

Using the Shared Network

Electronic records have replaced paper records in most schools and departments.

Staff should never store University records on their personal drives (U: drives) as that will prevent any other member of staff accessing them. Likewise they should never use the local drive (C:) as this not only restricts access but also prevents the information from being backed up/recovered in the event of the drive becoming corrupted.

The shared network drive should therefore be the prime repository for electronic University Records. As shared drives are accessed by many different staff they are more susceptible to uncontrolled expansion or change as each individual seeks to map a logical location to file their information. Uncontrolled expansion can lead to misfiling of information, duplication of records or information being retained for longer than is required.

Creating a functional based folder structure

Whilst departmental structures might change or merge from time to time, the core functions of the University will usually remain intact. For this reason, the most logical approach to filing electronic records is to reflect a structure that represents the functions and activities they represent. If the “function” is to be carried out by another department, the records associated with that function should be in a position to be moved with it with the minimum of effort.

Since the shared drive will be used by multiple users, departments should ensure that discussions take place between users to ensure that the drive is mapped out in a structured, logical (to all users) hierarchy of folders and sub-folders that reflect each of the functions, activities and record types used within the department. This will enable:

- Common electronic records to be held together
- Speedier retrieval of records
- Effective retention and disposal of electronic records
- Less duplication of records across the structure

The agreed structure should be simple to understand with each of the “main functions” at the top level with subfolders reflecting the activities geared towards achieving that function.

So for example, if the main functions of the Human resources department were “Strategy”, “Recruitment” and “Staff Development” then Level 1 of the Human Recourses shared drive should show folder relating to these core functions (see fig 1):

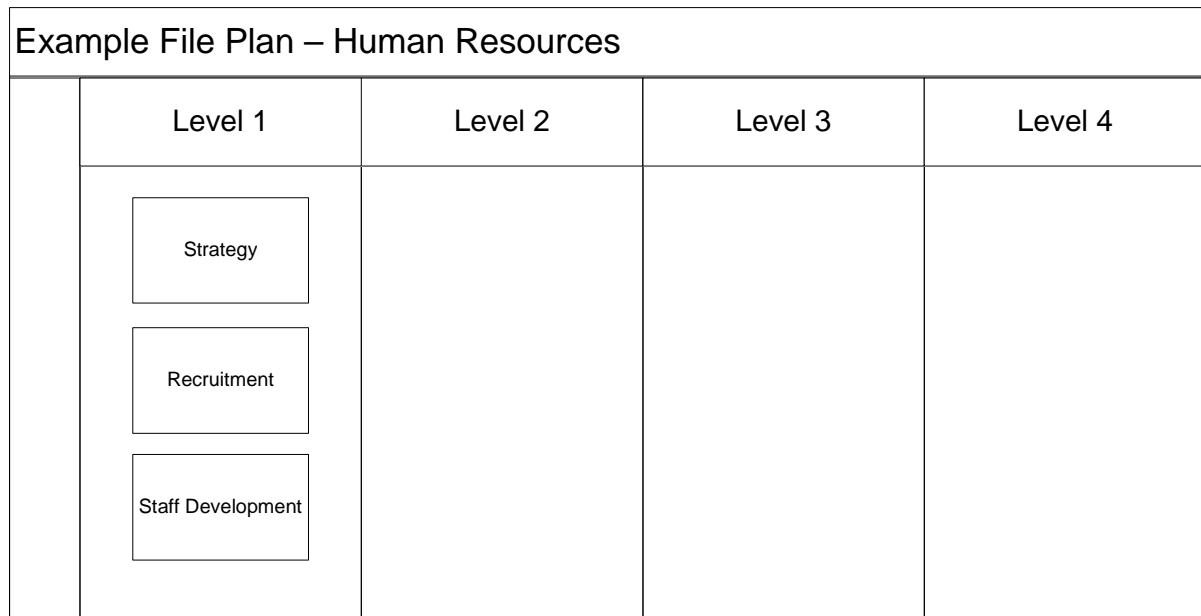


fig.1 - Level 1 shows highest Level of the Human Resources Function

Below Level 1, the folders are divided into sub-folders representing either the activities involved in achieving that function, or if more appropriate, by the frequency in which the activity is carried out. For instance, the activity is annual; it may be that the subfolders are divided to allow the activity to be managed by “years” (see fig 2).

