



Research Data Management Policy

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Summary

This University is committed to the principles of Open Research.¹ We subscribe to the principles of the UK Concordat on Open Research Data,² and affirm that publicly-funded research data are a public good produced in the public interest, which should be made available with as few restrictions as possible in a timely and responsible manner.³ We recognise the fundamental importance of research data management in establishing the quality and integrity of research and enabling the verification of research findings. Datasets can also be valuable research outputs in their own right, and should be managed in such a way as to maximise their potential for use and impact.

University researchers are required to plan for data management, to collect and manage data responsibly during the research process, and to preserve and make accessible to the fullest extent possible data that substantiate research findings, considering any legal, ethical, commercial or practical restrictions that may apply. Wherever possible, data must be preserved and made accessible by means of an appropriate data repository, and in accordance with the FAIR Data Principles for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable research data.⁴

Scope and application

This policy covers all data collected or created under the authority of the University for the purposes of answering research questions. It includes any computer code created in research that is integral to the reproducibility of research results.

The policy applies to all researchers involved in collecting research data for or on behalf of the University, including researchers employed by the University, research students and visiting researchers. Data preservation and sharing requirements apply to undergraduate or taught postgraduate students if they are involved in research that results in the publication of peer-reviewed research outputs.

Responsibilities of researchers

It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure that research data are managed and shared in accordance with this policy and other relevant policy requirements.⁵

¹ University of Reading Statement on Open Research. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/research/research-environment/open-research>.

² See Concordats UKRI has signed at <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/open-research/>. The Concordat on Open Research Data is also signed by Universities UK.

³ UKRI Common principles on research data. <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-data-open/>.

⁴ FAIR Principles. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

⁵ Information about [related policies and requirements](#) can be found in the Guidance section.

Managing research data

Research data should be managed by researchers in accordance with a data management plan, following defined procedures for data storage and backup, file naming and organisation, version control, quality control, documentation

Formats and standards

Data should be preserved in open or widely-used file formats wherever possible, so that access is not dependent on purchase of a software licence. Data and associated metadata should be structured and described using relevant standards where these exist.

Rights and licensing

Data that are deposited in a data repository or disclosed to parties other than the members of the University and research collaborators must be accompanied by a rights statement identifying the owner(s) of intellectual property rights in the data, and a licence specifying the terms on which the data can be used.

Wherever possible, data should be made available under an open licence, such as the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence, in order to provide the broadest possible scope for re-use, unless legal obligations, third party rights, intellectual property rights or privacy rights preclude this.

More restrictive licences should be used where there is a well-founded reason to do so, for example, to protect commercial interests. Wherever possible in such cases a standard licence should be used, such as the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC) licence, which grants permission for use in research and teaching and other non-commercial activities.

Data availability statement and data citation

Any publication based on the use of data must include a data availability statement citing the supporting dataset in the holding repository by means of its digital object identifier (DOI) or other unique identifier, or referencing any alternative storage location, and stating its accession number.

Intellectual Property Rights

The University has ownership of intellectual property rights (IPR) in research datasets created in the course of research undertaken by researchers in its employment, unless rights have been contractually assigned to another party.

Ownership of IPR in a research dataset created by a student r

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1.0	Research Data Manager	2 March 2015	UBRI
1.1	Research Data Manager	26 September 2017	Research Dean for Environment
2.0	Research Data Manager	23 January 2024	UBRI

Guidance

Related policies and other requirements

Research data management is subject to some or all of the following policies and requirements:

- the University's Information Compliance policies, including *inter alia* the Data Protection, Encryption, Bring Your Own Device and Classification policies;¹⁰

- the University's Code of Practice on Intellectual Property;¹¹

- the University's Code of Good Practice in Research;¹²

- any legal obligations, including those specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and the Data Protection Act 2018;¹³

- any contractual obligations, such as the provisions of research agreements relating to the use and disclosure of intellectual property and publication of results;

- the data sharing policies of research funders.

Data management planning

A data management plan (DMP) describes the data that will be collected in the course of a research project, how the data will be collected and managed, how relevant ethical and legal requirements will be met, and measures that will be taken to ensure the preservation and sharing of data on completion of the research and publication of findings.

