



Research Data Management Policy

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Summary of policy

This policy defines the standards that govern the management of research data at the Open University. It defines research data as the evidence base on which academic researchers

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build their analytic or other work and applies to all those engaged in research at the OU, most typically research staff and research students.

The policy covers the management of research data during and after the research process, including the preservation and sharing of datasets. It contains the following sections:

- Principles
- Responsibilities
- Ethical requirements
- Legal requirements
- Availability of research data
- Collaborative working

Summary of significant changes since last version

There are no significant changes from the previous version of this policy (Version No. 0.7). Minor changes were noted in draft review version 0.8.

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces the previous version of the Open University Research Data Policy [v.0.7 dated 24/07/2018].

Scope

What this document covers

This policy should be followed by all those who conduct, supervise or support research in the University's name, including staff, students and other individuals working on University premises or using University facilities, regardless of location. It also applies to OU staff working in collaboration with other organisations.

Related Documentation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Ethics Principles for Research Involving Human Participants](#)
- [Public interest disclosure](#) (requires login)
- [Research Degrees Student Handbook](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- Open University's [Information Security Policies](#) (requires login)

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- [Open Research Data Online \(ORDO\): Archival Research Data Management Policies](#)
- [Open Research Data Online \(ORDO \): Live Research Data Management Policies](#)
- [Open University Intellectual Property Policy](#) (requires login)
- [Open University Code of Practice for Research](#)
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Support for Research Data Management at the Open University can be found on the [Library Research Support website](#).

Introduction

Research data is defined as the evidence base on which academic researchers build their analytic or other work. Such data may be in any form, but may include “digital information created directly from research activities such as experiments, analysis, surveys, measurements, instrumentation and observations; data resulting from automated or manual data reduction and analysis including the inputs and outputs of simulations and models”¹.

This policy defines the standards that govern the management of research data at the Open University.

Research data management (RDM) is a recognised part of the research process and scholarly communications. Formal requirements and expectations from funders, publishers, collaborators and institutions (for example Data Management Plans and data sharing) exist and are likely to continue to evolve. There are benefits to the researcher, the University and the research community when research data is well managed, preserved and, where appropriate, made publicly available.

For specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact the Library Research Support team library-research-support@open.ac.uk.

Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to identify the Open University’s position with regard to the management of research data and to outline the responsibilities and requirements of the University and its researchers.

1.1. The objectives of this policy are:

¹ UKRI/RCUK *Common principles on data policy: Guidance on best practice in the management of research data*, July 2015, date accessed 19/09/2018

[\[https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/\]](https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/).

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- 1.1.1. To set out the University's requirements for research data management.
 - 1.1.2. To inform all OU research staff and students, OU research support staff, those we work with, and the public of how research data is managed at the OU.
 - 1.1.3. To provide OU researchers and support staff with references to guidance of how to manage research data.
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2. Policy principles

- The Open University is committed to the UKRI/RCUK [Common Principles on Data Policy](#)² and believes that the open sharing of data, wherever possible, is a public good.
 - In keeping with OU principles of openness, it is expected that research data will be open and accessible to other researchers, as soon as appropriate and verifiable, subject to the application of appropriate safeguards relating to the sensitivity of the data and legal and commercial requirements.
 - Research data must be managed to the highest standards throughout their lifecycle in order to support excellence in research practice.
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3. Responsibilities

3.1 Researcher responsibilities

All those engaged in research at the OU, including those involved in collaborating with other institutions, must take personal responsibility for managing research data in accordance with University and funder requirements.

Researchers are expected to share research data as openly as possible, where ethical, legal or commercial considerations allow.

It is the responsibility of the individual researcher to ensure that all research data that support and substantiate published research findings are offered to an appropriate repository for long term storage, discovery and public access, where permitted. This may be funder or discipline specific, or, where no external repository has been identified, may be within University storage facilities.

² UKRI/RCUK *Common principles on data policy: Guidance on best practice in the management of research data, July 2015, date accessed 19/09/2018*
[\[https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/\]](https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/).