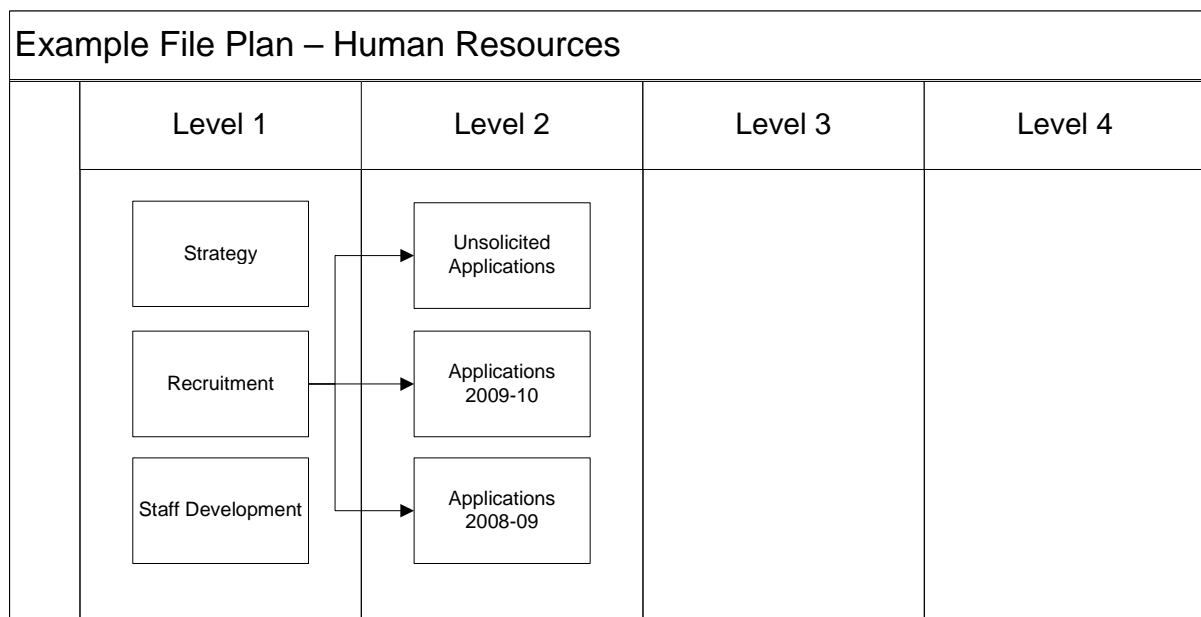


fig.2 - Level 2 shows the sub folder of the recruitment function. Here one activity “unsolicited applications” is as far down as that activity will go with sub folders so the associated records will be filed within this folder. Applications, which are dealt with by year, are divided into the years into which they relate. When the retention period for the year expires, the folder and the entire sub folders can be removed in one go.

If a “yearly” subfolder is not appropriate, for instance if the management by School or Department name is a more appropriate reflection of working practice, then the subfolders should reflect this(fig 3):

