FAQ – Creating ORO records of research data

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1. What is this?
From November 2014, you are able to create records of your research datasets in the OU’s institutional repository, ORO. This record will include information about the data you are collecting, including where it is stored and how it can be accessed by interested parties.

For a definition of research data, see the Research Data Management website “What are research data?”

2. What’s in it for me?
Creating records of research data in ORO benefits both you as a researcher and the University by:

- Enabling you to comply with policies and expectations for Research Data Management (see question 3)
- Providing a means to link research publications to their underlying data
- Increasing the visibility of OU research
- Facilitating faster responses to Freedom of Information requests
- Allowing the University to monitor the creation of research data in order to provide support to researchers at key points during the research data lifecycle

3. How does this help with compliance?
Creating a public record of your research data will enable you to comply with OU, funder and publisher policies, including the following:

The OU Principles of Research Data Management

Dan Crane | Research Support Librarian | 12th July 2017
“In keeping with OU principles of open-ness, 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 requirements.”

RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy
“To enable research data to be discoverable and effectively re-used by others, sufficient metadata should be recorded and made openly available to enable other researchers to understand the research and re-use potential of the data. Published results should always include information on how to access the supporting data.”

EPSRC Policy Framework on Research Data
“Research organisations will ensure that appropriately structured metadata describing the research data they hold is published (normally within 12 months of the data being generated) and made freely accessible on the internet; in each case the metadata must be sufficient to allow others to understand what research data exists, why, when and how it was generated, and how to access it.”

Publisher policies
Many publishers now ask for a statement on how data underpinning publications can be accessed (see Publisher Policies on Data Sharing). By creating a record for your data in ORO, you will be able to provide a consistent landing page for your dataset which can be updated if access details change.

4. How do I create a record?
The process for creating a record of your dataset is very similar to that for depositing publications in ORO, simply...

1. Go to oro.open.ac.uk
2. Click on “User Area”
3. Click on “New Item”
4. Select “Research Dataset Record” from the options list
5. Fill in the metadata fields. Please note: any fields with a star assigned to them are mandatory.
6. Publish your record. Please note: we are not able to accept deposits of datasets themselves in ORO, only the metadata describing them.

For further instructions on completing the metadata fields in your research dataset record consult the Step-by-step guide to creating ORO records of research data.

If you are experiencing difficulties creating your record, please email library-research-support@open.ac.uk
5. When should I create my record?
Records should be created as soon as possible after the project start date. At this stage, a basic record is required. The researcher must ensure that this is updated to a complete record when:

- The project ends
- A publication which refers to the research data is released
- The completed research dataset is deposited in a repository/archive

6. What is a “basic record”?
At the beginning of your research project it is likely that you will not yet have any data, however it will be useful for others to know what type of data you will collect. At this stage, the record will just give an indication of the type of data, when it will be complete, and how it can be accessed (if appropriate). All mandatory fields (labelled with star symbols) must be filled in with as much detail as possible. In addition to this, you are advised to record any other information you feel that you are in a position to enter at this early stage and which will be useful to those consulting your record.

7. Where should I store my data?
A project is underway to improve the infrastructure for the management, storage and archiving of research data both during projects and long-term.

In the meantime, for advice on where to store your active data during your project email library-research-support@open.ac.uk.

For information on repositories for archiving and publishing your research data, see Where to share your data.

8. Which data should I record?
You should create records of any data which:

- You are required to share as a condition of your funding
- Underpins a research publication
- You believe will be of value in the future

All research data recorded in the catalogue must be stored and managed responsibly in a manner which facilitates sharing and re-use. For guidance on good practice in research data management, consult the Research Data Management website.
9. Who should I ask for help?
For help with creating your records of research data in ORO, email library-research-support@open.ac.uk.