

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy defines the standards that govern the management of research data at the Open University. It covers:

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

1.2 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”<sup>1</sup>.

1.3 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.

1.4 The following University policy documents should also be consulted in relation to this policy:

- [Ethics Principles for Research Involving Human Participants](#)
- [Public interest disclosure](#) (requires login)
- [Research Degrees Student Handbook](#)
- [Data Protection Code of Practice](#) (requires login)
- Open University’s [Information Security Policies](#) (requires login)
- [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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<sup>1</sup> RCUK *Common principles on data policy: Guidance on best practice in the management of research data*, 2011, date accessed 15/06/2016  
[<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/>].

## The Open University Research Data Management Policy: Principles

The Open University is committed to the Research Councils UK [Common Principles on Data Policy](#)<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 2. Responsibilities

### 2.1 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 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.

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.

### 2.2 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.

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<sup>2</sup> RCUK *Common principles on data policy: Guidance on best practice in the management of research data, 2011, date accessed 15/06/2016*  
[<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/rcukcommonprinciplesondatapolicy-pdf/>].

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 and Academic Strategy, the Research Committee, and Deans and Directors are responsible for the overall effective management of research data at the OU.

### **3. 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](#).

### **4. 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).

### **5. 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).

Supporting research data must be made available no later than the first date of online publication of research. Published research papers must include statements on how, and on what terms, supporting data may be accessed. If there is no further supporting research data, 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.

## 6. 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.

### Document history

Date	Version	Stage	Summary of changes
19.04.2106.	v.0.1	Initial draft	Initial draft by Wendy Mears, incorporating comments from Library colleagues.
17.06.2016	v.0.2	Amended draft – incorporating feedback from specialist stakeholders across OU: Sam Mansfield, Lucy Neville, Rebecca Goulding, Beverley Midwood, Guy Lavender, Nadine Lewycky	Replacement of “their data” with “the research data”; some additional links to IP policy, increased mention of commercial use exceptions; clarifications of terms.
21.06.2016.	v.0.3	Amended draft following further feedback from specialist stakeholders	Updated and embedded policy links, increased emphasis on compliance with internal IT, legal and ethics policies.
04/10/2016	v.0.4	Amended draft following further feedback from RAS	Edits to policy links and phrasing.
16/11/2016	v.0.4		Research Committee approval.
06/03/2018	v.0.5		Links checked and updated