial the form. The completed form will be filed on SharePoint in the appropriate QA folder.

3 References and Related Documents

- GL007-F01 Electronic Filing QC Form
- GS002 Combined Risk Assessment
- CR001 Establishing & Maintaining ISFs, TMFs and Sponsor Files
- QA008 Document Version Control

4 Document History

Version Number	Effective Date	Reason for Change
1.0	13 MAR 2024	New Guideline
2.0	17 SEP 2025	Guidance on how to save emails in a PDF format added to section 2.3

5 Approvals

Sign	Date
(signature) AUTHOR: Lorn Mackenzie, QA Manager, NHS Lothian, ACCORD	17-Sep-2025
Heather Charles Heather Charles (18-Sep-2025 08:14:45 GMT+1) APPROVED: Heather Charles, Head of Research Governance, NHS Lothian, ACCORD	18-Sep-2025
(signature) AUTHORISED: Lorn Mackenzie, QA Manager, NHS Lothian, ACCORD	17-Sep-2025

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