

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD**

**EXTRACT FROM THE POLICY ON GOOD RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PRACTICES**

**GOOD RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PRACTICES IN MANAGING RESEARCH DATA**

In recent years research funders' and journals' policies have evolved considerably with respect to research data management and it is important to be aware of and observe applicable funder and journal conditions.

Ensuring research data integrity (i.e. so that it is complete, verified and undistorted) is critical to ensuring the validity of research results. Researchers should always be prepared to question the interim and final research results and underlying research data.

Enabling others to access research data is critical. All R&I activities are governed by some terms and conditions which will usually specify provisions for publications. There will often be a requirement for the University to delay the release of research data for a reasonable time period (enabling time in which to file a patent in order to protect intellectual property rights). In some rare circumstances the University may not be able to publish information on the grounds of National Security. In the case of R&I activities involving human participants research data may need to be anonymised before release, in order to protect the identity of human participants. In the case of research undertaken by PGR students, in discussion with their Supervisors PGRs are permitted to embargo their thesis under certain conditions (e.g. where there are commercial sensitivities or where it is necessary to delay access to a thesis until after publication of results). However, research data must be available to others in order to enable its credibility and reliability to be verified independently. Research data, like publications, are R&I outputs in their own right.

Ensuring the stewardship of research data, after the publication of R&I results, is good R&I practice (stewardship is about the long term preservation of research data to ensure its ongoing value). Stewardship encompasses enabling continued access to research data, preserving research data and metadata in formats that can be used by researchers in the same research field and by researchers in other research fields, and the active curation and preservation of research data over extended periods, which may require moving research data from one storage platform to another. The value of some kinds of research data increases over time, whereas other kinds of research data may decrease in value as the focus of research moves.

**Research Data Management Policy**

**Preamble**

This policy aims to provide a strategic framework for the management of data generated by research projects at the University of Sheffield. The term "data" is intended to be interpreted widely in this context, and includes observational data, experimental data and data derived from analysis, independent of format. There are particular challenges with the management, storage and long-term curation of digital research data, which the policy seeks to address. While effective research data management is important for funded research projects, this policy applies to all research undertaken by staff and students of the University. It aims to encourage a positive approach to the management of research data across the institution.

**Policy**

1. The University regards the effective management of the data generated by research projects as an integral part of good research and innovation practice. It believes that there are important

drivers for effective research data management, including:

- a. Maximising the impact of data-intensive research
  - b. Improving the likelihood of success in future grant proposals for data-intensive research
  - c. Assurance of research integrity
  - d. Enhanced data security and reduced risk of data loss
  - e. Facilitation of data sharing and collaboration
  - f. Maximising opportunities for new research based on reuse and recombination of data from multiple sources, including data mining
  - g. The principle of open access to publicly-funded research outputs, recognised by RCUK<sup>1</sup> and OECD<sup>2</sup>
  - h. Compliance with the requirements of research funders.
2. The primary responsibility for effective research data management during the course of research projects lies with lead researchers. However, all researchers, including postgraduate and undergraduate students undertaking research, have a personal responsibility to manage effectively the data they create.
  3. All research proposals for funded research should include a data management plan. This will help to ensure that research data management is be considered at every stage of a research project, from the initial proposal and research costing, through to provision for long-term data curation after a project finishes. In many cases submission of a data management plan is a research funder requirement.
  4. Data management plans should address data capture, integrity, confidentiality, retention, sharing and publication. Personal data should be protected in line with the University's *Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue*
  5. Unless the terms of research grants or contracts provide otherwise, data generated by research projects are the property of the University of Sheffield. Researchers should exercise care in assigning rights in data to publishers or other external agencies.
  6. Where possible, researchers should seek to recover the direct costs of managing research data generated by projects from the research funder.
  7. The University will provide support for research data management, including:
    - a. Training on research data management for research students and early career researchers, and other researchers who request it
    - b. Guidelines and advice on research data management, including data management plans, costing of research data management into research proposals, creation of descriptive metadata, intellectual property and Freedom of Information requests
    - c. Additional infrastructure and services for research data management, to be developed in consultation with researchers.
  8. This policy will be kept under regular review by Research & Innovation Committee.

30.04.12

<sup>1</sup> RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy (2011) <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/DataPolicy.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding (2007) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/61/38500813.pdf>