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Where supporting research data are physical, the researcher must create a research data catalogue record in either ORO or ORDO so that other researchers may find and then request access to supporting research data.

3.2 University responsibilities

The University will engage with funders, policy makers and other stakeholders to ensure that research data management policies and services evolve in line with sector requirements.

It is the responsibility of executive Deans or Directors of academic units to monitor research outputs and to ensure that the institution complies with its obligations to funders to manage associated research data and to disseminate the results of publicly funded research.

The University will provide access to services and facilities that meet sector and funder requirements for storage, access and curation of data produced in the course of research conducted in the University's name.

The University will provide training, support and guidance on policies and best practice in research data management and preservation.

The Pro Vice Chancellor, Research Enterprise and Scholarship, the Research Committee, and Deans and Directors are responsible for the overall effective management of research data at the OU.

4. Ethical requirements

The legitimate interests of human participants in research must be protected, according to the principles set out within the University [ethics policy](#) (requires login) and within the University's [Ethics Principles for Research Involving Human Participants](#).

5. Legal requirements

The legal obligations of individual researchers in relation to research data management are covered within the [Public interest disclosure](#) document (requires login), [Data Protection Code of Practice](#) (requires login) and [Intellectual Property Policy](#) (requires login).

6. Availability of research data

Access to live research data should only be granted to those that are working on the research project. Researchers should ensure that their handling of OU information complies with the University's [Data Protection Code of Practice](#) (requires login) and [Information Security Policies](#) (requires login).

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Data supporting published research must be made available no later than the first date of online publication. Published research papers must include clear and distinct statements on how, and on what terms, supporting data may be accessed. If there is no further supporting research data or data cannot be made available, the published paper should make that clear.

Supporting research data must be stored for as long as they continue to be valuable to the researcher and the wider research community, and at least as long as specified by external funders or institutional requirements. This period may be up to ten years, but may vary based on funder requirements.

The University accepts that access to research data may be subject to restrictions for a number of different reasons; in order to protect commercial interests or intellectual property rights, ethical approval requirements, legal or security issues, or other legitimate reason. Where restrictions occur researchers must explain the reasons for this within metadata descriptions, and the length of time the access restrictions will continue.

Where researchers store research data within ORDO, they should comply with Open University curation policies, including specifying retention periods, nominating responsible individuals within their academic units to review the data, and defining the method of destruction of the data.

7. Collaborative working

It is the responsibility of the individual researcher to ensure the security of collaboratively produced research data under the University's name, both during the active research phase and upon completion of the research.

Further clarification

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact the Library Research Support team library-research-support@open.ac.uk

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to APG-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the Library Research Support team library-research-support@open.ac.uk

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Review cycle: 2 years	Notable change: Formatted in new policy template. See related Research Committee paper (link)
Triggers for ad hoc review: change in legislation or funder policy	

Overview of Scope

This policy defines the standards that govern the management of research data at the Open University. It applies to all those engaged in research at the OU, most typically research staff and research students. It covers UK and international work.

Has the Student Policy and Procedure Framework been followed?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered relevant legislation, laws, regulations and policies, e.g.	Have you carried out all necessary checks?		
Prevent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equality Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consumer Law including Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language compliance (TBC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Policy Working Group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Degrees Office	<input type="checkbox"/>
QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apprenticeship Office	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Charter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct approvals route	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Operational feasibility	<input type="checkbox"/>

N/A

Related policies, procedures, guidelines, regulations, forms, templates (include internal and external)

See 'Related Documentation' section.

Internal policies/ procedures superseded by this document

It supersedes the previous published version (0.7), currently at <http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/sites/www.open.ac.uk.library-research-support/files/files/Open-University-Research-Data-Management-Policy.pdf>

Policy effectiveness measures/KPIs

Increased visibility of OU of research data, use of ORDO and other data repositories to record and publish research data, presence of data access statements in published research, OU complying with external funders' research data policies.

Keyword list

RDM, Research Data Management, Data sharing, Data preservation