

**LTC15D074**

**Title:** Research Date Policy: Implications for undergraduate students  
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### **Issue**

The University Research Ethics Committee is concerned about the implications of the Research Data Management Policy for taught students doing research-based assignments, projects and dissertations.

### **Recommendation**

Recipients are invited:

To advise on whether the existing policy can be implemented for taught student research based assignments and if not, what modifications to suggest to the University Research Executive for further consideration.

### **Resource Implications**

Any resource implications will need further consideration depending on the outcome of discussions on implementation of the existing policy for taught student research based assignments.

### **Risk Implications**

The collection and storage of research data both during the course of a project and on completion of the project needs to be within any legal or funder requirements whichever is the most stringent. Without this, the University runs the risk of the data being managed inappropriately which may impact on the research participants, the researchers (including students) directly involved and potentially the wider University community.

### **Equality and Diversity**

No equality and diversity issues are associated with this policy.

### **Timing of decisions**

Should any modifications to the policy be proposed, these will be considered at either the 24 February or 6 April meeting of University Research Executive.

### **Further Information**

Professor Nigel Norris (Chair of UREC, [n.norris@uea.ac.uk](mailto:n.norris@uea.ac.uk)), Rachael Mold, Head of Research ([r.mold@uea.ac.uk](mailto:r.mold@uea.ac.uk), ext 3949) and Dr Anna Collins Open Access and Research Data Officer

([anna.collins@uea.ac.uk](mailto:anna.collins@uea.ac.uk), ext 1807) for enquiries about the content of the paper and issues raised.

## Background

The Research Data Management Policy was developed in consultation with academics from a range of Schools and has been in place since 2013. A regular two-yearly update was also consulted on before approval by University Research Executive in July 2015 and the Senate in November 2015. The policy is accompanied by a more detailed Research Data Management Procedures and Guidance document which is available via the UEA Portal <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/ren/open-access-and-research-data/research-data>.

## Discussion

The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) expressed three main concerns:

- Whether the policy was intended cover the research-based course work of undergraduate and masters students as many UG and MA students undertake research-based assignments, projects and dissertations that involve collecting empirical data, but the outputs are not intended for publication.

*It has been confirmed by the Chair of University Research Executive and REN that the policy is intended to cover all staff and students*

- Second, insofar as the policy is intended to cover all UG and MA level research-based work, then UREC were concerned that this may lead to a reduction in opportunities to learn about and do research. The practical implications of retaining research data for at least 10 years (i.e. beyond the length of taught degree courses) are likely to lead Schools of Study to either ignore the policy or significantly reduce research-based assessed work for students. Clearly we cannot expect students to retain data for 10 years, since after they graduate the expectation that they will retain data has no force and is unenforceable. It would be unrealistic to transfer that responsibility to course directors, and project and dissertation supervisors.

*In general, we might not expect the data that is collected by many UG and MA taught students to have any future use (including but not limited to publication), and to be of use principally as a learning exercise for data collection. In this case, appropriate data management would under the policy be expected to form part of that learning exercise and a data management plan would need to cover aspects of data management relevant to the proper collecting and in-project storage of data, and also the destruction of data at the end of the project. More particularly, it would not be necessary to keep the data for 10 years but this should be covered in the data management plan, explaining that the data have no future use and will be destroyed (possibly when any assessment that depends on them has been finalised).*

*However in a small percentage of cases, students may be collecting data which is expected to be of further use (either by the student continuing with research or by their supervisor), in which case the data management plan would be expected to cover this and the student should plan – probably in discussion with their supervisor – what would happen to the data at the end of their project, including who would have permission to reuse it.*

- Third, where research results in the generation of qualitative or descriptive data about individuals, groups and organisations the long-term retention of data (as opposed to its destruction following its use in an assignment, project or dissertation) raises questions about the security of such data and the risks of inadvertent breaches of confidentiality or anonymity.

*This issue would be relevant while the data are in active use as well as any long term storage and therefore would need to be considered as part of the data management plan, in conjunction with any requirements around the DPA and other relevant legislation or commercial/security requirements.*

## Attachments

The current Research Data Management Policy.

# Research Data Management Policy

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Author: Members of the Research Data Management Project Team from REN, ISD and LIB, working from original document prepared by Raymond Scott (ISD)

Date: 02/07/2015

Version	Date	Note
0.1	17/1/11	First draft
0.2	24/2/12	Added policy elements from EPSRC expectations
0.3	22/05/13	Amended to reflect developments in responsibilities, facilities and approach to Research Data Management at all stages of the project lifecycle
0.4	26/07/2013	Amended to reflect comments made at 29 May Research Data Management Working Group and 8 July Research Executive
1.0	02/09/2013	Policy and Guidance into separate documents
1.1	14/10/2013	Amended to reflect comments made at 7 October Research Data Management Working Group
1.2	31/10/2013	Amended to reflect comments received from ADRs
1.3	18/11/2013	Amended to reflect comments received from Research Executive
1.4	02/07/2015	Updated as part of scheduled review

*Foreword by PVC for Research, Enterprise and Engagement:*

This Policy sets out the principles that guide us as a University in managing our research data and demonstrates our continued commitment to excellence in research.

Research Data Management is something that affects everyone at UEA who is engaged in research, at whatever level and whatever their discipline. 'Data' exist in a wide variety of forms across all UEA research fields and the principles laid out here are equally relevant to images of artefacts in art history, as computer models in game theory, as sequences in genetics and as spectra in structure characterisation. From new students to experienced researchers, ensuring that your research materials are well managed throughout the research project, and beyond, enables the research we undertake here at UEA to have the greatest possible reach and benefit to the academic community and the wider public. Support for the management of research data is available across the University in line with this Policy, including the Open Access and Research Data Officer based in REN and in the provision of storage infrastructure by ISD to support the secure storage and management of Research Data.