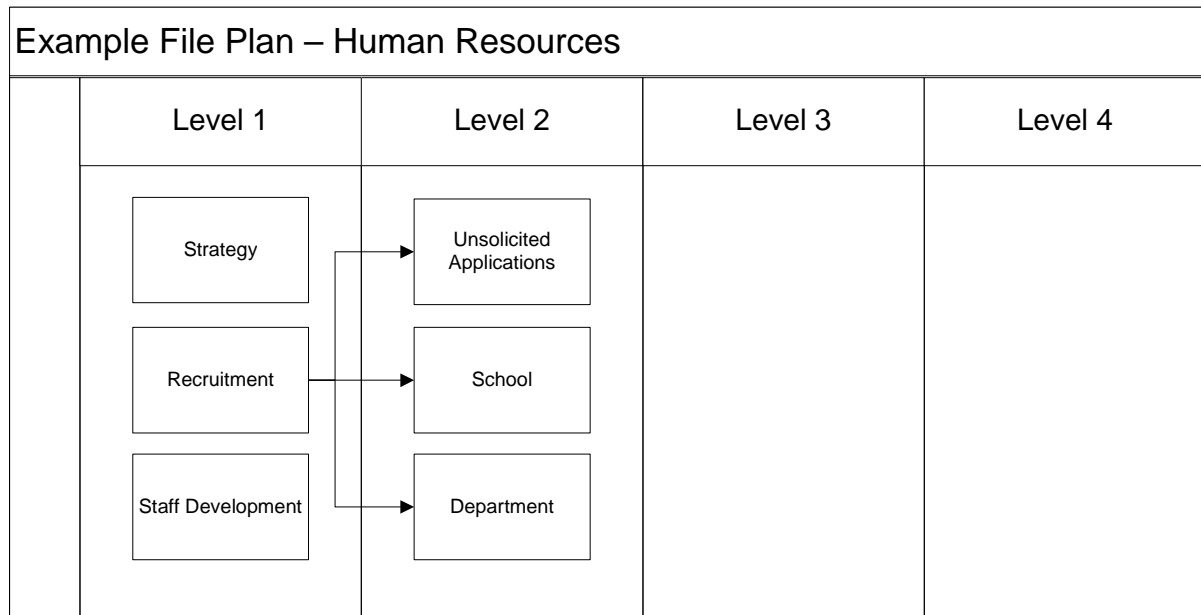


Fig.3 – An alternative Level 2 still shows “unsolicited applications but rather than divide the subfolders by year, this example shows them divided by the school or department they relate to because this may be the more appropriate method of working.

Levels 1 and 2 should remain as “static” as possible with no new folders added unless a new function is created within the department (or a new year begins etc) and the new folder is agreed and documented. Levels 3 and 4 on the other hand are where most records or “working folders” will be added so less strict rules apply.

Using the previous example, the folder 2009-10 should be the only folder for that year, so no new folders will be added at that level until the New Year when it is superseded by the 10-11 folder. Each new post within the 09-10 year will require a subfolder adding to the 09-10 folder. So many new folders will be added to Level 3 across the year as and when required. There is no need to seek formal permission to add to this level, but some “housekeeping” should take place to ensure consistency (fig 4).