Many funders of research accept that data management costs are legitimate research expenses. Requirements for the collection, storage, processing and archiving of research data must be considered when developing proposals, and eligible costs should be included in grant applications. Any third-party suppliers used for the processing of data must be approved by the University.¹⁶

Participant-based research

Applications for ethical review of research proposals submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and to some School Research Ethics Committees must be accompanied by a DMP describing the data to be collected, measures that will be taken to protect participants' data, and plans for sharing of research data. The DMP will be reviewed by the relevant Research Ethics Committee, which may specify requirements for the proposed research to receive a favourable opinion.¹⁷

Planning for sharing of data collected from research participants

Wording that can be used to notify an intention to preserve and share data, either openly or under safeguards, is provided in the sample consent form provided by Information Management and Policy Services (IMPS). The IMPS Data Protection and Research guide provides guidance on anonymisation of research data.¹⁸

If data collected from participants are considered to be sensitive or higher-risk and not suitable for public sharing, they can be archived in some repositories under controlled access procedures. The UK Data Service ReShare can hold anonymised safeguarded data and the University's Research Data Archive can accept restricted datasets, which may include identifiable and confidential information.¹⁹

Collaborations and research agreements

Standard research agreements include provisions that support the objectives of this policy. Research Contracts will ensure the appropriate implementation of research agreements.²⁰

Managing research data

Effective management of research data according to a data management plan will increase the efficiency of the research process, safeguard against corruption or loss of data, and make it easier to prepare data for preservation and sharing at the end of the project.

¹⁶ Information about University storage and computing services and guidance on information security is provided here: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/research-services/research-data-management/managing-your-data/data-storage>.

¹⁷ Guidance on the UREC procedure can be found here: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/academic-governance-services/research-ethics/what-do-i-need-to-do>. The REC DMP template, with guidance for applicants and reviewers, can be found here: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/research-services/research-data-management/managing-your-data/data-storage>.

The University's research data management website provides guidance on managing research data, including data storage, data organisation, file formats, quality control, documentation and metadata, and online survey tools available through the University.²¹

Preservation, sharing and disposal of data

Preservation and sharing of FAIR data entails:

- the use of appropriate repository services to preserve, publish information about and provide access to the data;

- the use of open and widely-used standards to encode and describe the data;

- the use of open or other standard licences which define re-use permissions;

- the assignment to datasets of globally unique and persistent identifiers (such as a Digital Object Identifier or DOI), in order to enable citation, discovery and re-use.

The FAIR Principles are described in detail on the Go FAIR website.²²

Guidance on preserving and providing access to restricted and high-volume data is provided in the research data management website.²⁴

When data should be shared

Researchers are entitled to a limited period of privileged use of the data they have collected to enable them to publish the results of their research. Once the research findings are placed on public record, the evidence to support those findings must be made accessible unless a justifiable exemption applies.

The University provides assistance with the protection of intellectual property.²⁵

Use of data repositories

A data repository is a service that exists to preserve and provide access to research data. It supports the long-term management of and access to data in accordance with the FAIR Data Principles. Among other things a repository will:

- apply data and metadata standards to support interoperability and re-use;
- publish machine-readable metadata about a dataset to enable online discovery;
- assign a persistent unique identifier, such as a DOI, to a dataset to make it citable and discoverable;
- publish licence information to facilitate re-use.

A data repository should be the preferred solution for data preservation and sharing. Sharing of raw data as supplementary information alongside the article on the publisher's web9a0e90 G[th]-5(e)-3(FA)6thang (e36 Tf1 0 4B>6)t9.e6-

Data availability statement and data citation

The research data management website provides guidance on data availability statements and data citation.³²

The inclusion of a data availability statement in a publication is a requirement of the UKRI Open Access Policy.³³

Preservation term

Most data repositories undertake to hold datasets indefinitely. A minimum retention or preservation period may be specified in the repository's policy.

The University's Research Data Archive guarantees a minimum retention term of ten years, but is committed to the long-term preservation of research data. A dataset would only ordinarily be in scope for deletion if it had not been accessed for ten years. Datasets may be removed for other reasons, for example, if they are found to be in breach of the law or the rights of other parties. If a dataset is withdrawn from a repository, a 'tombstone' metadata record will be retained to preserve a citable record of the dataset.

Disposal of data

IMPS provides guidelines for the retention and disposal of records.³⁴

Intellectual Property Rights

Further information is provided in the Code of Practice on Intellectual Property.³⁵

Researchers who leave the University should ensure that any data belonging to the University are handed over to an appropriate data steward, such as their line manager, or, in default of any other person, the Head of School.

Support for research data management

The Research Data Service promotes good research data management practice through the provision of information, support and training; supports data management planning for research funding applications; manages the University's data repository, the Research Data Archive; and monitors and supports compliance with this policy.

The Research Data Manager works with the Committee on Open Research and Research Integrity, the Committee for Research Infrastructure, relevant professional services and members of the research community to ensure that research data management is integrated into University policy and infrastructure.

³² Data access statements. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/research-services/research-data-management/preserving-and-sharing-data/data-access-statements>.

³³ UKRI Open Access Policy. <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>.

³⁴ Guidelines for record retention and disposal. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/imps/records-management/record-retention-and-disposal-schedules>.

³⁵ Intellectual property. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff/rules-and-regulations/intellectual-property>.

Glossary