The Policy will continue to be evaluated and reviewed. I would welcome any comments that you have on future development of our research data management policy.

Professor Dave Petley

July 2015

## Review

This Research Data Management Policy sets out the University’s position on the management of Research Data. This is a rapidly-evolving area and the supporting document on Research Data Management Procedures and Guidance will be updated as the resources and infrastructure to support Research Data management are developed throughout the University. This document will be reviewed and updated by the University’s Research Executive on or before 31 July 2017.

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## 1. Introduction

The University of East Anglia recognises Research Data as a valuable institutional asset to be managed in line with RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx>). In addition, the University acknowledges the role that good Research Data management can play in supporting the University's research vision to ensure that our research has the highest possible global influence through a dissemination strategy that maximises impact and that ensures effective communication of our research.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Researchers and support staff:

- are supported in good Research Data management practice.
- find it easier to conduct research relying on Research Data.
- benefit from improved citations of their work.
- can maximise impact of their research by encouraging discoverability and re-use.
- have a reduced likelihood of data loss through inaccessibility and corruption.
- can comply with legislation and the policies and requirements of research funders and of Third Party Data providers.
- are supported in protecting intellectual property and commercialisation opportunities.

## 2. Scope

The University's Guidelines for Good Practice in Research<sup>1</sup> outline what is expected of its Researchers. This policy and the associated guidance expand on this with respect to Research Data. As such, this policy applies to all UEA Researchers.

## 3. Principles

The University's policy is based on the following principles:

- i. Publicly funded Research Data are a public good and should be made openly available wherever possible.
- ii. Research Data include both digital and non-digital forms and the definition of Research Data shall be guided by that widely accepted within the relevant discipline of the research.
- iii. Overall responsibility for Research Data Management at UEA rests with Research Executive. Every project must have a named Researcher responsible for data management. Researchers who are students should seek advice about management and preservation of their research data from their supervisor(s), course/module director. All Researchers have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this policy and the associated guidance.
- iv. UEA shall provide advice and support to Researchers in planning and managing their Research Data through the provision of training, guidance, good practice documentation and expert advice.
- v. Best practice for the management of Research Data starts at the earliest stage of planning a research project and should cover all stages of the Research Data lifecycle,

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<http://www.uea.ac.uk/documents/251484/3124686/Guideline%2Bon%2BGood%2Bpractice%2BDocument%2B2012.pdf/bfa317d7-86ec-4710-b548-13356fd78d40>

- normally through the creation of a Data Management Plan which should be updated as necessary over the course of the research project.
- vi. Researchers shall include a short statement within a research output describing how and on what terms supporting Research Data can be accessed.
  - vii. Research Data that are made available should be as comprehensive as possible and have clear instructions for use, including Metadata that facilitates discovery and reuse.
  - viii. Research Data should be kept and remain available for access for at least 10 years following any publication. Metadata should be kept indefinitely. Any additional documents required to enable sharing or reuse, or to meet legal or ethical obligations should also be retained for as long as is necessary to ensure continuing access of Research Data.
  - ix. A Researcher may use an appropriate external repository or data centre which will archive and preserve Research Data, eg national, disciplinary or funder archive. Alternatively, if no such repository or data centre is available, Researchers should use a central repository provided by UEA. Where the data are held externally, UEA will have a Metadata record for the data, including a link to the holding repository.
  - x. Where the transfer of Research Data between organisations is required, it should be straightforward (e.g. research collaborations, Researchers moving between HEIs) but also managed (i.e. not on an exclusive basis unless that is a condition of funding). Where the Research Data have an assessed commercial value then additional steps will need to be followed before Research Data can be transferred.
  - xi. Any destruction of Research Data shall be in accordance with the terms of this Policy, the retention period set out in the Data Management Plan and any legal and funder requirements, whichever is the most stringent.
  - xii. All Researchers should comply with any policies, mandates and expectations around Research Data that are imposed by their funders.
  - xiii. The University's Research Data policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated regularly.

## 4. Definitions

**Research Data** There is no single definition of what constitutes Research Data. For the purposes of the University's Research Data Management Policy and the associated Procedures and Guidelines, the following definition contained within the Monash University Research Data Management policy<sup>2</sup> provides an indication of what is in scope: "the data, records, files or other evidence, irrespective of their content or form (e.g. in print, digital, physical or other forms), that comprise a research project's observations, findings or outcomes, including primary materials and analysed data<sup>3</sup>". Specific definitions shall be guided by what is widely accepted within the relevant discipline of the research or by the definition used by the funder of the research; a definition should be provided in the Data Management Plan.

All data gathered and generated as a result of the research, and not just analysed data that underpin a research output, are in scope. Digital and non-digital data are included and the mechanisms for retention and archive will necessarily differ according to the format of the data. Where data are obtained from a third party, any adjustments to

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<sup>2</sup> Monash University Research Data Policy, version 1.0 , Effective from 24 November 2010, available at <http://policy.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/academic/research/research-data-management-policy.html> (accessed 23 August 2013)

<sup>3</sup> Examples of analysed data are derived variables in a data set which retains the level of disaggregation of the primary data, and data which underlie a graphical representation in a published paper.

that base data set on which research relies should be included within the data generated as a result of the research.

- Researchers
- The term Researchers is used to refer collectively to the following groups of people:
- Academic, research and relevant support staff employed by the University, and other individuals carrying out research at, or on behalf of, the University,
  - Students undertaking research and their supervisors,
  - Any persons with honorary positions conducting research within, or on behalf of, the University.