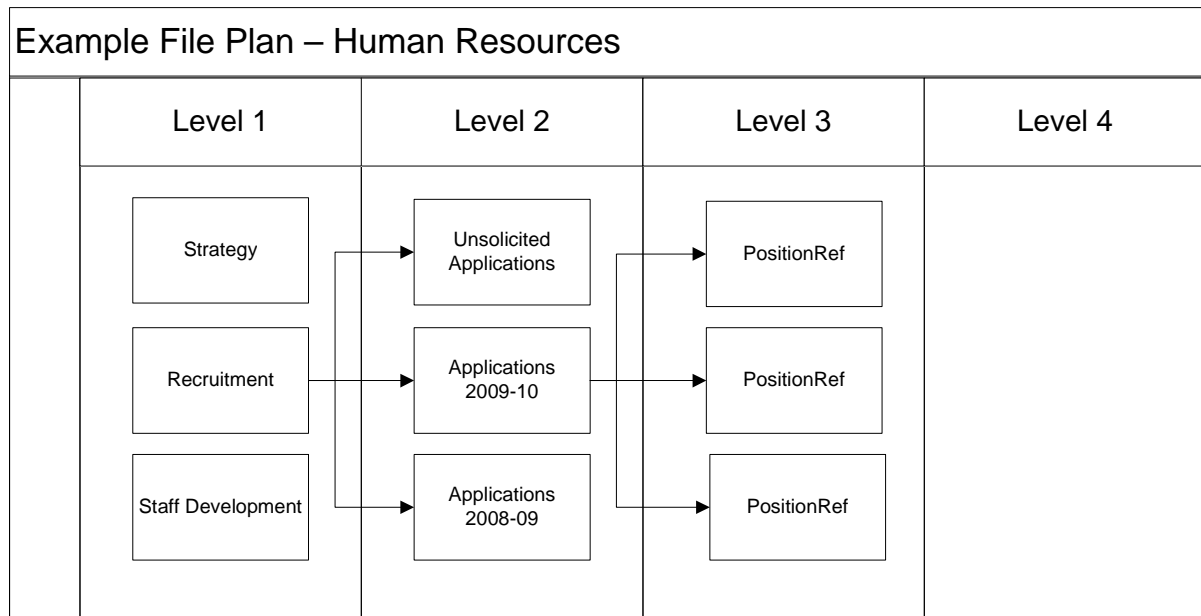


Fig.4- in Level 3 of the applications 2009-10 folder is divided into a sub folder for each of the advertised positions. Folders are named using the unique reference number of the position as the folder name. Whilst there is only one folder for the year, there are as many sub-folders as positions advertised.

Ideally, to avoid confusion and convoluted searches, Level 4 should be the last level of folders. This should be where most documents are located or, in situations where there will be multiple documents relating to the one activity, the folder into which they will be stored.

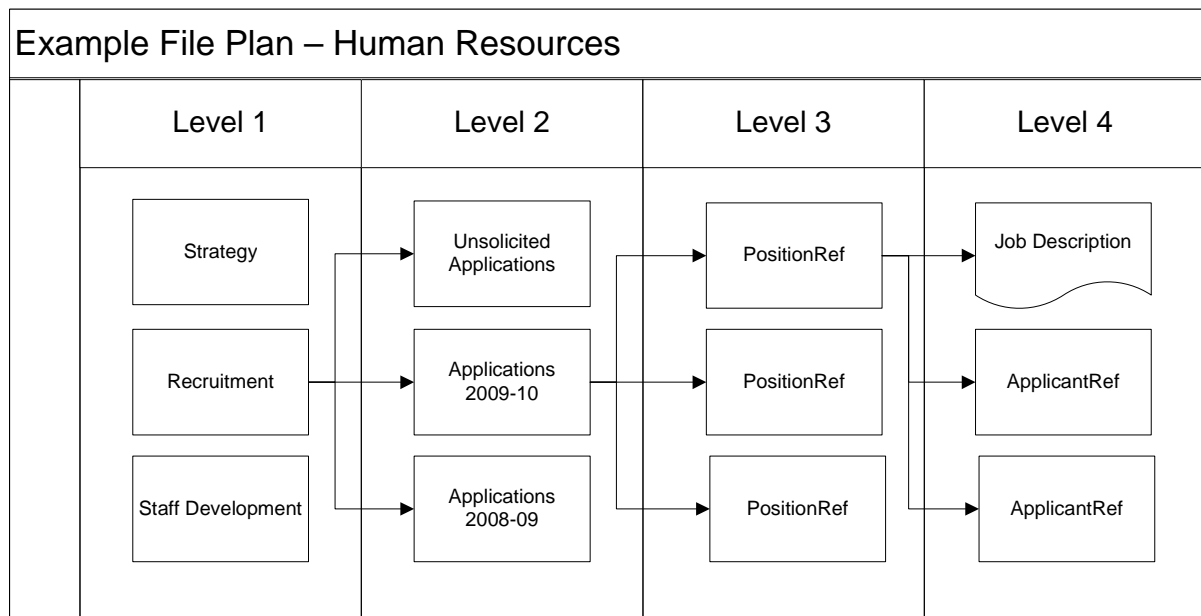


Fig.5- in Level 4 each applicant for the position receives their own folder into which can be added application forms, references, feedback from the interview. Alongside the applicant subfolders is the job description document which doesn't require its own folder as the same document related to each of the applicants and can be stored at this level.

